

A PRACTICAL INVESTIGATION

INTO THE TRUTH OF

CLAIRVOYANCE.

CONTAINING

REVELATIONS OF THE FATE OF SIR JOHN FRANKLIN,

AND

SOME INQUIRY INTO THE MYSTERIOUS RAPPINGS
OF THE PRESENT DAY.

BY

AN UNPREJUDICED OBSERVER.

LONDON :

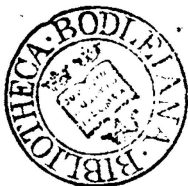
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INTRODUCTION.

MESMERISM has so long occupied the attention of serious and intelligent people, and so firm are the convictions of a large class of the *educated* community upon the subject, that the man, who respects his own judgment, may no longer treat the science as the visionary dream of enthusiasts, worthy alone of a laugh or sneer.

The friends of Mesmerism have ever urged its claims as a most efficacious remedial agency, and the proof they adduce in support of this position, is all but conclusive to the unprejudiced inquirer. But

this branch of the subject, together with the numerous instances of painless surgical operations, is better left in the hands of those inquirers who have devoted years of study to many various, and, humanly speaking, incurable cases.

My wish alone is to speak of facts—to support no foregone conclusion—to draw no inference, but simply, to note down what has come under my personal observation in my own family, and to give these facts to the public as an independent witness, a partizan to no theory, a defender of no class.

The reader will be able to see in the course of these few pages, how far the pretensions of mesmerists are sustained by the experience and testimony of a witness, who, until he experimented for himself, was entirely ignorant of Mesmerism and its alleged phenomena; not even aware that curative properties were claimed for it.

My experiments relate chiefly to clairvoyance, and although I have not failed to notice the many curious and most interesting collateral phenomena—such as, insensibility to pain, community of taste and feeling, *instantaneous* relief from distressing aches—yet, I am willing to regard these not as facts, of which we can be positively certain, but rather as inferences, about which opinions may differ. Besides, long and varied experience should be brought to bear in determining such conclusions. This sort of experience I have not. I deal alone with what are either facts or are not—with truth or falsehood.

It will easily be seen, what must have become of my convictions in the existence of such a power as clairvoyance, and how my knowledge of the truth of this power led me into an investigation of what appear to be the closely allied phenomena of table-turning and mysterious rappings.

The account which I will append of these extraordinary circumstances shall be temperate and unprejudiced.

Having been enabled, by accident, to witness them very often in many places, but especially in my own house, I think that such evidence may be received without the suspicion of fraud, and perhaps assist the public in forming their judgment on a subject, which, I must own, is too strange to meet with ready credence.

It is not with the intention of entering into any controversy, or of attacking anybody's opinion, that I now write; I have but one thing to do—to let my words bear the impress of truth, that the force which truth inspires may be given to them.

Neither is it my wish to adopt any theory in explanation of these phenomena; they are yet in their infancy, but every day adds some new feature to assist us in coming

to a rational and satisfactory conclusion as to their origin.

It may appear to the reader that in putting my questions, I have treated the matter as if it was undoubtedly spiritual, but if he hereafter should acquire any practical knowledge on the subject, he will find that the phenomena, being intelligent, impose conditions which the inquirer *must* comply with, if he would prosecute his investigation with any hope of success.

As my first experience of the more advanced "manifestations" was acquired through the mediumship of Mrs. Hayden, and as the public has been taught to look upon her with much suspicion, it may not be out of place to express my moral certainty of the genuine nature of the phenomena which occur in her presence.

This opinion is not founded upon a superficial examination of one or two hours' duration, but is the result of almost

daily experience, extended over a period of eight months. I have endeavoured to embrace all the phases of mediumship in my knowledge:—table-moving, with and without contact, intelligently and unintelligently; answering mental questions correctly through the involuntary writing; spontaneous somnambulism and clairvoyance, quite distinct in its characteristics from mesmeric somnambulism; and, lastly, the rarer form of raps, into which all the others at times merge more or less perfectly.

Another point, of which only those are able to judge who have paid sufficient attention to the facts, is the induction of “sensitives” into these powers, after they have been in contact with some person in whom these powers are already developed.

This induction seems to follow some law of nervous epidemics, and we commit a

most serious error when we attempt to reason without a knowledge of it.

