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A

DISCUSSION

ON THE

AUTOMATIC POWERS

OF

THE BRAIN;

BEING A

DEFENCE AGAINST REV. CHARLES BEECHER'S ATTACK UPON  
THE PHILOSOPHY OF MYSTERIOUS AGENTS, IN HIS  
REVIEW OF "SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS."

BY E. C. ROGERS.

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Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are  
God's. — CHRIST.

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## PREFACE.

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IN accounting for the phenomena of the present day (by some attributed to spirits in another state of existence), the author has never, from the beginning, made it his aim to originate a theory. His object has been to find the truth, without respect to preconceived notions either of his own mind or that of others, whether ancient or modern. "The Philosophy of Mysterious Agents" is, in part, the result of his honest endeavors.

The favor with which it has been received by a large class of discriminating minds, the demand for additional facts, the confirmation which the author has of late received from one of the most distinguished physiologists of Europe as to cerebral *automatic* powers in man, and the attack that has just been made upon precisely this principle by a learned clergyman of the Congregational church,—these have induced the author to put forth the present pamphlet.

The author can demand of the reader simply his *candid* attention; but will beg in addition, and as a favor, his thorough investigation before rejecting what are presented as demonstrated propositions.





## CHAPTER I.

ALLOWING the phenomena of the "Manifestations" and their analogies in past history, what can be proved?

In order to discover the immediate cause of any of the phenomena that appear in nature, science has always found it necessary to follow certain rules — not arbitrarily established by dogmatic minds, but growing out of laws of relation between mind itself and the principles of external nature, and the relations of external nature to herself. Before these rules were much known and followed, the progress of the race in the arts and sciences was exceedingly slow, and men were learned mostly in one another's a priori processes, and the conjectures and poetical fancyings of classical imaginations.

Now, one of the most important of these rules of scientific research is the following, which we have endeavored to follow in our investigations into the present phenomena. We give it in the language of the great Herschel: "If the analogy of two phenomena be very close and striking, while, at the same time, *the cause of one is very obvious, it becomes scarcely possible to refuse to admit the action of an analogous cause in the other, though not so obvious in itself.*"

In the modern phenomena, we have one class consisting in the movement of objects,—such as tables, chairs and the like,—on the mere proximity of certain persons, without their contact. Let this class be represented by an individual, and call it a phenomenon, consisting in the movement of objects on the proximity of a particular per-

son; let us then bring down our rule for finding its cause. To do this, we must cast about for another analogous case, very close and striking in the likeness, "while at the same time its cause appears obvious;" and here we are met with the case of Angelique Cottin. She, when standing in relation to the earth, became so charged with a physical power as to sensibly affect tables, chairs and the like, on coming into proximity with them, so that without contact they moved — nay, were overthrown, at times, with great violence. Not only her organism, but her dress, partook of it; so that, on passing a chair, the touch of her apron was sufficient to cause a discharge that would overthrow the former. Now, if the phenomena in the two cases are to be admitted at all, this last explains thus much, undeniably — that the immediate cause is *physical*.

For the legitimacy of this deduction (admitting the two phenomena) we appeal to the decision of the scientific world,—not excepting our friend Davis, who has offered the thousand dollars reward for a natural theory of explanation.\*

Now, as we have shown in the "Philosophy of Mysterious Agents," if it be admitted that these phenomena have and do still occur, it must be by virtue of some hitherto unknown law of relation existing between the organism and external objects, and between the earth and the organism; and that, inasmuch as the phenomena take place only with particular persons, and only when these persons are under peculiar conditions, as in mediums after certain processes of nervous induction, and the bewitched after nervous derangement, it must be by some hitherto undiscovered relation between this physical agent and the nervous system. This we have demonstrated, in the "Philosophy of Mysterious

\* We would here say, in justice to Mr. Daniel Davis, above alluded to that, without our own seeking, he called upon us after the publication of the second number of "The Philosophy of Mysterious Agents," and privately renewed his assurances that the sum offered was in perfect good faith, and should be forthcoming when we had satisfied any fair number of disinterested scientific minds that we had given an adequate natural theory. He did not require that they be convinced that the phenomena really occurred.

Agents," by a close analysis and comparison of the phenomena, allowing their veritability.

Having thus arrived at the immediate agent of the phenomena, and found it a physical power belonging to the earth and to man's body,—that it charges the human organism from the earth, and acts with the physical forces of the body, and from this point, under a certain modified form, reacts upon objects standing in relation to the body; that it has association with the nerve-force of the sympathetic, the spinal, and the cephalic or brain centres, according to their conditions,—it seems somewhat apparent that the outward action of the agent must be more or less, according to the state and action of the nerve-centres where it stands at the time in the closest relation. If, for instance, it be the sympathetic and spinal systems, and these are in a state of derangement, as in hysteria and chorea (exhibited in spasms), the phenomena of the agent will be irregular, spasmodic,—the things will more or less move by starts and sudden jerks. Accordingly, we find precisely these correspondent movements to have taken place in Angelique Cottin. (For the details of this very curious case, see "Philosophy of Mysterious Agents," Chap. II.) And as for similar correspondences in the case of mediums, we have invariably observed that in all these cases where the movements of objects have taken place in the proximity of spasmodic mediums, they have acted by jerks, rather than by steady movements, as when the medium's nervous system is more harmonious. This has not only been observed by ourself, but every candid and intelligent spiritualist who has spoken upon these matters has declared the same thing.

If this correspondence between the subjective and objective phenomena obtains by virtue of a law of relation between the agent that acts upon external things and the nervous system, it should hold good as well of the cerebral centre as of the sympathetic and spinal.

Accordingly, we find that precisely as we have the harmonious cerebral condition, will be the harmonious results in the objective phenomena; thus proving that the objective



physical agent corresponds in its action to the subjective "play impulse" of the brain. For example, when any tune is played in a circle where the phenomena are confused and irregular, it has been everywhere observed that the phenomena would fall in the harmony of measured time. Now, it is impossible to play a tune in a circle without at once exciting the action of that part of the brain at which centre and from which radiate the regular succession of time impulses; and every brain in the circle standing in the mundane relation, or in relation with the "medium" brain, will propagate the time impulse; hence, there will be more unitary action in the brains of the circle during the performance of timely airs than at any other period. Hence, too, it is everywhere observed that those circles succeed the best which have the least discrepant feeling.

Thus, by a new class of observations, and their legitimate deduction, we have arrived at precisely the same result as in the previous course, namely, we have found that the objective phenomena are the representative of cerebral action. This is admitted by all the spiritualists who acknowledge that the harmony or discord of the phenomena have been observed to correspond to the harmony and unitary action of the "circle," or that no consonant results can be obtained by an unharmonious circle; and nearly every spiritual work containing anything on the rules and conduct of "circles" touches more or less upon these facts.

Now, it matters not by what name you call the physical agent that we have thus found to act directly in the production of the outward phenomena,—be it electricity, od, magnetism, diamagnetism, nerve-force; it is settled that its actions represent cerebral or cerebro-spinal movement, according to whichever the agent stands most in relation at the time, or according to whichever is most prominently disturbed.

Having arrived at the brain and spinal centres as the points of action in the disturbance of the physical agent whose action produces the phenomena under consideration, it now comes up as a matter of inquiry, concerning the nature and power of the nerve-centres, Do they possess

within themselves a power of action? In other words, have they automatic functions? If so, how far are they modified in their action by external influences, and how far may one nervous system be *sympathetically* related to another? These, and many other related questions of great importance, come up before us for investigation. Most of these, however, have been already discussed, more or less, in the "Philosophy of Mysterious Agents."

The great question we would wish to settle here is that of cerebral automatic action. The facts and deductions put forth by us in our work on this subject have lately been attacked by Rev. Charles Beecher, in his paper read before the Congregational Association of New York and Brooklyn, and demand some attention.

## CHAPTER II.

REVIEW OF REV. CHARLES BEECHER'S ARGUMENT AGAINST THE AUTOMATIC POWERS OF THE CEREBRUM, AS EXHIBITED IN THE MODERN SO CALLED "SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS."

REV. CHARLES BEECHER'S only argument against the natural explanation I have given of the "modern phenomena," and their like, is that presented to overthrow the fact of automatic cerebral action. He admits "the odylic (mesmeric-magnetic) character of the phenomena," but assumes "that spirits act in their production by *odylic* law."

The numerous phenomena presented in the "Philosophy of Mysterious Agents," demonstrating automatic and "unconscious cerebration," seem to have had no convincing weight in his mind; and I am sorry to say that he does not exhibit an over-abundance of fairness in presenting the facts and arguments I have offered on this subject. This will be particularly noticed, as we review his objections.

In Chap. IV. of his pamphlet, he sets forth the spiritual argument against the natural, thus:

"The theory of automatic cerebral action is objectionable:

"1. Because it is equally valid against the existence of the soul as distinct from the brain. If God has endowed that form of matter which composes the brain, the organs of the mind, with exactly those properties which enable it, *under whatever irritant*, to represent in its action precisely those characteristics which the mind possesses, then external irritants alone can account for all mental phe-

nomena. True, there may be an internal spiritual irritant, a soul. Dr. Rogers believes there is one. But “*a posse ad esse non valet consequentia.*” It is as unphilosophical to suppose a spiritual irritant or soul for all mental phenomena, as to suppose spiritual irritants for the manifestations, provided both can be accounted for without.”

Now, every person of common sense knows that *no a priori argument can overthrow a fact of nature*. If it can be proved, then, that automatic cerebral action is a fact of physiology, the reverend gentleman’s *a priori* objection can only prejudice the minds of a few individuals against it, as certain facts in geology and astronomy,\* as well as in physiology, have been served before it.

It remains, then, as a question of *fact*, as a matter of rigid *scientific* scrutiny, whether *automatic function is a property of the brain*. The decision of the theologian cannot affect this question in itself; and, as it is a matter of science, an appeal to *Scripture* cannot alter it.

What Mr. B. says about this cerebral power being a valid argument against the separate existence of the soul is as premature and uncalled for as the like objection made against certain facts in astronomy and geology. If his *a priori* argument for his soul cannot be sustained without his denying a palpable fact of nature, an admitted fact in science, his argument must be a rotten one, or he has no soul. For nature never lies, but *a prioris* are extremely fallible, since they are commonly founded upon conjectural or hypothetical bases. This fact may afford him some hope of finding that he has a soul.

Had Mr. B. taken the part of a disinterested investigator, instead of that of an interested and prejudiced advocate, he would have seen a great gulf between the character and tendency of my views and the arguments of absolute materialism. I have exhibited two distinct classes of human phenomena :

1. Those of a *responsible personal agent*.

\* The theory of the earth’s revolution, when first propounded, was met with a theological *a priori*. The latter, for a time, frightened many *timid* minds, but soon grew stale, and the philosopher prevailed, for he had merely asserted a simple fact of nature.



2. Those of an irresponsible automaton, or machine.

The former is as distinct from the latter as it is possible for distinction to be made; and the whole argument against the pneumatic hypothesis of the modern phenomena I have built upon the facts of this distinction. But Mr. Beecher nowhere states this in his attempted criticism of my explanation. In this he is like all the other spiritual advocates who have offered it combat—never the thing, but their hasty and distorted idea of it.

