

# APPARITIONS;

A New Theory.

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BY

NEWTON CROSLAND.

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“If but one account of the intercourse of men with separate spirits be admitted, the whole castle in the air (Deism, Atheism, Materialism), falls to the ground.”—JOHN WESLEY.

“ . . . amidst holy oracles we live ;  
Shall their dim messages be all in vain,  
Or wilt thou into thought and action them receive ? ”

BESSIE RAYNER PARKES.

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## NOTE.

THE following is the syllabus of a LECTURE ON APPARITIONS, which I delivered at the DEPTFORD LITERARY INSTITUTION, on the 27th of February, 1856:—

Curious Instances of Spectral Appearances—Modern Spirit-rapping—The Cock-lane Ghost—Description of the Miracles at Ealing—Personal Experiences—Illusions and Delusions—Ideas of the Ancients respecting Spirits—Good and Bad Spirits, and how to distinguish one from the other—Exorcism—Interpretation of Dreams—Jamblichus, St. Dunstan, Jerome Cardan, Bunyan, Richard Baxter, John Wesley, Sir David Brewster, and Professor Faraday—Christian View of the Subject—Scriptural References to Spirits—Warnings and Explanations—A New Theory of Apparitions.

As far as my notes and memory serve me, I believe that the substance of this pamphlet bears some resemblance to a portion of the lecture. I have, however, purposely excluded the evidence drawn from classical, historical, and antiquarian

sources of information respecting Spirit-manifestations, because it would greatly swell the size of this intentionally small production, and also because this part of the subject can be much better handled by so many other investigators. I may, however, at some future day, deem it necessary to undertake this additional task, for the sake of completing the argument to the best of my ability.

N. C.

HYDE VALE, BLACKHEATH,  
22nd March, 1856.

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\* \* Since the following pages were printed, my attention has been drawn to a remarkable and valuable American work — Dr. Hitchcock's "Religion of Geology," in which there is an argument so closely resembling one main branch of my "new theory," that I should be liable to the charge of plagiarism, if I could not distinctly assert, and even prove, that I never saw or heard of the work in question until my own little pamphlet was in type. I should be proud to acknowledge myself a pupil of so able a master as Dr. Hitchcock; but, in this instance, I had not an opportunity of being indebted to him for a single idea or expression. Perhaps he might be "shocked" at some of my opinions, as, without a distinct recognition of the ministry of angels and disembodied spirits in the affairs of man, my "theory" is not tenable. The word "*new*" in the title-page must be understood in the sense that there "is nothing new under the sun."

"*Lucus a non lucendo.*"



# APPARITIONS.

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## I.

WHEN my attention was first directed to the phenomena of Spirit-manifestations, and before I knew anything about them beyond mere rumour, I considered that they must necessarily be "the most impious buffoonery ever palmed upon the credulity of a nation." Further investigation, of a laborious and minute character, not only satisfied me that this hasty and insulting opinion must be retracted syllable by syllable; but I became convinced that "the manifestations" are among the most valuable and important indications of the principles of God's dealing with mankind.

I am quite aware that whatever I may think on one side or the other of any question can have very little influence with the public; but this consciousness of my own insignificance shall not deter me from saying exactly what I know to be the truth on a subject that has engaged much of my leisure time during the last eighteen months.

Although not a medium myself, I have been favoured with very peculiar facilities for investigating the Spirit-phenomena in my own house. The conclusion at which I have arrived is, that to doubt the reality of these manifestations, would be as ridiculous and foolish as to doubt the existence of the solar system.

The fact that the spirits of the departed do return and communicate with living persons I deem to be so thoroughly established, that I do not think it necessary to discuss particularly this portion of the subject; it is, however, an interesting topic of inquiry to ascertain what purpose is served by these Spirit-visitations. They clearly demonstrate the individual immortality of the soul; the certainty of a future state corresponding to our deserts and conduct in this life; God's government of the world through the instrumentality of good and evil spirits; his individualising and incarnating himself in the person of Jesus Christ, to whom all prayers are to be addressed; and the infallible efficacy of prayer in calling down assistance from heaven to protect us from evil and guide us aright.