I know, personally, ten instances where individuals, after visiting Mrs. Hayden, have been inducted into the same powers which she possesses, though perhaps in a less degree.

Mesmeric patients seem to be more easily inducted than others. This leads us to ask, are not all these "manifestations" mesmeric? But with equal justice we may ask, is not Mesmerism a minor phase, gradually paving the way to the further developement of these phenomena? That some close connexion exists is highly probable. My own experience furnishes me with a proof of this. Occasionally, when I mesmerize, heavy blows, as if with a fist, are struck on a table or other piece of furniture; at other times, detonations appear to be made in the air some two or three feet above my head, and descend until they take the form

of raps on the table at which I may be sitting (but not necessarily touching), or on the book or paper that I am reading.

If we examine the arguments adduced to prove the non-existence of these phenomena, we shall find that they all merge into one comprehensive and triumphant word—impossibility. This is neither creditable to our modesty, or to our power of drawing just conclusions from the teachings of all time. The impossibility of yesterday is the certainty of to-day. How, then, may we judge of what the morrow will bring forth?

Reader! one word with you and I have done. Reader, are you prepared to deny what honest and intelligent men state, merely because your knowledge does not reach to the facts they narrate. Have you that weakness of pride in your own infallibility that your brother's word bears with it no value to your mind? Have you no room left for charity or belief in the *know-*

ledge of another when opposed to your *opinions*? Nay; not so! For the sake of common sense and a decent regard to justice, let us rather believe, when serious men, who have no motive to deceive, tell you things as *facts*, that you will place more reliance upon their statements, than upon the contradictions of others, who from the necessity of the case must speak from ignorance.

If no amount of evidence can establish new facts, what is to become of the accumulated and accumulating knowledge of the world? Is each investigator at liberty to reject all this knowledge until he can prove it personally for himself? and if he has not time or disposition to investigate, may he say, "*it is impossible, I do not believe it?*"

There is a curious point connected with painless surgical operations which illustrates these remarks.

Without exception, I believe it will be

found that the testimony to these operations under Mesmerism has come from *eye-witnesses*, and the opposing statements from persons who were *not* present. To which side we ought to give credence hardly admits of a doubt. All reasonable men would most certainly rather place reliance on those who *know they know*, than on those who *think they know*.

Conflicting statements must be sifted on this as well as on every other subject; but those witnesses who have only speculations and opinions to offer, must be turned down from the stand with the *contempt* that their presumption demands. This is the reasonable course, open to us all. May we be honest enough to adopt it.

PRACTICAL INVESTIGATION
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TRUTH OF CLAIRVOYANCE.

CHAPTER I.

MESMERISM AS A CURATIVE AGENCY.

As in my introductory remarks I stated my intention to confine myself simply and purely to things that have come under my observation as facts, I am precluded from saying I *know* Mesmerism to be the powerful remedial measure which it is claimed to be. Nor would any deductions of mine add weight to the statements of the many

upright and honest men who have preceded me. It only remains for me then, in this short chapter, to give a slight sketch of a most painful case of illness, and the complete recovery of the patient after a course of mesmeric treatment unassisted by the lights of medical science.

Rheumatism, in its most painfully aggravated form, had reduced the patient of whom I speak to almost the last stage of hopelessness. A chronic disease of the glands of the neck, accompanied by neuralgia, seemed to bid defiance equally to change of climate and medical advice. As the powers of life wasted away, the stomach began to refuse its offices. Nervous agitations, sleepless nights supervened. Opium and morphine were administered, and soon banished the little appetite and power of digestion that remained. Helpless in bed, unable to move head or limbs, racked with pain, and wild with nervous

apprehensions, lay the poor patient. Sleep or death her prayer.

As I sat reading by her bedside, I passed my hand, scarcely without a motive, certainly without the expectation of any result, gently over hers without contact. As I went on making these all but unconscious passes, my mind occupied with the book that I was reading aloud, she interrupted me by complaining of a peculiar and disagreeable sensation of tingling in her fingers, wrist, and then elbow. In a few moments this feeling passed off, and a pleasant degree of warmth took its place. The blood, as she expressed it, seemed to be once again circulating in her limb.

She tried to raise her hand and fingers, but to our surprise, if not fright, they were as if glued to the bed. This passed off too, and left behind an unwonted and natural glow.