Mr. B. says (how may it frighten the Christian world!) Dr. Rogers' is precisely the argument against the "manifestations" that avowed materialists' is against the soul. To prove this, he quotes a paragraph from the "Philosophy of Mysterious Agents," and then places in juxtaposition with it a quotation from the celebrated Thomas Cooper, M. D. (formerly President of South Carolina College), in his translation of Broussais on Insanity. He then goes on to say, "Were there time, it might be shown that every point made against 'the spirits' by Dr. Rogers—for example, from drugs, sickness, insanity, intoxication, &c. &c.—is made with equal force by Dr. Cooper against the soul. The same keen thrusts are made by both. Thus, to a medium, a physician "at once prescribed a few blue pills, and then a dose of calomel and rhei; it is sufficient to say that through the medium of these smart cathartics the spirits made their exit, in high dudgeon." By the side of this is given a quotation, made by Dr. Cooper, from Judge C., in his Medical Jurisprudence:—"How can you exhibit a dose of glauber-salts to the soul?" Nor is Dr. Cooper alone," he continues. "So reason Hartley, Cabanis, Destut, Tracey, Lawrence, and others of physiological fame—so the whole class of psycho-pannichists, from Priestly down to Dobney. Nor could the disciples of the latter school in any way more effectually promote their ends than by a republication of Dr. Rogers' book condensed, with Dr. Cooper's tracts on materialism appended. The argument, therefore, proves too much, and falls to the ground."

Now, the truth is, that neither Broussais, Cooper,

Hartley, Cabanis, Destut Tracey, Lawrence, nor any of the like class of materialists, made that thorough analysis of human phenomena that true philosophy requires. Like my reverend reviewer, they "lumped the whole." But having tested a few, and found them cerebral material, they inferred that *all* were material — the mere play of nervous matter, which, when decomposed, left no trace of an immaterial entity.

Now, the only difference between Mr. Beecher and the material philosophers is in the idea he entertains that all the phenomena originating in the brain are from a spiritual and immortal entity. But he entirely agrees with them in supposing but *one* class of phenomena in this direction. Here is just where Mr. B. becomes *infidel* to me; for here it is he sides with the materialists against me. The truth is, that my view is no more opposed by Mr. B. than by the materialists themselves, excepting where the latter have taken more care to study and understand my views, and have more faithfully represented them.

So far, then, instead of my philosophy being consonant with that of materialists, it is Mr. Beecher that sides with them, in opposition to me. Why, then, should he represent me as a materialist, or as advocating materialism, denying to man an immortal spirit? What reason had he for hitching upon me that name, at which all Christendom hisses and utters anathemas? Why, he saw that on one side of my analysis of human phenomena there was a class of facts which materialists have been wont to quote as evidence that man has no "soul." Forthwith he is frightened,—smells the stench of sepulchres, dead men's bones,—stops not to examine further, but flies precipitately. He had seen enough, scented enough; 't is all death, sheer annihilation, complete destruction, and he must report it to the world; and so he tells the spiritual rappers and community that the disciples of the *material* school could not "in any way more effectually promote their ends than by a republication of Dr. Rogers' book condensed, with Dr. Cooper's tracts on materialism appended." From this, he learnedly concludes that "the argument for the natural theory of the

'manifestations,' without disembodied spirits, falls to the ground."

Strange to say, Mr. B's. fright and flight precipitate takes place at the sight of a class of *facts*\* that at this moment is being admitted, not by the material physiologists merely, but even by many who are as orthodox as himself, and as firmly hold to a distinct spiritual entity constituting man's immortal nobility. Among these, I may quote Wilkinson and Carpenter.

Is it not quite too late to raise an alarm on matters of science? Are not facts too broad-cast? Have not men heard the sound *infidel materialist* too often repeated, in reference to scientific facts, to suspect much evil? Do not these names appear now rather as badges of honor? Are not discoverers growing proud of these titles? For, on all extra occasions of their bestowment, is it not for some new and very important discovery in the sciences, or its advocacy? Have not people thought somewhat of Galileo and the Pope, Harvey and his brethren, geology and the clergy? Have not too many good things been called bad names?

It is certain, then, judging from the history of the past in these matters, that all opinion must be tried *in foro conscientiae*. *In hoc signo spes mea*.

A second objection made by Mr. Beecher against the automatic argument is, that it fails, because "*automatic contingent* operations involve a self-contradiction." This will be reviewed in a future chapter, where the fact of automatic cerebral power is further explained.

\* In a discourse against modern materialism, by John Weiss, delivered before the First Congregational Society in New Bedford, July 28, 1852, I find quite an opposite course pursued to that generally by the clergy, in treating infidel arguments. In speaking of the *facts* advanced by materialists against the independent existence of the soul, Mr. Weiss thus remarks: "It seems to me that it is as important to *acknowledge* the *facts* as it is to *deny* the *use* that is made of them; for they fill many a chasm in our scientific knowledge, and their legitimate uses promise to increase our welfare." Again, speaking of the manner of treating the materialist, he says: "It is easy to make a sweeping denial of both his facts and his conclusions; but more fatal to him to accept, if possible, the stubborn facts." By pursuing this course, the reverend gentleman has enabled himself to wield one of the most powerful arguments against materialism I have ever read.



### CHAPTER III.

A PRIORI EVIDENCE FOR THE LIVING AUTOMATON; AND  
FOR A SEPARATE ENTITY, CALLED SOUL OR SPIRIT.

THE word Automaton is from *autos*, self, and *mao*, to move, and is generally applied to a machine that has within itself the power of motion; thus, a clock is an automaton. So, by means of mechanical contrivances, M. Vaucanson constructed a flute-player, and a tabor-player, whose performances were, in some respects, superior to those of living men. One of these curious musicians was capable of playing twenty or more tunes, and in every respect its external performances were as apparently human as human nature itself. The action of the lips and of the tongue, and the movements of the fingers, had all the characteristic appearance of the most accomplished living performers. Strangers to these wooden gentlemen, when introduced, bowed very respectfully—listened to their tunes with the most absorbing interest.

Now, no one will deny that these men, made of wood, iron and sheep-skin, really *represented* intelligence in their movements, although there was not a whit of spiritual agency in them. True, the intelligent representation in these *unreasoning, involuntary, and unconscious* machines, was owing to a particular arrangement of matter.

Would it not appear a little strange (if we may be allowed to view the matter *a priori*) that man may construct an automaton out of *inanimate* matter, and the Deity not be able to make, in every respect, a superior one out

of *animate matter*? To admit this, is to grant, *a priori*, my argument; to deny it, is to grant to man superior powers than to the Deity.

It being *possible*, then, for Deity to make a *living* automaton, there is nothing at all to render the thing *improbable*, since it is, in itself, neither unholy nor unwise. In Vaucanson it was considered an evidence of the greatest constructive or mechanical genius; and he was quite deified by many people in Paris, where he exhibited the fruits of his talents.

It is *possible*, then, and not at all *improbable*, that Deity may construct *living automations*, as M. Vaucanson constructed dead ones. And it is extremely probable that the living ones could be made, all in all, very much *superior* to the dead ones.

Now, in case the Deity has formed a *living* automaton, we might find, on examining its internals, a somewhat different set of organs from those of Vaucanson's; for, in order to get moving power to make his creatures perform, Vaucanson had to resort to the law of gravity. He made use of suspended weights, and the elasticity of bodies, as in springs; and both of these, every now and then, had to be "wound up." Thus, the internals of Vaucanson's automations were weights, pulleys, springs, levers, &c. &c. The *living* automaton, however, would not have such gross machinery, but something more refined,—organs built up of minute cells, closely knit together by means of minute fibres,—and, very likely, it would take a little longer to find out all about it than to comprehend Vaucanson's. In short, according to our poor notion, the creature of the Deity would be very likely to have the characteristics and construction of an *animal*. I can see no reason why it should not.

It is certain, then, that, *a priori*, there is no argument against the idea that the *animal is a living automaton*;—a living machine, having within itself the power of motion. It follows, therefore, undeniably, that, *a priori*, so far as man is an *animal*, he may be but a *living automaton*.

One step more. In so far as man may be *more* than an *animal*, he may be *more* than a *living automaton*; and

this *more* than the living automaton may be a separate entity,—separate from, though for the time being related to, the living automaton.

Now, if this *separate entity* embodies any *higher law* than that of the *living automaton* with which it is for the time being associated, it must of consequence follow that the *separate entity, with its higher law, holds the precedence* of right, from whose decisions there is no appeal, except to the maker—the Deity. Here, then, we come at once to *personal reason, personal will, personal conscience*, as so many elements of the *separate entity*, thus being a *volitional, personal, conscious, responsible agent*.

Now for the argument that this separate entity shall preserve itself after the living automaton with which it is associated for the time being has fallen away.

Neither the boor nor the philosopher has yet found a lie in the mouth of nature. Never has there been an instinct created without reference to an object fitted for its gratification. Every primary want has been scrupulously provided for, from the beginning; so that not a germ of development in the race is left without its appropriate aliment. Christians and infidels may quibble about tenets, and notions, and dogmas; but neither can deny the above proposition, with honesty to conscience. Had there been no ambient air where birds might bathe their wings in ether, then had the birds' instincts for joyous flight been a lie of nature. Had no crystal water been created,—no lake, no river, no ocean,—then had the instincts of fishes, and of the sea-fowls, been monstrous falsehoods of nature. But the naturalist finds nothing of this to mar the blessedness of his researches. Everything proves design in adaptation. If nature tells no falsehoods to the birds, the fishes, not even to the worm, does she mock thee, O man! Endowed thee with powers above the rest of creation, created primary desires boundless, unending, has she left thee to be mocked? Given thee primary hopes of a life in an unknown and boundless future, where no life, *no* future awaits thee? Then art thou the only falsehood, the only abortion, of



creative wisdom; and in the future to answer the ends which thy higher hopes demand (His own creation), *His* wisdom sinks into commonplace human short-sightedness, and his goodness and his power of goodness into imbecility. This argument may prove nothing to the *scoffing* infidel; but, to the honest doubter, it will be sufficient to turn his mind into the channel of hopeful thought, and to the springs of a pure Christian faith.

To return to the living automaton. This being the animal machine, having within itself the power of motion, must, judging *a priori*, have its centres of animal action exactly in the brain and spinal centres. If the animal, then, including the physical man, be an automaton, we should be able inductively to arrive at this fact from an observance of phenomena. Our question, then, turns upon the *fact of automatic action in man as an animal*.

In order to be as definite and precise as possible, the reader will note that, according to the true sense of the term *automatic*, it includes all those actions which are *not voluntary* — not depending on the *will*. Says Webster, "Automatic — not voluntary; not depending on the will; applied to animal motions." Thus, even in seeking authority for the definition of the word, the reader obtains the evidence of the truth of my position.

Probably, however, Mr. Beecher has no objection to considering mere animal motions as automatic. He will doubtless grant that the spinal centres of even man are automatic, since their construction and function is precisely on the same principle of all vertebrated animals. And since, also, the sensorium of man is like the same nerve-centres of other animals, he may be willing to grant that, in one, *this animal* power may be as automatic as in the other.

But when we come to the *cerebrum* of *man*, possessed alike by the whole tribe of *mammalia*, and by some other animals below it, Mr. Beecher shrinks from comparative physiology in the matter of automatic functions, and makes man's cerebrum an exception to the general law. Thus, his argument is, virtually, — If it be granted on the part



of the human cerebrum, why, farewell to the doctrine of a separate entity for the soul. The sophistry of this reasoning has been sufficiently exposed. It may be well to add, however, as it will offer some consolation to those who may fear that if this *fact is fact* man may have no soul, that in seeking out the phenomena of *human cerebral automatic action*, a *residual* class of facts is left, that cannot be accounted for by any legitimate process, without admitting a separate entity, a *spiritual, personal, responsible agent*,—not a mere “fluid irritant in the brain,” but a veritable governor, controller, *master of automatic functions*. This fact I have everywhere recognized and built upon, in the “Philosophy of Mysterious Agents;” but Mr. Beecher disingenuously hides it in his review, supplying the omission with inimical insinuations and prejudicial comparisons, as if designing to make the doctrine of automatic cerebration, with all its facts, “a by-word and a hissing” among Christian people. If it must be so, “*chacun à son gout*.”