But we are taught all these certainties in the Bible! Exactly so. That divine book contains all that need be known respecting Spirit-manifestations. It is in fact the literature of the whole

subject; and no modern refinements or philosophies can add one word of original value to its lucid and wonderful teachings. In the 12th chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul tells us expressly with what spiritual gifts God has endowed his church and his people; and scripture is as applicable to modern times as to the age in which it was first written. It has been frequently asserted, that when Christ had established his worship, he withdrew from the world his displays of miraculous power; but there is no warrant to be found in scripture for this opinion; and if the maintenance of his divine religion requires his miraculous intervention, there never was a time when this intervention was more needed than at the present day, when pagan reasoning and scoffing infidelity are secretly taking possession of the minds of many of our leading philosophers and scientific guides. There never has been an age in which these miraculous gifts have not been manifested, but philosophers and sceptics have called them tricks or delusions. Whenever your rationalist meets with a circumstance which he cannot explain, he immediately, and coolly, denounces it as imaginary.

One curious fact elicited through the instrumentality of Spirit-rapping is this; that when the soul goes to the other world it apparently receives

a "Spirit-name," descriptive of its most prominent quality, and by this name it is generally known in its communications with the living.

Here is a list of the names of the spirits with which we have communicated—forty-two in number:—

Adoration.	Inoffensiveness.
Benevolence.	Joy.
Charity.	Justice.
Clemency.	Leader.
Devotion.	Love.
Elevation.	Mercy.
Enlightenment.	Mirth.
Faith.	Modesty.
Felicity.	Patience.
Gladness.	Peace.
Glory.	Pity.
Goodnature.	Poverty.
Grace.	Power.
Gratitude.	Righteousness.
Harmony.	Sensibility.
Heavenly-mindedness.	Surprise.
Honour.	Teacher.
Hope.	Trust.
Humanity.	Truth.
Humility.	Wonder.
Innocence.	Youth.

Some of these represented themselves as pure angels who had never been embodied, many of the others are the spirits of friends or relatives with whom we were intimate in this life. All these spirits have testified to the truth of Christianity,

respecting which, I must confess, I was previously too often indifferent and sceptical.

At the commencement of our sittings, before we became experienced, we were sorely perplexed by the contradictory character of the messages, apparently given by the same spirits; and so hopeless did it appear to us to extract anything like order out of such a chaos, that we had almost determined to give up the whole affair as an atrocious mass of unintelligible absurdity; when a friend suggested the advantage of resorting to the old system of exorcism, and making the sitting a religious service. We successfully adopted this advice. By prayer to "God, the Saviour of Man"—to use the exact title given to Jesus by the spirits—and by accosting them in his name, we contrived to distinguish the evil messengers from the good ones, and to see our way more clearly to a solution of the mystery. We also discovered, that we are all more or less accompanied by good and evil spirits, and that to enter into parley with us, the evil imitated the names and signals of the good; but that the evil spirits could not answer "Yes," when we asked them if they came from God. That appeared to be a lie which they were not permitted to utter. Putting this solemn question was not, however, the only precaution that we found it necessary to adopt. It was essential to watch the

tone of the message that was being given to us; for if after elevating our thoughts to the required devotional altitude, we allowed them to drop to a low self-interested standard of mundane occupations, or vulgar curiosity, that moment an "undeveloped spirit" would creep in, seize the message almost in the middle of a word and finish it with a Satanic colouring, or render it ridiculous.

Flippant critics, and philosophic buffoons, who bring their shallow experience and pugnacious dispositions to scrutinizing and testing these phenomena, may be assured beforehand, that they will gain no advantage whatever from the investigation beyond additional food for their "exposures," jokes, and impertinence.

We have now given up sitting for manifestations, for the following reasons, any one of which is sufficient:—

1. Because so many strangers and friends wished to sit with us that we found it impossible to accommodate them.
2. Because the same spirits came to us repeatedly, and gave us the same messages word for word, that at last we considered the occupation uninteresting and a waste of time, when we had satisfied ourselves of

the genuineness of the manifestations. After Dr. Franklin had demonstrated the identity of electricity and lightning by sending up an electric kite to a thunder-cloud, he did not wish to be always repeating the experiment.