At her request, I made passes over her

head and neck, to see if I could induce the same agreeable sensation there. In a few minutes her eyes closed, and in an indistinct manner she begged me to go on, as she felt greatly soothed, and the pain was abating. I continued; but how can I tell my emotions, when I saw her arms relax, and her head, for the first time in three years, without assistance gently turn over on the pillow! I spoke, she roused with a start. That night she slept! and, for a period of eighteen months has enjoyed uninterrupted and refreshing repose, freedom from pain, and, compared with her former state, almost robust health.

Dr. Gregory's book on Mesmerism, was the only work I had heard of; I hastened to procure it, and to the judicious, simple, and practical advice contained in it, I shall ever be ready to tender my most heartfelt thanks. Having made myself master of its contents, I was guided by its precepts,

sons to yield readily during a natural sleep.

Still distrusting the evidence laid before me, I sought for other cases. I soon found several, and in no one instance did I fail to induce sleep, and to banish the pain under which the patients were labouring. In two of these cases, the persons had no knowledge whatever of Mesmerism, never having heard of it, yet the effect was as prompt and decided as if they had been mesmerized all their lives.

I will draw no inferences, but I will briefly recapitulate.

A patient cannot move her head without assistance, or suffering the most exquisite pain ; she has no appetite, *no sleep* by night or day. Passes are made over her almost accidentally, by one who knew no more of Mesmerism than she did ; she closes her eyes, and her head turns gently and naturally on her pillow, an utter impos-

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made, might have been gathered from the mind of the questioner.

Chapter III. : Clairvoyance proper, where nothing at all is known to the questioner.

Chapter IV. : Clairvoyance mixed, where the questioner has some knowledge of part of the subject under examination.

pendently ; but as thought-reading is the simpler and most natural solution, perhaps it would be better to adopt it. Passing over scores of minor instances, I will select three cases, in which some person in the room had a knowledge of who was the writer of the letter employed to test the clairvoyant.

In a dark room, a gentleman placed in my hands a letter ; without looking at it, I put it under the somnambule's foot. A few minutes elapsed, when the somnambule spoke, and gave us a description of a court, a king and queen conversing in German, and not to dwell too long on all the particulars, we recognized George III. and Queen Caroline. Lights were brought in, I opened the letter, and read it. It was an autograph of George III., dated 1786.

The same experiment was tried with a letter of the Duke of Wellington, under the same conditions, and the success was as

instance discovered in the dark room who was the writer of every letter, when I, the questioner, knew not but what these letters might have been blank pieces of paper.

I do not insist that the information conveyed to us was in consequence of clairvoyance proper. All of it except a knowledge of who was the writer of the letter, might have been previously known to the clairvoyant. It is needless to multiply cases; a few instances, when above suspicion, are as good as many.

CHAPTER IV.

CLAIRVOYANCE MIXED.

THE instances to be mentioned, I have classed under the head of clairvoyance mixed, because I have always had a knowledge of who were the writers of the letters which might happen to be the subject of examination, but no knowledge of the acts they were engaged in as narrated by the clairvoyant.

Almost the first instance of clairvoyance that came under my notice was occasioned by a little child coming into the room with

clairvoyant to be at that moment dining out. All the accompanying circumstances were mentioned, the number of the ladies, their personal appearance, and style of dress, even to the subjects of conversation.

On the instant I sent the statement to my friend, and from his reply, found it in all its leading features most correct. The inaccuracies (and inaccuracies, more or less, are always to be expected) consisted in relating different epochs of the individual's life as co-existing.

A few evenings subsequently I again introduced the picture of the same friend. "He is standing at a drawing-room door, brushing his hair; he leads the lady of the house in to dinner. The master of the house is there. (A minute description of him.) Your friend is sitting next to the lady of the house, &c. Such and such dishes and fruits for dinner, &c." Even whilst my friend was at dinner I sent off

patient had ever seen General Sir —— or Lady ——, or known them as friends or acquaintances of my correspondent. We neither of us knew where the gentleman in question would dine that day, or with whom; so that imagination, sympathy, suggestion, are entirely excluded from bearing any part in explanation of the above *facts*.

Desirous to ascertain if light was necessary to enable the clairvoyant to obtain perception of distant objects, I arranged with a gentleman abroad, that at a certain hour he should do some unusual act in a dark room.