## CHAPTER IV.

### TESTIMONY OF PHYSIOLOGY FOR AUTOMATIC CEREBRAL ACTION.

Cerebral Elaborations. — Composite Results from the Cerebrum, without the Mind's Action. — Distinction between the pure Pneumatic Power and Automatic Cerebration.

IN Chapter Fourth, Part Second, of the "Philosophy of Mysterious Agents," the author has given the following as a deduction from stated facts: "That, inasmuch as the brain may, under peculiar conditions, act independently of the wish and the will of the 'medium,' and *even in opposition to them*, it follows that *communications* [or responses] may be obtained in direct opposition to the *will* of the 'medium,' without the (supposed) influence of departed spirits." This automatic responsiveness on the part of the cerebrum we have shown to result precisely according to the specific prevailing impression on the brain at the time, and according to its preëstablished conditions. The preëstablished conditions are, *first*, a *non-controlling* state of the voluntary agency (the mind, the will) over the brain. *Second*, a consequent readiness on the part of the brain to receive impression. *Third*, a promptness of the brain to give forth in reflex actions the language of these impressions through the medium of the automatic apparatus of the spinal centres, or by telegraphic propagation through the odyllic medium, which exist in material association with the brain, as well as with external things. See "Philosophy of Mysterious Agents," § 372. It has also been shown

“that so far as the *brain* can be made to act *independently of the mind* of a subject, so far that person will be *unconscious of the cerebral action*: that those ‘media,’ therefore, who become most ‘independent’ (as the spiritualists term it), — that is, whose cerebral organs are excited most perfectly *without* the controlling power of their *own minds*, — will be the least conscious of the real relation which they sustain to the phenomena.” Ibid, § 407; see, also, § 423.

The above position is sustained in every point by Carpenter, the celebrated physiologist of England. His language, quoted in §§ 419–20 of “Mysterious Agents,” exhibits but a moiety of what he has of late expressed in the new edition of his “Principles of Human Physiology.” In all that I have said of the automatic powers of the cerebrum, I have nowhere used any stronger or more definite language than the following, which I am happy to quote for the benefit of those minds that ask for the authority of great names. “*There is evidence*,” says he, “*that even the cerebrum may respond, as it were, automatically to impressions fitted to excite it to reflex actions, when from any cause the will is in abeyance*, and its power cannot be exerted over the muscular system, or over the direction of the thoughts.”\*

Here it will be seen, that when the condition, the “*abeyance of the will*,” or when the power of the will “cannot be exerted, either over the the muscular system, or over the direction of the thoughts,” then, by impressions made upon the cerebrum, it may be prompted to *respond automatically* to those impressions, if they happen to be fitted to excite the “*reflex*” action of the cerebrum. Now, this statement covers the vast majority of mesmeric, pathematic, and the modern so-called spiritual phenomena.

Nothing was said by Carpenter, in his former edition, of the necessary *condition* here so unequivocally expressed; namely, the *abeyance of the will*, which, the reader must perceive, is the same in meaning as that used by the author

\* See Carpenter’s Principles of Human Physiology, edition of 1853, § 684.

of this, namely, the “*non*-controlling state of the mind, or of the will,” and that also made use of by mesmerisers and spiritualists, namely, “passiveness of will,” — “passive state,” and the like.

I am ashamed to have repeated so prominent a fact so many times, without having excited the attention of Mr. Beecher and other spiritualists to its consideration. He and they have nowhere met it, nowhere named it; and I am forced to consider that both have designedly stepped aside here to avoid the gulf fatal to all their objections. And I hereby call upon the whole community to witness, that I honorably repeat the challenge for any spiritual advocate, or any of the purported communications of “media,” to meet this argument as it demands; for it is fatal to the whole theory of spiritual influence, in the involuntary writing, speaking, and pantomime of “media,” and the *quasi* intelligence in the “rappings.” It makes the cerebral condition of the so-called “media” analogous to that of the mesmerized patient, — that of a mere automatic machine; the same, also, as the brain of the clairvoyant, the dreamer, the somnambule, the insane.

Speaking of these conditions, Carpenter says, that, “whether spontaneously or artificially induced,” as in the medium and mesmeric patients, “so long as these psychical operations take place at the mere *suggestion of antecedent* impressions, so long must the actions proceeding from them be considered as *manifestations of the reflex power of the cerebrum*, and consequently as *no less automatic* in their character than are those which result from the reflex power of the cranio-spinal axis,”\* or spinal marrow.

The above statements of this eminent physiologist, just made before the medical and scientific world, express precisely the views advanced by the author several months ago, as a further application of the principle expressed by Carpenter in 1850, quoted in § 419 of the “Philosophy of Mysterious Agents,” thus: “Automatic action

\* Carpenter’s Principles, § 684, edition of 1853.



may be excited in man when the *cerebrum* is in a state of functional inactivity, as in sleep, or coma; or when the power is concentrated upon itself, as in profound thought, such as cannot be called forth when the cerebrum is in active operation, and in complete connection with the automatic centres in the spine." Again, speaking of strongly excited emotions, he says, they "may act downward upon the muscles, through the medium of the automatic apparatus, quite *independently of the will, and even in opposition to it; thus constituting a sort of REFLEX ACTION of the CEREBRAL GANGLIA.*"\*

Now, the cerebral ganglia constitute the whole upper and outer portion of the brain, found in all the higher animals. They are composed of globulous matter, from which innumerable fibres or threads extend towards the centre of the brain. In this globulous matter of the cerebrum all psycho-nervous action originates, and to it all communications are made that in any way affect the psychical agent. It is this portion of the brain that constitutes nearly all the *organs* assigned to man in the science of Gall; and, according to Baellarger, its entire surface, when its convolutions are unfolded, is six hundred and seventy square inches. Moreover, the cerebral hemispheres of man include an amount of nervous matter which is four times that of all the rest of the cranio-spinal mass;—more than eight times that of the cerebellum, or little brain, thirteen times that of the medulla oblongata, and twenty-four times that of the spinal chord.† And when the cerebrum of different animals is compared, it is found to be possessed in a superior degree by those animals most elevated in their psychical developments. It is also found that for each additional convolution of the cerebrum some additional psychical function is found: thus showing that every particular centre of the cerebrum has a particular psychical function, whose law is to propagate its influence

\* Carpenter's Principles, edition of 1850; §§ 236—470. See, also, Dunglinson, vol. i. pp. 99, 100. Also Brit. and For. Med. Rev., Jan., 1845, "Wilkinson's Human Body and its Connections," p. 40.

† Carpenter's Principles, last edit., p. 747.

down to lower centres of nervous force, such as those of the sensorium and the cranio-spinal-axis, or spinal marrow, — thence to appropriate combinations of muscles, where the outward expression takes place.

Now, the whole of this process may be gone through with, from first to last, without the slightest action of one's conscious self, — without will and without reason. Nay, even elaborate processes may take place in the convolutions of the cerebrum, equal to anything the mind itself might execute, and all without the least voluntary effort, and without the slightest knowledge, on the part of our own mind. Such processes, in fact, take place between the cerebral organs every day; and, so far as the mere animal is endowed with the higher form of brain, so far these cerebral processes take place. Hence, their results are nothing more than the relative influences of various cerebral impressions, without any real process of reasoning, such as are entered into when man voluntarily and consciously brings those impressions of the cerebrum to the test of absolute and eternal principle.

Many, doubtless, will stare at my statement, and fear for consequences; but the above is based upon innumerable facts, and, besides, it makes the only distinction between man's spiritual and animal nature that can be made; — allowing the one to be rational, voluntary, conscious, personal, and responsible; the other irrational, involuntary, sensing, animal, irresponsible.

Many assert that some animals go through reasoning processes, — as the dog, the horse, the elephant. This we deny, because it is evident that *reason* is a rational, personal, voluntary power; whereas, the real phenomena of the animal thus attributed to reason are *involuntary*, impersonal. Certainly, no one can conceive that an animal, however wise apparently, is a person. Nay, it is in the nature of things impossible for the animal to become a person, a *responsible* individuality, as it is for a bramble to become an oak. It is merely an *irresponsible* individuality. And the whole history of the human race shows that, as it has approached the animal in its charac-

teristics, it has been destitute of moral responsibility, and rational self-government.

So far as the animal brain is impressed by the external world through the various avenues of the senses, so far there is no difference between *man* and the mere animal. When the impression happens to reach no further than the centres of the spinal column, there will be a change of matter at that point, which, like the motion of an excited machine, will take place by virtue of an inherent power that belongs to that form of matter. This is called spinal automatic action; and the influence is reflexed or propagated back to appropriate muscles, which, being excited thereby, contract, and thus represent the influence exerted upon them. But if the impressions made upon the outer senses extend to the sensorium, without stopping below that point, then, providing the impression does not extend itself above the sensorium, a reflex action will be awakened here, which, passing down to the spinal centres, will act itself out, as already described above. This also belongs to the nervous power in man, as well as in other animals, and may be termed senso-motor, *sensio-spinal automatic action*.

Should, however, the impressions reach the *cerebrum*, a totally different process will take place. For, whatever may be the impression, it will propagate itself only to that point of the cerebrum to which it is most nearly related in character. Supposing it takes a point in philoprogenitiveness; at that point it excites a state of peculiar cerebral action, that may, in the lapse of an instant, have started up related influences in a hundred different points of the cerebrum, all radiating to a given centre, and as perfect as any process of crystallization. This will all be an automatic process, and the whole of it may be totally beyond the power of the mind itself to control; and it shall beautifully represent a train of connected cerebral impressions,—some made yesterday, and others “long, long ago.”

Now, if this process of cerebral elaboration, thrown into a unit, be propagated upon the organ of language, without the consciousness, and thence to the vocal organs, you



will have the phenomena of a somniloquist, or a "speaking medium;" but, if there is no outward development of this cerebral process, it will be simple dreaming. If it be propagated to the nerve-centres, exercised in the process of writing, then the phenomenon will be that of a somnographer, or of a "writing medium." If the cerebral process plays upon *imitation*, and thence upon the general muscular system, the phenomenon will be that of a somnopantomimic, or of a "pantomimic medium." If, however, the physical conditions are favorable for the propagation of the cerebral influence upon the mundane agent (as exhibited in "Philosophy of Mysterious Agents"), then the phenomena will be those of the "rapping medium."

Now, that such an unconscious process of cerebral elaboration may, and even does, take place without the influence of spirits, may be seen from the following language of the celebrated Christian physiologist whom I have already so freely quoted as authority; — "The cerebrum," says he, "may act upon impressions transmitted to it, and may *elaborate results*, such as we might have attained by the *purposive direction of our minds* to the subject, *without* any consciousness on our own parts." \*

The difficulty of finding any appropriate common term by which to express this important fact of elaborate cerebral automatic action led Carpenter to choose that of "unconscious cerebration." These processes, says he, "can scarcely be designated as *reasoning* processes, since '*unconscious reasoning*' is a contradiction in terms. The designation *unconscious cerebration* is perhaps less objectionable than any other." †

Now, a composite of any number of related cerebral impressions, or any number of related acts of the automatic cerebral centres, will represent a complex idea. Such composites are frequently "elaborated" in the cerebral centres, independently of our own spiritual agency; and often, when they make their appearance to the mind, as when we become conscious of them, we may endeavor to

\* Carpenter's Principles, edit. of 1853, § 818. † Ibid., § 819.

banish them, and with success, if the mind has control over the automatic processes of the brain. If it has not, then the process of automatic "cerebration," in working out simple or complex ideas, will continue, in spite of the spiritual power. Hence originate the thousand foolish ideas that, as is commonly expressed, "pop into one's head." Thus a man may involuntarily have a plan of dishonest gain "*rush to his mind.*" Whence came it? Why, surely, not from his own voluntary agency, which is his real and spiritual self, but from the animal power of his brain; and, as it presents itself before the gaze of the mind, the latter may cherish it, and sanction its influence, and determine upon carrying it out,—or it may condemn it, and veto its further passage. Thus again we see the vast, the immeasurable odds between the *spiritual, personal self*, and the cerebral or animal automaton. And here let the reader carefully notice that the materialists represent man as altogether the latter,—as altogether an animal automaton,—while the spiritualists deny that man is an automaton in the least, but that all the *agency* of his organism is spiritual, and consequently that every act is a spiritual act. Neither, therefore, analyze the phenomena of man, and seek for a legitimate classification, and by a rigid induction seek for the laws of human action.