3. Because the necessity of keeping the mind elevated to a high state of contemplation, while we were repeating the alphabet and receiving a message letter by letter, was too great a strain upon our faculties.
4. Because sitting for manifestations is dangerous if too frequently practised. The undeveloped and earth-bound spirits throng about the mediums, struggle to enter into parley with them, apparently with the purpose of getting possession of their natures, or exchanging natures; and I have heard of sittings terminating from this cause in cases of paralysis or demoniacal possession. If you leave your doors open, an enemy may enter sometimes as well as a friend;—or, to glean another lesson from the old story of Dr. Franklin and his kite, if the philosopher had gone out whenever there was a thunderstorm, to show over and over again his expertness in drawing electricity

from the clouds, and if in this idle occupation, his career had been suddenly arrested by a chill or a thunderbolt, his fate would have extorted scant pity from our remorseless common sense.

I therefore recommend the world to believe in the verity of these manifestations, but not to seek them, unless conviction cannot be secured by any other evidence but that of personal experience and examination. If, however, we will investigate for ourselves, and not trust competent witnesses, our labours must always be re-commenced. Christ came to overthrow the dominion of the devil, and yet we seem disposed to insist upon fighting this evil personality over again, when we might simply, by faith in our Redeemer and dependence upon his might, avoid the terrible and Satanic combat. The Spirit-manifestations have satisfied me, that the Bible tells us all we need know of the world to come, and how to reach its blessed regions in safety. Two years ago, I should have considered this opinion and advice so much deplorable cant, but what I then deemed cant, I now regard as the language which will best express the ideas religion is charged to convey. Those observers who maintain that these Spirit-manifestations are of diabolic origin, are so far in the right, that one half of the



revelations, at least, cannot be attributed to any other source. The devil has certainly secure possession of a large moiety of our thoughts and actions; and he would be a poor plotter, indeed, if he did not contrive to take advantage of so splendid an opportunity for creating confusion and leading us astray.

One caution it is very necessary to observe. Whenever a spirit comes and gives us a minute description of its social occupations and amusements in the other world, we may be generally quite sure that the spirit is an undeveloped or evil one, and that it resorts to this trick to interest us in soul-trifling, and to decoy us away from the great truths of Christianity, and the worship of Jesus. A more ingenious, profound, and Satanic stratagem could not be devised for undermining God's holy religion. The American spiritualistic newspapers teem with communications, purporting to be the biographies of departed souls. I do not, for a moment, doubt the fact of such descriptions having been received, for we have been favoured with similar subtle and fascinating extravagancies; but we invariably found, that they proceeded from the undeveloped spirits, whose designs, if encouraged, will certainly lead to the most dangerous consequences. Indeed, so liable is this practice to be abused, that no one can be surprised that the

Mosaic law thundered its anathemas against the unauthorised and dissenting practitioners in the arts of Necromancy, and the dealers with familiar spirits; for few things could be more pernicious than a misuse of this extraordinary power. The priests kept all such modes of communication to themselves; and wished, naturally enough, to enjoy a monopoly of spiritual gifts. But under the Gospel dispensation, the commands of Christ, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, are our only law and authority: each man is at liberty to choose his own course, and decide upon his own actions, provided he loves God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself. To love Christ, is to fly from evil; and to recognise the personality of the Devil and his angels, is to take the first great step towards attaining a belief in their great divine conqueror.

Unless these Spirit-manifestations are used to bring unbelievers to a knowledge of a celestial life, they must be highly detrimental. They are intended to lead us up in mysterious contemplation from nature to nature's God, and by baffling our reason to develop our faith, and make us feel how little Religion is intended to be mastered by the understanding. I think we may safely entertain an opinion that the early priests of religion were appointed and held in estimation, because they

were mediums endowed with miraculous gifts; and that their ceremonial acts were accompanied with a vital efficacy, the product of their spiritual power; but in the course of time, as religion became an institution, and priests were trained by men, and not called by God, the ceremonies which at one time had appeared to produce marvellous results, degenerated into a mere business or craft, without meaning and without value. When churches became instruments of worldly power, the gifts of the Spirit winged their genial flight to the tomb of the saint, to the cave of the hermit, and to the prison of the persecuted worshipper.