At the hour appointed, the somnambule *went* in search of him, found him, and declared him to have "something on his head—not his hat; that he had a picture—the picture of a lady—which he kept under lock and key." Enough was said to identify the picture. In her normal state the somnambule did not know that

She barely touched it, and exclaimed: "You did not get this letter to-day; it came from a great distance—from over the seas." She then proceeded to describe to me the appearance of the writer's house, the disposition of the rooms, the relationship in which she stood to me, and finished her narration by saying: "The house is shut up; she was ill; *she has gone away.** I saw her walking in a garden, she fell down, and went away very soon."

Twelve days *after* this I received a letter from America announcing the death of this relative. I copy this paragraph from the letter: "Nine days before her death, she fell whilst walking on a path near the house, and broke her leg."

It is hardly within the bounds of possibility to regard this as a coincidence, but when we look further, and see the same

Her usual way of saying that a person is dead.

no views of her own to support, and takes no deeper interest in the matter than the generality of feeling-hearted persons. I procured then a letter of Sir John Franklin, and placed it in the clairvoyant's hand. The following remarkable answers were elicited by the questions which I put.

Q. I put a letter in your hand, can you tell me anything about it?

A. Have you put salt on it? * I never saw the writer.

Q. Is it from a man or a woman?

A. And I never will.

Q. Why not?

A. I think nobody will ever see him again.

Q. Is the writer a man or woman?

A. A man.

Q. Can you tell me where he is now?

A. He is down in the water; all of them, when I saw them.

* This letter was not written at sea, but in London.

will never hear any more of them. They will never be found in all the places where they are looking for them. They left no paper, they did not mean to go for some time; but the water came open, and they went away quickly.

A few days afterwards I renewed the subject.

A. The writer of that letter was a man; he has gone away (died). He was a traveller, and went to great distances. It pricks my hand, I do not like to hold it. I saw him leave this country. The ships stopped at several places. The ice froze his ship up, and they went on shore, and put up tents and sort of houses. The ship did not come to the land, but was not far off. It was very cold, while they were on the land. They did not leave any paper; they would have done so, but when the water came open, they gathered up their things and hastened away. I saw

I could keep them in sight all the time. The raps began, and were much louder and more emphatic than on my former visit. My first question was put mentally, as indeed were all my others. "What is the real name of the place to which I must address the letter which the involuntary motion of my hand has directed me to write?" "Frontunac," was very slowly rapped out to me. As the raps persisted in giving me this word, I desisted from the inquiry, and *mentally* requested that the table should be moved in conformity with the statement made to me in writing at my own house. Scarcely had the idea been formed in my mind, when the table, a large centre one, turned half-way round. I motioned the medium away, beyond the possibility of reach; got up myself and changed my seat; and in a few seconds the table moved in an undulating manner, a distance of four to five feet up to the

drew involuntarily a figure resembling a large U, and wrote "Frontunac." I thought, What can this figure mean? when the word "lake" was at once written. I instantly understood what was meant, and my hand responding to my thought, wrote "Yes, yes, yes, Fond du lac;" Frontunac had been meant for "Fond du lac."

It seems to me to be in place here to give the sequel to this strange power of involuntary writing. In order to test the intelligence of it, I got a friend to ask me one hundred and eighty-seven mental questions, *de omnibus rebus*. Thirty only out of these were answered incorrectly. Of these thirty, twenty-two related to living persons. I had intended to have carried these questions to greater length, but the power which moved my hand seemed to be exhausted, and did finally leave it in writing "Why do you seek to know more?" I afterwards put the mental

tions were put merely for the sake of studying the character of the answers given by the raps.

(Mentally.)

“When I write to —— what account shall I give of these puzzling phenomena?”

“Tell him my spirit hovers around him like an angel. Tell him the truth. Tell him, great is the work, and good is the cause. Be ready! We wait to take him home to our Father’s house on high.”

(Mentally.)

“What is Mesmerism?”

“The gift of God.”

(Mentally.)

“How do we mesmerise?”

“It is not you.”

(Mentally.)

“What then is it?”

“The influence He imparts to you.”

(Mentally.)

“How is it imparted?”

are heard, and he explains that they will become louder as he gains strength.

(Mentally.)

“Can I be told what is in the letter which I understand is left for me with the executors of ——?”