Avoiding both these extremes, the author has sought the true principles of all human phenomena, not excepting the "Mysterious Manifestations." And here he would frankly appeal to the sound common sense and cool judgment of candid men, if on the present bases does not rest a satisfactory explanation of all the well-attested phenomena of the present day, as well as of the similar phenomena in mesmerism, pathetism, witchcraft, preaching mania, French prophets, &c. &c.

But, says Rev. Charles Beecher, and others who advocate the spiritual theory, "cerebral automatic *contingent* action is an *impossibility*. Therefore it can have nothing to do with the 'manifestations,' as they are contingent." This objection is very logical in form, but extremely sophistical in fact. This will be seen in what follows.

## CHAPTER V.

CAN CEREBRAL AUTOMATIC OPERATIONS BE CONTINGENT?  
ANSWER TO REV. C. BEECHER'S SECOND OBJECTION.

REV. CHARLES BEECHER, in his pamphlet, lays down, as a second objection to my explanation of modern phenomena, that "the argument fails because *automatic contingent* operations involve a self-contradiction. For brain," he continues, "to discharge sentences drilled in, is one thing; to adapt answers not drilled in, is quite another." He then refers to Vaucanson's automatic duck, that could quack, waddle, eat, digest, but not be frightened; also, to automatic musical performers, and then mixes up the whole with "galvanic helices," "electric clouds," "odic currents," "helix circles;" but adds, "If it were conceded possible (automatic contingent action), its probability is infinitesimally small, not affecting the calculus." \*

Now, although this learned reviewer has given, in his second chapter, a truthful (but very partial) outline of the author's theory, he has in other parts exhibited a very profound ignorance of the important details of the subject he attempts to treat. The least-informed spiritualist has never exhibited to the writer so great a want of cautious discrimination and analytical judgment as Mr. B., in this his second objection.

By a little careful examination, the sophistry of his whole argument will appear.

The reader should notice, first, that his premise, as a

\* Review of the "Spiritual Manifestations," &c., pp. 26-7.



universal one, is not true. It is not fact that "*automatic contingent* operations involve a *self-contradiction*." If his assertion were applied to the automatic performances of an *inanimate machine*, it would be true then only in a limited sense. For a *contingent* action is simply an unexpected, unlooked-for event, or an operation not anticipated, or not capable of being calculated upon. It is by no means an event *without a cause*; but an occurrence whose cause is hidden from sight,—whose conditions are *unknown*, or *uncertain*.

Who will pretend to deny that even a *machine*, an inorganic automaton, may be so arranged that, to every one but the contriver, its operations shall be contingent, even apparently fortuitous, and yet, absolutely, every operation be as certain, under the circumstances, as the revolution of a planet? True, a contingent event is an uncertain occurrence, made so by its dependence upon other uncertain events. But, absolutely, there is no uncertain event. Hence, absolutely, there are no contingencies. The word therefore expresses, simply, the ignorance and fallibility of man in judging of operations whose minute complex causes lie hid from his calculation. Thus, many events are now regarded as certain which were once considered as contingent. The more complicated the causation, the more apparently fortuitous or contingent is the result. So, also, when a thousand interposing influences are constantly liable to slide in, and vary results, the *appearance* of contingency is increased. Yet to one whose spiritual power grasped within the circle of its knowledge every thread of causation, even the minutest interposing influence, there would be no idea of contingency.

Mr. Beecher's proposition, therefore, applies only to a simple inanimate machine, whose construction involves but a very few principles of mechanical motion, well perceived, and whose resultant operations can readily be predicted,—a machine not liable to be influenced or affected by varied external influences. Of the automatic operations of such a mechanical structure, he may well assert that "*automatic contingent* operations involve a self-contradiction." But

when his proposition is made to apply to *animal* automatic operations, it is like poor Peter's contrary quilt, that, on being pulled over his shoulders, *would* leave his legs to freeze. As I have before shown, the principle really to be considered in this discussion is not touched by Mr. B. He hastily throws up a fortification where there is no call for war, and shoots at subjective goblins, when the real foe — a fact of nature — stands bolt upright on the parapet, challenging an arbitration by reason.

Although, as already stated, there can be no such thing as absolute contingency in nature, yet in complex causation there is an appearance of such to the human mind, instances of which will be increased in proportion to human short-sightedness. Mr. B. gives a case of *contingent* "rapping" phenomena. This, he concludes, could have had nothing to do with any automatic cerebral operations, as he had already decided that automatic cerebral contingencies are impossible, or "involve a self-contradiction."

The case is stated thus: "In a circle, the table addresses itself to a young man, A B, and says, 'I met you in Rome, George Inman.' A B remembers no such person. The table is asked to assist his memory, and replies, — 'Cigars not burn.' Yet A B remains oblivious. Nor can any of his friends who travelled with him recall any person of that name, nor any incident suggestive of incombustible cigars."

Now, what contingency was there in all this? Why, simply in the unexpected phenomena, and the unknown cause. Mr. B. must admit that A B, being in Rome, and falling in sympathy with an individual named George Inman, would certainly, in case of the latter executing any remarkable thing at the time, make an impression upon A B's cerebrum; and the event (be it a trick with an incombustible cigar) would be as faithfully impressed upon the cerebrum as the Greek, Latin, and Hebrew sentences on the brain of the servant-girl in the family of the German student. And the trick of George Inman would be impressed, together with his characteristics, and also his name, upon the brain of A B. In fact, the brain of A B would

have a phantasmic representation of the whole affair, which, at first, might be cognizable to his mind, but, after the lapse of months, or years, would be, from its trivial character, dropped, as a matter of thought, and be forgotten; still, it would be *retained* as an impress upon the brain, as a scar may remain for a lifetime. Here, then, is an old cerebral impression, but as exact and definite as if made but yesterday. Now, does Mr. Beecher assert that it is impossible, *in the nature of things*, for this impression to be transmitted or reflected from A B's brain, without his knowledge, to the brain of a person whose cerebral condition is exactly in sympathy with that of A B? There is nothing *a priori* to oppose this. It is neither impossible nor improbable. On the other hand, it is extremely probable, since, by the law of physical sympathy, when two bodies stand in a given relation to each other, the affection of one will give an impression of likeness, for the time being, to the other.

It is only required, then, that a precise relation should subsist between a "medium's" cerebrum and that of A B, — that the sympathy shall be at that point *where the old impression rests* of G I's trick at Rome; then, by the law of *cerebral sympathetic relation*, or rapport, the exact representative impression will be made to the "medium's" brain, without the consciousness of either party; for the *knowledge* of the *mind* is not the action or impression of the brain, but of the spiritual, *thinking* entity.

The reader must now see that the only contingency, or uncertainty, at this point, is in regard to the establishment of this form of specific cerebral relation or sympathy between the two individuals. That being given, all contingency vanishes; but, as that cannot be predetermined, as is well known, in the phenomena of mesmerism, pathetism, modern manifestations, there is apparent contingency as to any given result.

But again; the mutual cerebral sympathy having become established, and its specific character determined, in any given case, it becomes certain that at that instant an impression will be made by one brain upon the other. Thus



the "medium," when a medium at all, becomes cerebrally impressed with the notes which subsequently become developed in the responses. For, as Carpenter says, "The cerebrum may *respond*, as it were, *automatically to impressions fitted to excite it to reflex actions, when from any cause the WILL IS IN ABEYANCE.*"

Here the reader will notice the two important *conditions* mentioned as necessary to exist for this form of cerebral automatic action.

*First — The abeyance of the will.*

*Second — The influence of an impression fitted to excite the reflex action of the cerebral ganglia.*

Are these two conditions fulfilled in the "medium," in cases of responses? If so, the automatic argument is conclusive. Let us see.

1. The abeyance of the will. It has been demonstrated in the "Philosophy of Mysterious Agents," and every work published by the spiritualists promulgates (where directions are given with regard to "mediums"), that the all-necessary condition for the obtainment of the phenomena of the manifestations is, "abeyance of the will," a "passive state of the mind," a "non-interference of the will."

2. An impression upon the cerebrum of the medium, fitted to excite its reflex action, is necessary for automatic responses from the cerebrum. Does such an impression exist? What is it? It is that of obtaining responses, and that of being a "*medium*" for responses from the supposed persons of disembodied spirits. This impression upon the cerebrum is of that specific character that inevitably gives the general tone to the automatic phenomena. This argument is conclusive, and shows the perfect silliness of Mr. Beecher's talk about "how improbable" it may be "that automatic breaks of the odic current" should take place, and the impossibility that one out of a myriad impressions made on a brain in the Eternal City should be "rapped out." Certainly, all this, and a great deal more, mixed and crude, might well appear improbable as objective realities, and would rather be attributed, to the flippant play of the brain, than to the calm, protracted,



patient ratiocination of the mind upon the relation of facts.

If Mr. B. had studied the natural principles advanced in the "Philosophy of Mysterious Agents," he would not have found himself so puzzled as to how "a fictitious personality should obstinately reveal itself, at several successive sittings, to the chagrin of all, and should not be able to be recalled to the memory." For the whole may easily be supposed to have been but the persistence of the cerebral impression. Its not being remembered may be accounted for by the fact that countless impressions are made upon the brain that are only momentarily perceived by the mind, and are then dropped from it. What Mr. B. says with regard to the fictitious personality taking "a circuit through medium and table, back to the brain whence it started," exhibits very well the part he is disposed to act, — as an ingenious advocate, not as a cautious, candid investigator.

Again. — It would be well for the reader to notice another sophistry in Mr. B.'s objection. He says, "For the brain to discharge sentences drilled in, is one thing; to adopt answers not drilled in, is quite another." Now, the truth is, that the brain of a *man* needs no more drilling, to become impressed indelibly with a circumstance that occurs to his hearing or his eyesight, than the brain of a dog requires the same to smell a bone, or to scent a track. The canine brain, however, would require "drilling" to receive a distinctive impression of the letters of the alphabet. But the healthy cerebrum of an adult man is primarily constituted to receive distinctive impressions from everything reflected upon the retina by light, upon the drum of the ear by atmospheric vibrations, &c. &c. &c. To talk, then, about *drilling* in sentences, in order to have an automatic response from the human cerebrum, is to exhibit the want of a knowledge of facts and principles exhibited in human every-day life.

Among the numberless phenomena of mesmerism, there are thousands of instances showing that the most casual

impressions, scarcely perceptible by the mind at the time of being made, have been automatically thrown out as responses.