The ancient and modern learning, which could be resuscitated to illustrate the subject of Spirit-manifestations, by any one competent to the task, is extensive—very curious, interesting, and instructive.

A wide field of investigation is here open for an able, enlightened and unprejudiced scholar to cultivate. We have been too long treated to conventional doses of edification concerning "popular delusions," "barbarous rites," "pagan superstitions," "idolatrous priestcraft," "heated imaginings," and every other form of speech to express philosophic contemptuousness, in answer to our demand for an explanation of those phenomena, which in all ages have alike ruled powers, principalities and peoples.

Some weak and estimable writers tell us that the oracles of Greece, which lasted two thousand years, were the machinery of priestcraft; as if the wisest and most enlightened nation that ever existed had one large weak place in its "upper story," and allowed itself to be tricked into its permanent beliefs!

We now find, that the Oracles of Delphi were similar in many respects to the modern Spirit-manifestations. The Tripod corresponds to our table; the bending down of the laurel-tree which grew at the entrance of the temple, the shaking of the great gate, and sometimes of the building itself—movements produced by invisible and unknown agency—are analogous to the commotions apparent at some modern sittings. Even the Pythia can now be seen and heard, in the shape of our Seeing and Trance Mediums; sometimes placidly, and sometimes convulsively delivering oracles, prophecies, warnings; describing and interpreting dreams and visions. Paganism, we may be sure, was not foolishness in essence and purpose. The God whom Pagans ignorantly worshipped—him was St. Paul commissioned to declare unto them.

Table-turning is the lowest form of spiritual intervention. To the investigation of this phenomenon, Professor Faraday devoted his rare and magnificent powers of scientific research. He only

succeeded in wasting his time, for the subject is not one of a scientific character; and he rendered himself the laughing-stock of every spiritual circle in England and America.

After weeks of patient and misdirected labour, he produced an accurate, but infantile, toy which demonstrated——what? That when we laid our hands on the table, and imagined that their pressure was directly downwards, it was in reality slightly lateral; and he, therefore, inferred that an accumulation of this lateral pressure, from a number of hands, was sufficient to make a table move round; a fact, and an argument, that, I should imagine, very few persons in their senses would feel disposed, even *à priori*, to question. We hardly needed a ghost or a philosopher to tell us anything so insufferably childish; and scarcely any mind but that of a natural experimentalist would require the demonstration of such a trifling mechanical contrivance. Professor Faraday's opinion and statements, however, furnished, as might have been expected, not the slightest explanation of the cause of the phenomena which I and others have so frequently witnessed. Two friends and myself have placed our hands gently on a large and heavy table; in five minutes, it has reared up, and then rapidly gyrated from one room to another in a manner that rendered it difficult for us to keep even the points of some of

our fingers on the table; and, having reached its destination, messages were rapped and tilted out. At Ealing, when I and thirteen persons have been seated round an enormous table, the pressure of twenty-eight hands tending to keep the table down, it has risen up bodily and entirely in the air at least six inches from the floor. I could mention scores of such occurrences, conclusively showing the fallacy of Mr. Faraday's application of his trivial experiment to the phenomena now under discussion. His pitying and self-complacent allusions to the intelligence and education of those who have arrived at conclusions opposite to his own, I leave to the tender treatment of the Rev. Dr. Maitland, one of the ablest controversialists and most distinguished scholars of our time. Natural philosophers must be plainly told, that they cannot put down and extinguish investigation so unceremoniously.

The Seeing Mediums declare that they actually discern the spirits—appearing something like our ideal of fairies—engaged in the duty of co-operating with or opposing human beings. On one occasion, a friend of ours was passing along a street in London, when, on the side opposite to her, she saw a woman who made three efforts to enter a narrow alley, and that each time she was driven back by a radiant angelic figure. If we had asked

this woman why she allowed her resolution and attempt to be ultimately overcome, she would have probably been able to give no other account of her conduct than that she felt an internal struggle between inclination and feeling, which ended in her relinquishing the object or purpose she had in view. What we call reasoning with ourselves, is very often debating a point with some controlling spiritual messenger; and the spirits themselves, tell us that part of their duties is to impress us with ideas and desires in many of the occupations of life. "I feel impressed to do so and so," will, probably become a favourite style of phraseology.