“I have told you.”

A month previously it was rapped out to me what purported to be the contents of the letter in question.

(Mentally.)

“At what place was it written?”

“Pawtucksie. I gave it before.”

On a previous occasion I had asked the same question, and going over a number of names mentally, when I came to that of Poughkeepsie, which I *thought* might be the place, loud and vehement raps were given.

(Mentally.)

“Why is not this name spelt more correctly?”

“Then why should I not be incredulous about these *soi-disant* spirit raps?”

“Because it is against the laws of God.”

(*Mentally.*)

“Where am I to find these laws?”

“In the Bible.”

(*Mentally.*)

“Whereabouts?”

“Many places.”

(*Mentally.*)

“Be more specific. You generalise too much.”

“You will know more when you become a medium.”

(*Mentally.*)

“Oh! I am to become a medium?”

“Yes.”

(*Mentally.*)

“How?”

“Remain passive, and wait for God’s will.”

(*Mentally.*)

and names from an alphabet in detached pieces, mixed promiscuously, and turned face downwards.

In consequence of a communication that was rapped out to me some time before, I asked this friend the mental question :

“When will the raps be made to me intelligently?”

The answer was long, and to this effect :

“The birthday of Jesus, the Saviour, Christ. We rejoice in the Lord. We praise Him. All nations join with us. The day of Christ ! All join on earth, and in the spirit land, in praises to Him, the Saviour of mankind. Ask then for us all. Wait !”

The writer was totally unconscious of what was written, nor did I mention the purport of the question or answer.

Some days subsequently I put the same question mentally. The answer was nearly alike, but rather differently worded.

“Christmas, the birthday of Christ, the

to discuss this (I believe) invariable feature, until more correct views of the existence of these phenomena become general.

It would be useless to continue a further relation of questions which were merely intended to test the intelligence and fitness of the replies.

The examples I have already mentioned are more than enough to show that there does exist a power capable of giving you correct answers to your mental questions, and answers too, which very often were not anticipated by the questioner. I will briefly mention the tests which I used, to satisfy myself that these answers were not derived from indications furnished unconsciously by my actions or by my features.

I hid my face and alphabet under the table. The raps continued intelligently as before. I had the letters forming the answers, indicated by a number of raps according to their position in the alphabet.

of the reply ; thus avoiding the possibility of knowing the nature of the answer until I converted it from figures into letters. Let us imagine an alphabet divided into five lines of five letters each, omitting Z. Now then look not at all at the alphabet, turn it upside down if you will, and request the raps to give you the letters by their position in each line, as, for instance : one rap followed after a short interval by another will indicate the first letter of the first line, which put down in a fractional form, $\frac{1}{1}$; three raps—three raps, $\frac{3}{3}$; three raps—three raps, $\frac{3}{3}$. On turning to the alphabet, you will find $\frac{1}{1}$, a, $\frac{3}{3}$, l, $\frac{3}{3}$, l,—all ; and this not for one word only, but through long sentences. If inadvertently, or on purpose, you put down a wrong figure or letter, the raps will generally

them on the margin. During the whole interview I took charge of the alphabet, pointed to the letters, and wrote down the answers. The lady took no part in the matter, further than mentally requesting :

“What is the answer to No. 1 ?” &c.

All the answers that *I* obtained bore a close relation to the mental questions put by the lady. All but the last. To this question I could get no intelligent reply beyond raps indicating Yes or No. On going over the alphabet, raps were made at various letters, but they seemed to be at random as no words were formed by them. At last I asked :

“Are you unable to spell the answer to the question ?”

“Yes.”

“Why ! can’t you spell ?”

“No.”

“Were you an ignorant, uneducated person ?”

“ Yes.”

“ Did you know this lady ?”

“ Yes.”

“ Where ?”

No answer.

“ In England ?”

No answer.

“ In Canada ?”

No answer.

“ In France ?”

No answer.

“ In America ?”

“ Yes.”

“ In Washington ?”

“ Yes.”

“ Were you white ?”

No answer.

“ Were you black ?”

“ Yes.”

“ A servant ?”

“ Yes.”

“ This lady’s servant ?”

“ Yes.”