Now, as to the contingency or uncertainty of any particular impression being thrown out in response, when cerebral reflex action is excited, it is what any naturalist would reason out *a priori*, from the above, and from connected data. Thus, it is shown that, instead of Mr. B.'s proposition proving any objection, it is not only false as a whole, but the elements of truth that it does contain demonstrate conclusively the verity and harmony of my theory of explanation, and that the latter is founded *in the nature of things*.

For example; if it were known before-hand, by the members of a circle, precisely what influence would call forth specific responses, and they had the voluntary command of those influences, then there would be not the slightest contingency or uncertainty in the results. But this is not the case, *as a whole*. The specific impressions can be known only in a very limited number of instances, — those in which the will of one of the party can *indirectly*, though certainly, by cerebral sympathy, control the cerebrum of the "medium." In this case, the uncertainty or contingency of the results are infinitely lessened, though not entirely removed.

Thus, I have known a case where a gentleman in a room with a circle (the latter being seated around a centre-table, the former in a distant part of the room) silently, and unknown to the medium and the circle, dictated every response. When any question was asked by a member, pertaining to a supposed spirit, the response was given verbatim, as the gentleman wrote it at the instant. All but the gentleman imagined that the supposed spirit was making the response, as it *purported* to come from that fictitious source.

This gentleman found, by mere accident, that his organism stood in strong sympathetic relation with the medium's; and, though a firm spiritual believer, and having faith that he had previously received communications from his departed companion, was induced to make these experi-

ments, which, unexpectedly succeeding, led him to further observations and study. The results forced him to abandon the spiritual theory. I could give the names of half a dozen similar cases that have come to my knowledge within a very short time.

It is evident that the law of sympathy, upon which the modern *responses* are so vastly dependent, being that of the specific relation of cerebrum with cerebrum (as that of one magnetic pole to another), and this being a matter entirely beyond consciousness, or out of the mind, and entirely uncertain till known by accident, as above, the whole phenomena resulting therefrom, through automatic cerebration, are in the highest degree uncertain, or contingent. Especially is this the case when the brain of a medium is in more or less sympathy with numerous others, and subject to responsive or automatic reflex action from the unconscious cerebral influence of uncertain individuals. And still more especially when the apparently accidental presence of a friend prevents the establishment of a sympathetic relation between the responsive brain of the medium and that of another, necessary to the automatic responsive play.

For example: I have known the responses in a circle to be proceeding very promptly, then all at once cease. On sending one and another out of the circle, it has been found that the presence of a particular person (a member of the circle) had, on taking his usual seat, cut short the responses. Here was the introduction of an unexpected cross cerebral influence. It broke in upon the established cerebral sympathy between two brains, or susceptible material points. This is why persons are so often disappointed on going to a medium for responses; and why some can obtain responses, and others none.

A gentleman in Boston — who, by the way, is a strong-fisted spiritualist — informed the author, a short time since, that, on going to the circle on one occasion, he was surprised that the responses were entirely silenced, merely on his proximity to the circle. When he went out, the responses went on, commencing where they had ceased. On his entering again, they ceased for the second time.



Not one in the circle had any objections to his presence, and he was very desirous of taking a part. Here, again, was an instance of cross cerebral sympathy—a neutralizing power.

The same observation has always been made by practised mesmerizers. They know that nothing can be done with some (otherwise good) subjects when certain persons are present. "The presence of one such person" (who may be prejudiced), says Professor Gregory, in his excellent treatise, "will often deprive a lucid subject of his lucidity; nay," he continues, "this may occur from the presence of one, who, without being so prejudiced, exerts, *without knowing it*, an influence on the subject stronger than that of his magnetizer, which is thus neutralized. All this," he proceeds, "has often been stated by authors on Animal Magnetism, and every prudent exhibitor will bear it in mind. I have been informed," he continues, "on perfectly good authority, of the case of a lady, highly susceptible to the magnetic influence, who could never be magnetized *if a certain person were present.*" \*

Hence, again, the same law of cerebral sympathy, which obtains alike in mesmerism and the so-called spiritual manifestations.

Thus I have demonstrated that human, cerebral, automatic operations upon the law of sympathy, are uncertain,—contingent; and, therefore, that Rev. Charles Beecher's second objection to the natural explanation of the so-called spiritual phenomena is entirely impotent against, but, in so far as it has truth, is in favor of it.

\* Letters to a Candid Inquirer on Animal Magnetism, by Wm. Gregory, M.D., F.R.S.E., Professor of Chemistry in the University of Edinburgh. Philadelphia: Blanchard and Lea, 1851. pp. 39, 40.

Professor G., on page 383, details a very curious instance, where, from the presence of a number of susceptible subjects and two operators, the results varied in a very wonderful manner. Sir David Brewster, and other distinguished personages, were present to witness. The professor concludes that "where a powerful magnetizer is in the same room with several susceptible persons, the results are very apt to be very much confused, and experiments fail which would succeed perfectly if only one susceptible subject were present." So it is well known that when several susceptible mediums are present the results are subject to great confusion, and often entirely fail.



## CHAPTER VI.

### REVIEW OF REV. CHARLES BEECHER'S THIRD ARGUMENT, OPPOSED TO AUTOMATIC CEREBRAL OPERATIONS.

THE third argument of Rev. Mr. Beecher, in opposition to my explanations, is based upon the proposition that the attempt to carry out the principle (automatic cerebral action) consistently, pushes the mind into extravagance. This argument would be conclusive, if the notions that he represents me as advocating, in what follows his proposition, were, in reality, what I have upheld. Nowhere in the "Philosophy of Mysterious Agents," nor in any other form, has the author of this represented that, "the brain can push a door open at a distance, or project (in the sense Mr. B. indicates) odic pectra visible and audible to distant observers," &c.

The following is what I have advanced, and is the nearest approach to what Mr. B. represents me as advocating in the "Philosophy of Mysterious Agents." Thus, "Dr. Binns relates that a gentleman dreamed that he was pushing violently against the door of a certain room, in a house with which he was well acquainted; while the people in that room were, at the same time, actually alarmed by the violent pushing against the door, which it required their utmost force effectually to resist." Nothing was discovered by these persons to account for the disturbance. This account (which it was not my purpose to verify) being taken for granted as a fact, is attempted to be accounted for in accordance with the principle of cerebral

representation, through the agency of a mundane imponderable. The following is what I have said on it, out of which Mr. B. weaves his web of description :

“In the act of dreaming, as previously shown, the mind, the responsible agent, is suspended as the controlling power, and the brain, under the influence of an irritant, plays automatically. In the case above, the brain was acting in relation to a particular point of matter. Now, it is certain that the simple *action of the brain* WAS NOT *sufficient to resist the muscular force of those persons*. But the mundane imponderable, in which the brain had its play, was sufficient to have raised the house from its foundation, if thrown into concentrated action.” \*

Now, wherein is the likeness between this and what the reverend gentleman represents me as advocating as a “fact” ?

And what great extravagance is there in all this, if we grant the phenomenon and the coincident dream, and that one had any relation to the other? But Mr. B. would rather have it that it was altogether by the action of a *spiritual* agent, a going out of the soul from the body, and its contact with the door,—notwithstanding the fact that the cause of dreaming is the brain’s automatic action, while the mind’s action is suspended;—but all facts must be kicked out of the way, and rational views, plainly stated, must be distorted, in order to make room for the spiritual theory.

It is not to my purpose to overthrow the theory of the soul’s locomotion out of the body, to accomplish feats of strength prodigiously beyond its power while within its clay tenement. “Cicero” may “recognize it,” Gamblichus build upon it, Homer sing it, Socrates and Plato learnedly discourse upon it, Hippocrates doctor upon it, Aristotle philosophize it very acutely, and Mr. B. may quote *all* this *heathen* classical authority to support a modern Christian’s *opinion* against the modern scientific fact of “cerebral automatic operations;” but it is the *fact*, the veritable *principle*, that should be sought in this, as in all

\* Philosophy of Mysterious Agents, § 584.

other matters. Sooner or later it "must come." Blinding men with the quotations of classical or scriptural opinion against a modern physiological principle will have its influence momentarily upon a few minds; but *what is truth* will be the universal cry, and science—the development of the laws of nature—must triumph, even at the hazard of every cherished opinion, however dear, that has not its basis in the nature of things.

If the candid inquirer will carefully compare Mr. B.'s representations of what he calls the "automatic theory," contained in his paper, Chap. IV. with what the author has presented in the "Philosophy of Mysterious Agents," the extravagances that he talks so much of will appear rather as the creatures of his imagination; for, in justice to myself, I must say, that this gentleman has represented neither my statements nor my views. I have endeavored, in my poor way, always to state every fact explicitly, and make every deduction legitimate. If he honorably endeavored to overthrow any of these, there was a proper, a just method, certainly, to *attempt* it,—namely, to state *fairly* the author's position, and then offer some sort of arguments in refutation.

I have seen distortions of my views, similar to those I now complain of, before; but the source has, in every instance, been too contemptibly low to merit attention. But when the like things come from a *gentleman*, an accredited Christian teacher, one appointed to examine and make a just report upon the most important and exciting phenomena of the age, I cannot let the occasion pass without some rebuke, as public as the offence. But even this might be passed in silence, like the others mentioned, were it not for the fact that precisely that class of persons who, all along, have pursued this course of low prejudice and contemptible subterfuge, now quote this gentleman as of their party, and make extensive use of his name as authority.

But to return. Mr. B., after referring to Gilbert Tennent and Mrs. Hauffe as cases where mortals have held converse with the dead, then says: "If such converse with



the dead be admitted, in even one well-authenticated instance, the whole apneumatic (anti-spiritual) argument fails. With all the gross consequences, then, of the cerebral hypothesis, it is the only alternative." Then, speaking of the author's course, he considers him as judging "wisely, that the only effectual defence against pneumatic agency is to make the phenomena MATERIAL altogether."

Before proceeding further, it should be stated, explicitly, that the author holds, and has ever held, through the whole of his investigations on this subject, to a spiritual world, and to spiritual communications from that world; and that these are made not to the brain, but to the *spiritual* entity in man; and that the only fitting condition for that communion or intercommunication is *holiness of spirit*,—a pure will, a loving heart, and a teachable understanding, without which there is no true spiritualism, no heaven; with which, earth itself is heaven.

Will Mr. B. consider that this doctrine destroys the "apneumatic argument"? True, it is not "communing with the dead," which he so strenuously contends for, but communion with the living. Not by "rappings," "tip-pings," breaking furniture, fits, spasms, catalepsies, swoons, "trances," dreams of the night, or dreams of the day,—not by these, but by "*holiness*, without which no man shall see the Lord,"—by free, conscious communing,—the going forth, so to speak, of the "*spiritual mind*" into the spiritual heavens.

Are these "gross consequences of the cerebral hypothesis"? Where is the grossness?—and yet it is every whit opposed to that really gross, that vulgarly sensuous idea of the spiritual world, inculcated in the "rapping," "jerk-ing," "table-moving" theory he so learnedly advocates. If the one class of facts are spiritual, inward, known only to the consciousness of the man who experiences them, the other is gross, sensuous, MATERIAL, and are *materially* discerned. The theory that is opposed to the spirituality of the latter, and calls them by their right name,—material,—is it necessarily opposed to the other class, calling them also material?



Is it fair argument, then, when Mr. B. represents my views as virtually "implying an *impossibility* of establishing the reality of spirit communication," &c. ? The phenomena of the "rappings" are to be tried by the same rigid law of philosophizing as those of any department of nature. They are as gross, outward, palpable things, as any in chemistry, pathology or mechanics. Is the philosopher to be frightened at them because of their anomalous character ; and shun their touch, because, like many of their predecessors, they are stared at by gaping mortals as evidences of demoniacal powers ? And what if, on a rigid analysis and careful classification, it be found that the whole body of the present phenomena is most naturally accounted for by means of powers that lie within the sphere of this world,—does it follow that this overthrows all *spiritual* intercourse ? We can answer that it would be only an exceedingly *gross* and *material* spiritualism that would find itself demolished, over which who would be the mourners ?