Few persons will be disposed to doubt that human beings are indebted for their strength, activity, ability of locomotion, to the spirits which animate their bodies. Why, then, should it be so difficult to believe that, after death, the spirits out of the bodies still preserve the power and the will which our physical organisation merely obeys? I think it easy to imagine that this power is more constrained and limited in its operations while it is resident in mortality during life, than after it is liberated by death from its material habitation. This idea, fostered by our recent experience, leads us to a conclusion respecting the punishment of death, as administered by our criminal code, which conclusion, I hope, will not be considered altogether

unworthy of attention and acceptance—it is, that a believer in Spirit-manifestations cannot consistently approve of capital punishments; a spirit out of the body having more power for working good or evil, in influencing and impressing the minds and feelings of mankind, than a spirit in the body. To release a wicked soul from its earthly bondage is to send it forth on an errand of woe and destruction more fatal in character and consequences than any injury it could perpetrate in its mortal tenement.

As the Spirit-phenomena may possibly soon be withdrawn, when they have served their purpose, and the routine of life once more, for a time, find its ordinary track, it is worth while to chronicle facts which may not recur in our generation. I, therefore, feel it to be my duty to bear witness to the following manifestation, which I experienced at the house of my friend Mr. Rymer, of Ealing—Mr. Home being the principal medium on the occasion. Ten persons—I being one of the party—sat round three sides of a large dining-table, the fourth side, nearest to the window, was left vacant that all those present might have an opportunity of seeing the expected manifestations by the aid of the dim twilight which entered the window. We commenced our sitting at nine o'clock in the evening, of the 24th of July, 1855. A wreath of jasmine and mignonette, made expressly for the



purpose, was laid at the edge of the unoccupied side of the table. After remaining quiet for about five or ten minutes, we saw rise up between the window and table, and about four or five feet from me, a gracefully formed female hand, with drapery falling from the wrist. The hand was solid and opaque, for wherever it passed across the window it eclipsed our view beyond. I also observed that the hand moved, not like a severed limb, but easily, as if it belonged to, and was supported by, a body. After repeated wavings, as if making signals to bid us be attentive and calm, the hand deliberately took up the wreath, carried it round outside the circle of visitors, and placed it firmly on the head of a dear friend of mine who was sitting next but one to me. When the wreath was placed on her head, my friend says that she distinctly felt the fingers adjusting and fixing it. I must confess that, when I witnessed this act, I felt some trepidation; my hands became cold, and the roots of my hair seemed inclined to disarrange themselves; but I soon recovered my equanimity, and the ultimate effect of my acquaintance with the spiritual phenomena was to render me extremely composed whenever I was present at such manifestations, and to remove all dread of death, or of the supernatural.

I may here remark, that when the hand holding

the wreath passed out of the plane of the window, I lost sight of the proportions of the moving figure in the darkness of the room; it then appeared more like an ash-coloured shadowy form advancing in a curve towards me. On subsequent occasions I had opportunities of touching these hands—they felt like soft human flesh; if we clutched them they melted away.

When the spirits are in their spiritual state, they can only be seen by the Seeing Mediums; but here was an instance in which a spirit became partially incarnated so as to be plainly perceptible and examinable by any one present at the time. Can this mystery be explained? We may endeavour to offer something like a semi-solution of it, by supposing that the spirits have the power of helping themselves to a portion of the physical and magnetical substance of the medium, and thereby covering some part of their spiritual shapes with material forms. This appropriation can, however, be effected to only a limited extent, as I am inclined to believe if more material were taken from the medium than he could spare from the framework of his own life, he would instantly expire. It is, therefore, not likely that much more than a single limb of any spirit will ever be seen incarnated.