The question the lady had asked was this: "Who was Cely, and what was her station in life?" This Cely was a black woman, who had been an attendant upon the lady when in Washington, some thirty years previously. In this instance, no other human being but the lady had a knowledge of what the questions were or what the answers to them ought to be, nor did she know what answers had been obtained until I read them from the paper on which I had marked down the letters as indicated by the raps.

I had made an arrangement with some friends to meet on the following day at the house of the medium. From accidental circumstances, but two of us kept the appointment. We indulged naturally in some reflections on the want of punctuality in the rest, and perhaps expressed in rather strong terms the vexation we mutually felt.

On this occasion there seemed to be an

indecision and want of power to answer either my spoken or mental questions. But the following circumstance occurred, in itself a conclusive proof to both of us of the perfect good faith of the medium. One in which no collusion could occur, and where it would be folly to suspect it. After several ineffectual attempts to get an answer to my mental questions, at last the following sentence was clearly rapped out to me :

“ We wish you to put a pencil in H——’s hand, and we will write.”

I obtained this answer, with the alphabet concealed both from my friend and Mrs. Hayden, who were in conversation together, and having obtained it, at once put the pencil in H——’s hand. To the astonishment of us both, his hand immediately traced a *perfectly correct* answer to my unspoken question, using five out of the seven words which I had employed in forming my question.

It does not seem to be at all necessary that a table should be employed in the process: a door, the walls of a room, the floor, an empty box, or what is perhaps still more satisfactory, a sheet of cardboard held in one hand, whilst the other hand is either taken by the medium, or placed on the table with which she is in contact. On all these various things the raps are produced, not quite so loud perhaps as on the table, but still sufficiently so to assure you that you are not deceived. I have frequently got my answers from the raps made on a small sheet of paper lying by my side.

It certainly makes not the least difference whether the medium shuts or opens her eyes, whether she pays little or much attention to you. The raps still go on, and that intelligently.

On more than one occasion the medium visited my house. The persons whom she

met there were perfect strangers to her; yet all their questions were, I believe, without exception, answered correctly. We took the precaution to observe that the questions asked should be beyond the knowledge of all present but the questioner, and that some other person besides himself should point to the letters of the alphabet and obtain the answers. At the request of one of the party, such an infinite number of raps were made at the same time, that the table seemed to be covered by blows, as if thousands of hailstones of different dimensions had fallen on it.

We were startled by hearing an air distinctly rapped out, and simultaneously exclaimed "God save the Queen." One of the persons present had mentally requested this to be done. The experiment of getting the table to move without being touched was again repeated, every pre-

caution being taken to avoid collusion, and in the presence of six credible witnesses, the table partially raised up one side, and moved backwards and forwards, more than two feet each time.

These are some of my facts. I give them without an attempt at explanation. Possessing keen eyesight and a somewhat suspicious disposition, I must fairly own that I am baffled. However, my only desire is, to add what experience I may have obtained to the general stock of facts which will be gradually collected. We may hope in time, from analysis of these various reports, to arrive at something satisfactory. In the meanwhile, perhaps it would be better not to commit our belief too hastily to conclusions drawn altogether from table tippings, which seem to be the lower and rudimentary form of these phenomena, and altogether worthless as the foundation of a theory. We should endeavour to embrace

all the facts and all the phases in our experience before we can, with any show of common sense, call upon the world to adopt our explanations.

But at all events let us, encouraged by the example of our *clerical heads*, continue to observe these strange mysteries.

Be they spiritual and diabolical, let us know how to shun them.

Be they spiritual and beneficent, let us know how to greet them.

And be they natural, let us know how to study them.

With regard to the charge of fraud, I cannot do better than quote a few lines from a writer, whose opinion upon a question of "Probabilities" must ever obtain the most respectful consideration.

"An impostor who is ready, at any notice, to spell the names correctly of children who died twenty years ago, (including second christian names), being relations of any half-dozen who will make

up a party, is such a marvellous impostor, that any other hypothesis is, to my mind, easier.

“Those who can set it down as easily explicable by imposture, are among the easiest believers I know—if they know anything of such facts as I know from a plurality of witnesses to each.”

In vain by charges of fraud and delusion do we seek to combat the misery and insanity which it is stated have been caused, and perhaps still will be caused, by a *belief* in the spiritual nature of these phenomena. Our only hope is in *knowledge* through facts. Truth is always good, no matter *where* it leads. Mystery and doubt alone cause the evil.

END.