## CHAPTER VII.

The character of Mr. Beecher's theory — Its extravagance — Its dangerous influence, if believed in and carried out in practical life.

REV. MR. BEECHER, in quoting Cicero on the absurdities of *philosophers*, did not think, perhaps, that the Roman orator might have made use of the same language in reference to the "notions" of theologians. Insinuations, however, prove nothing. Fact is what is demanded now; and, where there is much of the latter to support an argument, the less room will be left for the former.

There are several important points developed in the pamphlet under review, that every person should examine carefully before accepting. It should be noticed,

*First*, That the theory of Mr. B. is exceedingly alarming to every honest orthodox mind, and places it in the most painful position.

On one side, he represents all natural solution of the phenomena as absurd, extravagant, material, infidel. On the other, the spiritual theory as alone consistent; but making it the work of low, designing demons, "under the masterly guidance of some one mind (Satan) of fathomless ability, and fathomless guile;" weaving "the spell of exciting novelty;" exciting "the vague presentiment of boundless discovery;" and unveiling "a dazzling horizon of an elysium without a cross, where mankind shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Thus, according to Mr. B., "Satan is making the people drunk with this elixir;"

making "the millions surrender themselves to the implicit sway" of these demoniacal and diabolical powers.\*

These powers, says he,† "seek impressible subjects,—those, namely, in whom the odylic bond between soul and body is less firmly fastened, and capable of partial disadjustment. Having once been incarnate, they retain vestiges of odylic [mesmeric] adaptation; they invade, they dispossess in part, the rightful occupant, and prey upon his odylic energy. Around such subjects they throng eagerly." He even goes so far as to assert their taking possession of the "optic nerve, causing blindness;" also "of the auditory, vocal, sensational, or motor nerves, producing deafness, dumbness, palsy, contractions," &c.; or "the whole brain and nervous system, producing fierce and furious delirium."

Let this idea be impressed upon the brain of a nervous patient, and it would render all remedial influence nugatory; for every person having an abnormal condition of the nervous system is extremely impressible; in other words, "is in an odylic condition," according to Mr. B. Thousands upon thousands of such may be found throughout the United States,—how many throughout the world? All these, according to the reverend gentleman's doctrine, are certain to become, in one way or another, possessed of demons; for, "mark," says he, "*whenever odylic conditions are right, spirits can no more be repressed from communicating than water from jetting through the crevices of a dyke.*"‡ And again, he says:

"Demoniac possessions, as really as eclipses, have their law; and their law is, *that spirits of the departed, restless and miserable, and longing to get back into life, will thrust themselves in, whenever and wherever odylic conditions of the organism will let them!*"§

A sad dilemma is thus created by Mr. Beecher for every sincere orthodox mind; for, if his representations of my views, and his arguments against them, are relied upon as just and conclusive, then, either the poison of my supposed

\* Mr. Beecher's paper, p. 74.    † p. 54.    ‡ Ibid, p. 46.    § p. 52.

*materialism* must be accepted, which is certain moral death, or *his* must be accepted, which frightens to mortal death, if heartily embraced. This is, certainly, a fearful alternative. It is, however, entirely demolished, when the mind understands the true idea I have, in my poor way, tried to present to the reader. Let him study it carefully, candidly, in *all* its bearings; and if then he is forced to adopt *heartily* the demoniacal theory, let him not complain at the sad consequences upon body and brain,—let him not be surprised at increased spasmodic affections, insanity, suicide.

I would create no unnecessary alarm; but I would warn persons unacquainted with the terrible history of nervous manias not to promulgate such doctrines as I have just quoted. Let the zealous action of Cotton Mather, in 1691—2, and its sad, nay, terrible effects, be a warning to clergymen. For, when the nervous tornado is once raised, it is impossible to tell where and when it shall end.

The stand Mr. B. has taken, in this matter, so far as doctrinal opinion is concerned, is precisely that of Cotton Mather, and the Salem clergy and justices, in the witchcraft mania of Salem.

Just so far as the clerical and general opinion, in those days, favored the notion that the phenomena arose from the influence of demons, with Satan at the head, did its ravages extend. And as soon as this cerebral impression was disturbed, and ministers and people began to *doubt*, the phenomena began to *subside*. At last, when Calef, a merchant of Boston, struck the final blow at the delusion, by attacking Mr. Mather, in the case of Margaret Bule,—whom Mr. M. asserted to be *under the power of demons*,—the whole delusion was crushed. Not another case occurred to disturb the peace of the colony.

As in the days of witchcraft, so now, it will be found that as soon as people become convinced that the cause is a natural one,—so soon as its supernatural advocates have ceased to inflame the imagination of the people, and to excite those cerebral “impressions that awaken automatic reflex action,”—precisely at that moment will the present



nervous mania go down. For the law of the present is exactly that of all the nervous epidemics that have preceded it.

Let every minister in the Union preach the doctrines inculcated in Mr. Beecher's pamphlet,—let the above doctrines of his be urged home upon the imagination and brain of a believing people, as Rev. Cotton Mather, Rev. Messrs. Parris, Noyes, Hill, and others, did, from their pulpits, in the days of Salem witchcraft,—and as certain as the laws of nature are the unbending laws of God, so certain there would be one of the most terrible moral desolations sweep over this land that it has ever known.

And is it not an enlightened public sentiment that prevents so fearful a ravage? It is only so far as men's reasons have become exercised, and their intellects stored with facts and principles of nature, that they are able to resist the tide of fanaticism. But even these counter-influences have not been sufficient to prevent many from running wild with demoniacal notions. The old witchcraft-faith elements are too deeply inwrought in the texture of some organisms to be lost in a few generations, or rooted out, even by science, in a hundred years.

Yet a very great change has been produced. Once the great body of the people, high and low, attributed every unusual phenomenon, that the existing light could not readily explain, to the agency of spirits. Every man of forty years can now look back to the ghostly nursery tales, and the thousand wonders told by grand-parents and aged nurses, servants by the kitchen-corner,—the mysteries of spiritual powers, the ghost, Molly Cary, and Molly Pitcher and Captain Kidd. Every locality had its goblin; and no church-yard could be passed by a child after the twilight hour. These terrifying impressions, within a few years, had been wonderfully counteracted by more enlightened views of nature and her relations, till the "rappings." Enlightened men and reformers were rejoicing that the spreading light, and the expanding influences of civilization, were doing away entirely with the *false* influences

bequeathed by unscientific forefathers. But this could not be effectually executed. Phenomena originating under abnormal conditions in former times are being repeated in the present age; and, having passed unaccounted for, now seize upon us like an incubus. Confounded, we stand and stare; and the more we stare, the more we are fascinated and enchained. No one can call the wonder by its real name; all repeat the old — “wonders of the invisible world,” “powers of spirits.”

Lawyers, judges, ministers and doctors, walk up to scrutinize the mysterious creature. Some see it not, and forthwith go away crying “Moonshine!” Others see *something*, — watch it, catch responses, as from dead fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, wives or children. The charm takes. Ah! this wonderful fascination! — it is that of the *domestic affections*. The whisper of astonishment is heard. “O, these *are* the spirits!” — “This is my dear one talking to me!” — “I am remembered!” — “I have a guardian spirit!”

And these all went to investigate. They *heard, saw, felt*, and — what? — went home believers, each man to proselyte another, or a dozen others. And where is the investigation? Why, is it not enough that all *saw, heard, felt*, and believed? You must not *reason*, but *believe*.

For, when the question is seriously asked of any one of the crowd of believers in this kind of “spiritual communications” what *reason* they have for *believing* that the agency is that of disembodied spirit-influence, and not some power within the circle of nature, they profoundly answer it is *easier* to believe it is; — as if it is not also easier, in our ignorance, to believe that the world is *flat*, that the sun rises and sets, since it is all in accordance with the plain testimony of our senses. All a man has to do is to *look and see*, and that easily *proves* it; and “*he must believe accordingly!*”

Upon this procedure it is extremely easy to misunderstand the teachings of nature, and to attribute even the most common phenomena to the most unnatural causes. It is no more absurd to suppose or believe that the earth

is flat, and that the sun actually rises and sets, because there is the *appearance of these things*, than to suppose or believe that spirits respond through modern "media" because there is an appearance of it, and because it is easier to suppose so than to find out the real cause. No doubt the Pope was as shocked at the idea of the earth's revolution as Mr. Beecher and the spiritual brethren seem to be at the idea of cerebral automatic action. And, no doubt, many were, in those days, as completely disabled, by their anciently inherited opinion, from carefully examining and comprehending the new reasoning and conclusions, as some in modern times are from the same cause.

## CHAPTER VIII.

WHEREIN THE SPIRITUAL THEORY FAILS TO ACCOUNT FOR ANYTHING IN THESE PHENOMENA, AND OTHER MATTERS OF IMPORTANCE TO BE CONSIDERED.

MR. BEECHER, after representing the "cerebral hypothesis" as favoring pure materialism, says: "If, then, such difficulties embarrass the apneumatic hypothesis, why not adopt the pneumatic?" then immediately adds, "It is an admitted principle of science, that that theory is preferable which accounts most naturally for all the facts known. The pneumatic (spiritual) theory accounts for all facts alleged by the other theories as well as either of them, for some better, and for many which they cannot account for at all without absurdity."

Now, to speak of my own theory, I protest that Mr. B. has not represented it, but something else in my name, which he in the end calls absurd. This having been shown, and his objections completely demolished, and having shown the terrible consequences of a rigid application of his positions, and their extreme inconsistency with the principles of society, I shall now turn to consider the impossibility of philosophically or reasonably accounting for any of the phenomena of nature by the modern spiritual method of attributing them to the agency of demons.

Mr. Beecher states that "the pneumatic or spiritual theory accounts for all facts alleged by the other theories," &c. As to this, it may be answered, in the outset, that, so far is this from being the case, that no *attempt*, even, has



been made to account for *some* particular phenomena that have appeared in the "circles." Nay, indeed, they have been ignored, and in many instances been carefully hidden from the public eye and ear,—in only one instance publicly acknowledged, in part, by spiritual leaders, and then unaccounted for; and Mr. B. nowhere touches them in his report, not even by a hint, himself appearing to be ignorant of them,—showing thereby either a want of discrimination and careful observation, or a moral delinquency of which I would not think him guilty.

Mr. Beecher asserts too much, then, when he says that the spiritual theory accounts for all that the other theories account for. I deny that there has even been an *attempt* to account for all the phenomena by the so-called spiritual or pneumatic theory.

Again, I will take one other step, and deny that it is possible to account rationally for any of the modern phenomena by the supposed agency of spirits; for I venture to assert, and think it can be made clear to the candid mind, that to refer an event to a cause above the inherent powers of nature gives it no *rational* solution, but only "darkens counsel with words without knowledge."

The truth of the above is evident from the fact that the supposed personal spiritual influence here considered cannot be an *intrinsic* force of nature, operating as gravity, magnetism, electricity, light, heat, od, and the like, but an *extrinsic* agent, introducing its exceptional causative powers on the outside of nature,—which, being contrary to the order of nature, is miraculous.

Now, although a miraculous power may account, so to speak, to *faith*, it does nothing for the reason, and therefore gives no *rational* solution of any phenomenon.

True, the spiritualists deny that there is anything miraculous in the influence of spirits of the dead, in producing what otherwise are natural phenomena. But that denial amounts to nothing, since in the same breath they deny it to be an intrinsic force of nature, which is to admit its miraculous character.

To illustrate; suppose that, on the falling of a meteoric

stone, it be asserted that a spirit threw it down from heaven, this would be to refer it to an extrinsic, and therefore a miraculous cause ; and not one whit of change in the character of this would be produced by asserting that it was no miracle, in that the spirit effected it by natural powers. This would be begging the question, and running in a circle. The assertion that it was effected by a spirit throwing it from heaven would still stand as an assertion of miracle, in no way accounting for the phenomena to the reason, but leaving it as a matter of imagination and faith, without reason, without intrinsic natural law.

To suppose that the earth is upheld upon the backs of myriads of spirits, would be to suppose a miracle, inasmuch as it supposes some other than an *intrinsic* natural law affects it.

Hence, when Deity allows or ordains an *extrinsic* cause to operate upon any point of nature, the result is a miracle ; and this, being an exception to the laws of nature and of reason (which are *intrinsic*), appeals to *faith* and the imagination. It is impossible, therefore, to account *rationaly* for any phenomenon in nature by attributing it to the agency of departed spirits, or to demons, or to the devil, all of which are extrinsic to natural causation, and, therefore, to nature in her phenomenal developments.

How preposterous and absurd, then, to talk of "accounting *naturally* for all the facts" of the so-called "spiritual rappings," by attributing them to disembodied or departed spirits !

Mr. Beecher commits suicide when he says, to support himself, "It is an admitted principle of science that that theory is preferable which accounts most naturally for all the facts known." \* For, by the pneumatic theory, he can "most *naturally* account" for *none* of these phenomena, since it is most *natural to account for the facts of nature by referring them to adequate intrinsic causation*.

The method chosen by Mr. B., and the spirituals whom

\* See his paper, p. 33.

he so ably supports, snatches the work of philosophers out of legitimate hands, where, by analysis and classification, specific results are arrived at, and thrusts it into the hopper of a vulgar credulity, into which has run a constant stream of filthy superstition, since the birth of man. The only difference in the "muss" now, from its condition when King James I., Baxter, Glenvil and Mather, "tended" the hopper, in the witchcraft issue, seems to be, that in the late revival of the stream, though the contents are the same, a thin, gauzy film is cast over it, called "spiritual philosophy" or "pneumatics," that accommodates it to the times. From some cause or other, the absorbent powers, however, have become much slower than of old.

One of the most important methods of making out a case, in this book under review, is that of quoting heathen authority for the support of the opinion of demoniacal powers and their influence upon man; as if a most sublime heathen whim, new vamped, could be demonstrated by quoting a heathen's *opinion* of it. Mr. B.'s highest authority seems to be one into "whom," he says, "seems distilled the quintessence of Egyptian and Chaldee, not to say Hebrew, Greek and Roman, doctrine on this matter." Jamblichus, a disciple of "the arch-pagan, Porphyry," "after describing the *épiphanies* of the seven orders of superior beings, thus speaks of the effects on the mediums:

"Some are agitated throughout the whole body; others in some of their members; others, again, are entirely quiet. Sometimes there are pleasing harmonies, dances and according voices, and sometimes the reverse. Again, the body either appears taller, or larger, or is borne aloft through the air, or is affected by the opposite of these.' \*

"From the characteristics here and elsewhere noted by

\* Jamblichus, *De Mysteriis*. Oxonii, E. Theatro Sheldoniano, A. D. 1678. Sec. iii., c. 5. — See Review of the *Spiritual Manifestations*, read before the Congregational Association of New York and Brooklyn. By Charles Beecher, pastor of the First Congregational Church, Newark, New Jersey.



this author, it is evident that the 'mediums' now are like those of the remotest antiquity.

"Did Jamblichus, then, writing in the name of all antiquity, imagine these phenomena to result merely from a disturbance of the nervous principle? 'If prophecy be only the liberation of the diviner part of the soul,' he answers, 'or a sequestration or intensification of mind, or a more forcible and exaggerated grade of action or passion, or an acuter or more concentrated thought or fervor of soul, then might inspiration be accounted subjective.' 'Moreover, if the body, in virtue of temperament, *e. g.*, bilious or other; or on account of innate heat, cold, moisture, or any quality composite of these; or by some ethereal fluid, or by excess or defect of all these; — be considered the cause of the inspired rapture, then it might be regarded as a corporeal phenomenon, and accounted for by natural causes. Or, if it takes its origin from soul and body both, viewed as a compound, still it would be connected with both parts.'"

Even Jamblichus then indicates the possibility that certain phenomena (now called "clairvoyance," "spiritual manifestations," which were common in the priestesses of heathen temples) were *possibly* to be accounted for by natural causes, "if they depended upon conditions of soul or body, or both." Had the facts of the brain's powers, under peculiar conditions, and the natural character of the phenomena of mesmerism, clairvoyance, and the like, been known to him, he probably would have adopted the natural explanation, if his heathenism had not taken too rank a hold upon him, as it seems to upon many at the present day, who, having eyes, see not, and ears, hear not, lest their minds should be convinced, and science should heal them.

But Jamblichus lived in an age when the science of physiology, with all its startling facts of modern times, was not known. There were no enlightening rays from the heavens of investigation, to penetrate his heathen mind. Superstition held the sway, and all phenomena that the physician could not readily, by his dim taper, see to proceed from abnormal bodily functions, were at once referred



to the obsession or possession of demons. Epilepsy, chorea, hysteria, sleep-talking, sleep-writing, sleep-dancing, running, biting and barking, were all attributed, at one time, to the power of demons; more especially when the phenomenon of clairvoyance became mixed with the others. Of the latter, the unenlightened heathen Jamblichus and our enlightened Christian teacher of the nineteenth century, amid the blaze of the sun of science, say, "The cause is not in man, but in the influence of demons on man." The only difference that seems to subsist between these antipode religious representatives is, that Jamblichus, the heathen, refers reverently to the *gods* as the originating cause, and the Christian, Mr. B., to the devil. But, as our Christian teacher regards the heathen gods *as devils*, the difference vanishes, and the extremes meet. It follows, therefore, if our Christian teacher's views in his pamphlet are the exponent of the truth of Christianity, the latter is identical with heathenism. Thus heathenism and Christianity meet together, and Rev. Charles Beecher and Jamblichus kiss each other.

## CHAPTER IX.

Phenomena of Cerebral Automatic Action further considered — Analogy of the modern "Manifestations" with the Preaching Mania of Sweden — Important facts developed.

"UNCONSCIOUS cerebration," according to Carpenter, is that complex action of the cerebral organs, that takes place automatically, and without the least conscious knowledge on the part of the mind during the process. The results of such cerebral complex processes are of that nature that, when finally made manifest to the mind, appear like processes of reasoning, or the combination of ideas, depending for relation and coherence upon the particular parts of the brain which play as centres.

When any one of these automatic processes of the cerebrum is thrown down upon any of the automatic centres of the spinal system, it is expressed or represented in the play of appropriate muscles, as is seen in the somnambule, the mesmerized subject, the insane, and the medium of the present day. Hence we have our speaking mediums and our pantomimic mediums, as well as our "rappers" and "tippers."

Now, it is well known to every one familiar with the history of medicine that nearly every form of nervous derangement, especially those involving the spinal centres exhibited in spasmodic symptoms, &c. &c., may become epidemic. Hecker, in his celebrated work on the nervous epidemics of the middle ages, exhibits a great abun-

dance of facts, which show that even the cerebrum of many persons may become sympathetically affected in the same manner.

Indeed, it is a fact manifest in every case where unconscious cerebration assumes the form of an epidemic disease, that the derangement first makes its appearance in irritations of the spinal centres, giving rise to irregular, involuntary motions, leaping and jumping, spasms and convulsions.

The disease sometimes will extend no further upward than the medulla oblongata, sometimes as far upward as the sensorium. But when it reaches the convolutions of the brain — the cerebrum — the irregular spasms cease, and thenceforth the action of the muscles exhibits the characteristics of psychical influence.

In an age of ignorance, or in a community where science has not shed her light, it is to be expected that such strange phenomena as naturally appear in nervous epidemics, or even in single cases, where unconscious cerebration takes place to any prominent *abnormal* degree, would be attributed to supernatural agencies, to holy or diabolical demons, or to the Supreme Deity. Hence the phenomena of the French prophets, of witchcraft, and of modern manifestations, have their supernatural advocates.

It would be an interesting consideration here to observe those phenomena of automatic cerebration which show the influence of popular notions on the cerebral organs. In the days of witchcraft, for instance, the phenomena of that epidemic perfectly represented the impressions which had been made upon the brains of children in the nursery. At the present day we have exhibited (in the general phenomena) the general notion impressed upon the "medium's" brain.

But it is my design here to show the involuntary and unconscious cerebration in another form of nervous epidemic, namely, the preaching mania of Sweden,— a very interesting account of which has been given by the learned and judicious Dr. J. A. Butsch, Bishop of Skura, in Westgöthland.

The bishop noticed that the preaching phenomena accompanied a certain bodily sickness; but he unfortunately has given us but a few of the symptoms of the latter. He, however, states that its phenomena were "like the effects of animal magnetism."

With regard to its origin and history something may be said hereafter. It is sufficient to observe, at present, that it commenced under a religious excitement, and spread like an epidemic. Starting from a point in Southern Sweden, it extended itself rapidly in every direction. One person would be seized with it on seeing another affected. From its peculiar characteristic phenomenon, it was called the preaching epidemic.

The bishop mentions that one of the most striking and early symptoms was, that the persons were affected *against their will, with quaking fits*; and then, he says, when subject to immediate medical treatment, soon recovered.

In describing the commencement of their state, they complained of certain pains, and other physical symptoms. He says that he "carefully studied the effect of sulphur and the magnet upon several of the sick persons; and found symptoms of the preaching epidemic to correspond with the effect of animal magnetism, as given in Kluge's work on that subject.

"In both cases," he says, "there was an increase of activity of the *nervous and muscular system*, *prickling sensation* in the *extremities* (analogous symptoms to those experienced by our "mediums"), "*convulsions* and quakings, and they seemed predisposed for *visions* and *predilections*. Some families were more predisposed to it than others, and it prevailed more among *children* and *females* than in grown-up persons and men. Among the men, those of a *sanguine, choleric* temperament seemed most susceptible," which appears to be generally the case in the present epidemic of this country.

As to the character of the language used in the "preaching" he says: "Whatever the origin of the disease may be, it characterizes itself by Christian language, and makes its appearance with many truly Christian thoughts and



feelings;" and that, "probably, the disease has *universally met with something Christian, previously implanted in the heart, to which it has, in an exciting way, allied itself.*" And he adds, in another place, "that to give a complete and detailed description of the nature of the disease would be difficult, *because, like animal magnetism, it seems to be infinite in its modification and form.*" We see this in the present "manifestations."

As in the present phenomena, most of those who became inducted (as our "mediums" are) were generally affected in the outset with "certain *quakings* and *irregular involuntary movements*, and the spasms or motions were instigated at the *mention of certain words*, the *introduction of certain ideas*, and especially that of their being inspired of God, influenced by guardian spirits with us." This of itself was sufficient to induct some. Susceptible persons become mediums by merely being told that they *will* be "*mediums*," or by simply giving them the "Spiritual Philosopher" to read, or "Supernal Theology," or any like reading; or by telling them they are being magnetized by spirits. The brains of some of those affected with the "preaching mania" became so susceptible to the influence of certain words, that, when spoken, the children acted as if under the power of demons. The word *no* affected them all, and was described by them as "*one of the worst demons, tied with the chains of darkness, in the deepest abyss.*" It was remarked, also, that they frequently acted as if they had a strong temptation to speak *falsehood.*" The same phenomenon appears amongst us.

Let us mark here, particularly, that in this form of the phenomena all the movements and motions and speeches were entirely *without the will* and consciousness; so that the persons thus affected, on coming out of this condition, were not aware of what had been done, except in some particular instances, and then they would say they could not help it. This is according to the law of "*unconscious cerebration.*"

There were two stages of the disease: the first was

pantomimic, or that in which gestures and certain representative movements of the body prevailed. The first part of this was characterized by *irregular movements*, and this passed into the regular, where every action became beautiful in the extreme, in many cases. Of this stage of the disorder we are to speak more particularly in another work, where I shall treat upon the pantomimic phenomena in the manifestations of the present day.

The second stage was that which characterizes the "*speaking mediums*" among us. "This was characterized," says Mrs. Mary Howitt,\* "by a beautiful calmness and quietness of demeanor and countenance, and with (as in the case of one child) her arms folded meekly on her breast, she began to preach. Her manner in speaking was that of the purest oratory; her tones were earnest and solemn." The language was of an elevated character, much above what could have been uttered in the normal condition, indicating an intense excitement of the organs of ideality, language and reverence.

"*The bishop tells us that these children were cured by medicines which he himself procured for them.*" Here we see the fact which we have exhibited in the "Philosophy of Mysterious Agents," namely, that the abnormal state, wherein the *organs* of the cerebrum are made to play automatically upon the spinal centres, depends in all cases upon a *specific condition* of the nervous centres, wherein the *will*, reason and consciousness, have nothing to do, being thrown into a neutral or inactive state; and that as soon as the *voluntary* agency is by any means (by disease or the influence of individuals) made passive, all the organs of the brain are left to the perfect control of whatsoever specific impressions have been or are made, at the time, upon the brain. Then its automatic action is inevitable.

Now, we have already seen that not only may a little medicine, which acts specifically on those nerve-centres, produce that condition, but, when they are *in* that condi-

\* See Appendix, A A, in *Man's Nature, &c.*, by Atkinson & Martineau, page 392.

tion, a simple dose will often *remove it*; and, as in the case of Julia, the medium mentioned in *Supernal Theology*, a specific form of disease setting in will destroy the power of the medium.

Another thing proving the sympathetic influence of surrounding persons is, that, when these individuals are removed from all those who entertain a superstitious notion with regard to the phenomena, or from those who, by their special attention, show a desire to have them manifested, the phenomena invariably decline, unless arising from some form of settled chronic disease of the brain.

Those subjects of the preaching epidemic, mentioned by the bishop, "that were carried to the *hospital*, immediately recovered." Thus, he says, "Many of the 'quaking people' were taken to the hospital, and, *on their arrival, they were found to be free from any symptoms of the disease whatever*; but, scarcely had they *returned home*," he continues, "*when it again appeared in its full force*." This is exactly the case with many forms of insanity; and we have seen it in cases of the manifestations. There is an influence in certain associations which is sure, under favorable circumstances, to induce powerful unconscious cerebration in some persons. Indeed, every action of a man that is not determined in his consciousness by his will is *automatic*, according to the demonstrations of Carpenter; and is more or less a departure from the law of his *manhood*, according to the extent to which it governs and controls his life.

Where the brain is in its normal condition, or undiseased, and we know — as we always should endeavor to — what are the influences that are operating upon us from without, that noble power, the will, can easily withstand the influence that would break down our manhood, and convert us into automatons. Hence the bishop's remark: "Many individuals, by means of a firm *will*, and a *faithful endeavor to counteract* it, succeeded in doing so. Others, on the contrary, from their *belief of the disease being of a divine character* [as though God would demolish his noblest workmanship, the governing power of the person],



became predisposed for the contagion, both bodily and mentally; and thus, being attacked, helped to make it worse, by their own superstition, and submission to it."

And this is precisely the fact of all nervous epidemics. The subjects of it bow to the influence, as if it were from God or spirits of the dead, and immediately fall a prey.

The preaching epidemic, like the manifestations of the present, depended upon a *submission* of the self-conscious governing power of the mind. This was the necessary condition upon which it commenced; and its continuance depends upon the fulfilment of such sensuous conditions. Not a phenomenon of the "manifestations" could be evolved without them.

The like we have shown to hold good of mesmeric phenomena; and, indeed, of all automatic action of the brain,—namely, *non-interference of the will*. Hence it matters not whether a man believes he is being magnetized by a man or by a spirit. The *submission to an impression* is the thing; and the physical result depends upon it; so that the outward instrument is only a small part. The means may be insignificant;—only the tick of an insect, if the reason and the will yield to the cerebral impression, which is *involuntarily* suggested, may convert him into a puling, druling idiot. Or, it may be that the mere twitching of a muscle, or the spasm of the little finger, may suggest to *ideality* and *wonder* that a spirit is trying to magnetize the body; and, if the self-conscious reason and governing will are made passive, or suspended in their government, that idea, that impression, will do the work, even were there no spirits in the wide universe. It is manifest folly, then, to attribute that to spirits which has been done thousands of times without them. See the following:

A writer from Bridgeport (Ct.) says: \* "The spirits entrance numbers of the circle. Last night we met at Brother Mettler's, and the spirits entranced Rev. S. B.

\* See Spirit World, vol. II. p. 22.



Brittain ; and he gave a beautiful lecture while in that state. Mrs. Mettler is also often entranced by spirits," &c.

Now, S. B. Brittain is naturally a lecturer. His cerebral organs are very active ; and we do not see why they may not as readily play automatically as any other brain, especially when he tamely resigns his personal government, his will and reason, as a common mesmeric subject.

## CONCLUSION.

HAVING extended this discussion as far as present limits will allow, without scarcely touching the magazine of reserved facts the author possesses on this subject, he may notice that, at some future period, he will present to the public what he has in store. Meantime, it should be felt by every one who has any interest in these phenomena, and witnesses them, to move cautiously, and in no case press the condition of "mediumship" too far, as it is dangerous. Let it be marked that *it is tampering with the brain*. An abundance of facts demonstrating its insane and idiotic tendency can be offered. These facts shall in due time appear. Men in responsible stations, who advocate the spiritual theory in these things, incur a fearful responsibility. "Posterity will have more light to judge ye; honest," they may say; "but, weak and ——— Let the children fill that blank. Remember the impetuous but honest Cotton Mather, Sir Matthew Hale, Richard Baxter !

Before closing, I may say something of the animal *individuality* of the brain, in contradistinction from the spiritual personality that inhabits it in man, and constitutes his nobility.

It is in the nature of every nervous organization to have a *sense of individuality*; and this corresponds to the mind's conscious personality.

The brain of man has its *sense of individuality*, in the same manner that every other animal has. This proposition cannot be denied, since sensuous individuality is predicable of every cerebral conformation, and becomes more notoriously apparent in phenomenal exhibition in proportion

to the extent and elevated character of the cerebral convolutions.

It follows from this that *man's* cerebral sense of individuality is as much more extensive, as to the range of cerebral functions which it embraces beyond the lower animals, as the cerebrum of man is more comprehensive than that of the animals below him.

The *sense of individuality* stands for the animal what the sense of personality stands for in the spirit of man. Still, in the man, there abides the animal sense of individuality with the spirit's consciousness of personality. It must, therefore, follow, from this, that, when the latter acts in perfect harmony with the former,—when, in other words, the spirit's consciousness of personality acts in the animal sense of individuality,—the two parts, or beings, that constitute man, act as one being, as one responsible personality.

There are conditions, however, wherein the action of the *personal* self is suspended, and the animal individuality is left to act without it;—that is, the animal organs, the convolutions of the brain, play their part without the *personal* sanctions. In all such cases there is not the least responsibility in the deeds performed. This is seen in the states of insanity, natural or spontaneous somnambulism and clairvoyance, mesmeric phenomena, and the phenomena of the modern and ancient medium.

It is only when the personality determines the act that there is any responsibility in it; for no other are rational actions: no other have the sanctions of the responsible I, myself, the spiritual nature. The outward act must be performed by the animal force, in every case; but it is only when the personal, spiritual self, acts in or with and prompts the individual, animal self, that the outward act has any moral character.

The moral character of any deed lies in the fact that the *personal, spiritual* self has prompted or sanctioned it. Hence it is seen that the mere excitement of the brain, and its exhibitions in phenomenal display, are by no means spiritual, even though the phenomena may exhibit never so great an amount of intelligent representation; for the

brain has the inherent power of intelligent *representation* in every act it performs upon the spinal axis. And how much more has it the power of intelligent representation in its acts, since manifold and innumerable *impressions* have been made upon it, both by the external world and by the previous acts of the mind itself!

Mystics and ignorant persons are apt to attribute the acts of the brain to the acts of the mind,—as if the brain was the mind, or the mind the brain. A superficial class of philosophers do the same thing. They talk of immortality in the language of materialists, and deny, with the latter, that nature gives evidence of the immortality of the soul.

Nature never lies. If she teaches only materiality, it is useless to seek any evidence against her testimony; for there is nothing in time that does not stand within the circle of nature. A revelation from Heaven must come within this circle, or it cannot come to the *mind* of man; for the mind of man stands as a power *in nature*, and whatever comes to it must, therefore, come *into nature*. Hence, to deny that nature teaches the immortality of the soul, is to deny that anything *in time* teaches it.





# ELECTRICITY IN DISEASE.

**DR. E. C. ROGERS,**

**MEDICAL ELECTRICIAN,**

**NO. 34 TREMONT ROW, BOSTON,**

Would respectfully inform his friends and the public, that he has opened his Office in the city for the purpose of applying imponderable agencies in cases of disease. As he has devoted great care and attention to the action of Electricity, Electro-Magnetism, Magnetism, Dia-magnetism or Od, and Magnetic Electricity, to the organism, and observed the curative as well as abnormal effects in a great number of cases, he feels assured of exciting the attention of discriminating minds to his method, which differs, as a whole, from that of all other medical electricians, being the result of his own experiments and observations for several years:—

In the first place, as to the manner of applying the secondary current of the common electro-magnetic machine in nervous and rheumatic affections. Second: As to the method of making use of the primary current of the galvanic battery—making use of volume and intensity according to the peculiarity of the case. In order to reap all the advantages possible in this department of electric treatment, he has constructed a battery of over fifty elements, divided into numerous series, any number of which may be applied to the patient with the most perfect ease, and with the most happy results.

Third: In whatever form he applies the electric agency, whether in the pure galvanic, the electro-magnetic, the magneto-electric, or the magnetic, he can direct it upon the most nervous patients, effectually, without the least sense of shock or discomfort—an extremely important consideration in all such cases.

The following affections he has found most readily to yield under his method. Nervous debility, with sinking about the pit of the stomach, trembling, vertigo; pain in the head; weakness and pain in the back and loins; chlorosis; constipation; suppression of other natural discharges, as well as too frequent or abundant; piles, blind and bleeding; spasms, where not the result of *organic* disease; incipient curvation of the spine; cramps of the muscles; rheumatism; gout; paralysis; many diseases of the eyes and ears; ague; tardy recovery from bruises and sprains; many affections of the throat; bronchitis; soreness and pain of the muscles of the chest; nervous cough; neuralgia; sleep waking, and other functional disorders of the brain and nerves, &c.

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OFFICE HOURS from 9 A. M. to 4½ P. M.

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N. B.—Physicians are cordially invited to call and examine instruments. All cases they may deem proper to place under his care, as to the application of electricity, shall be treated with strict reference to professional etiquette.

**E. C. ROGERS,**

*Med. Electrician.*