I witnessed many other marvels at Ealing; but I need not relate any more at present. The fore-

going one will serve as a specimen of what occurred there nearly every evening for some months. I may as well add, that I took good care to be certain that I was not deceived by any trickery. That tricks to imitate the Spirit-phenomena have been practised to deceive the credulous and unwary, I am quite willing to believe on no better evidence than that of common report; but if these mockeries prove anything, they satisfy us of the reality of the things which they profess to resemble. If we once see a forged bank of England note, we naturally become suspicious; but we do not conclude therefore that all bank of England notes are forgeries. The circulation of a lie indicates that a truth to counterbalance it exists somewhere, and the truth is worth any search.

Having satisfied myself so thoroughly of the actual ministration of angels and disembodied spirits in the affairs of mankind, I have ventured to use and apply the fact to the formation of a new theory, to account for apparitions. It must be borne in mind, that no theory is a certainty—it is always open to discussion and correction. I ought properly to term my speculation a hypothesis. The condition of its reception must be its explaining all the phenomena of which it professes to treat. Whether it attains this end or not, I must leave others to decide. Of course I shall be called “silly

or insane;" but I can readily forgive any severity of language towards myself, when I recollect my own former style of thought and expression concerning "Spirit-manifestations," and those who believed in them.

I now proceed to discuss this branch of my subject.

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## II.

IN one of the midland counties there is a small town, which, not being near any railroad, is, therefore, very naturally, on the high road to decay. Within the precincts of this shabby town are the remains of a ruined mansion. Its iron railing is rusted and dilapidated, its garden overgrown with weeds; its doors are battered down; its windows have long since disappeared; and at night the stars of heaven can be seen through its shattered roof. The only occupants of this humanity-deserted dwelling are bats, owls, and echoes. Echoes! I never feel so lonely as in their companionship: they give me the idea of loneliness with the addition of a mockery.

Many years ago, when this mansion was inhabit-

able, there resided in it a young surgeon, who was ambitious of distinguishing himself in anatomical studies, without being very particular respecting the mode in which he conducted his researches. He was served by an old gardener, who one day died mysteriously. The night of the burial, the dead body was dragged from the grave and conveyed to the young surgeon's dissecting-room. The corpse was then suspended by its wrists from the ceiling; and after placing a single lighted candle at the edge of the table, close to the body, the anatomist proceeded to cut away the cerements. He had scarcely commenced the deed, when one hand of the corpse burst from its bondage, dropped upon the candle, and immediately extinguished it. The surgeon was suddenly alone in the dark, with his victim apparently animated with a new kind of demoniac life!

In the morning, the master of the house did not make his appearance. Search for him was made; the door of his dissecting-room was burst open, and there in one corner he crouched—a gibbering idiot! He lingered a few days, and then died. The gossips of the town will tell you, that if you choose to keep watch in this ruined house on certain nights, you may see a shrouded figure hanging from the ceiling, attended by the spectral semblance of the young surgeon.

I cannot answer for the truth of this horrible story; but I can personally vouch for the correctness of the following circumstance:—About thirty years ago, there resided in Berkshire a pious and excellent young lady. She had a brother, who was living in Scotland. One morning, about eleven o'clock, she was sitting in the parlour, working at her needle, and singing a hymn—that one in which occur the lines—

“He plants His footsteps on the sea,  
And rides upon the storm ;”

when she distinctly heard a gentle tapping upon the window of the door; the door was half glass, half panel. After the tapping was repeated, the lady looked up and clearly saw her brother's long thin white hand and part of his shirt-sleeve; the latter she was able to identify as her own cut and needlework. Two or three days after the appearance of this apparition a letter arrived, announcing her brother's death, an event which happened at the time the spectre was seen.

Apparitions of living persons have also been witnessed. I will give an instance. A little girl was one day playing under a tree in the garden, when at some distance off she saw apparently her mother advancing towards a gate which was always kept locked, and through which, therefore, the girl always felt an intense desire to pass

to the meadow beyond. She immediately ran after her parent; but before the barrier of the garden was reached, the appearance of the mother vanished. The child then entered the house, and found her mother sound asleep on the sofa, from which she had not stirred during the time of this occurrence. The intention of the apparition was, however, soon revealed. While the girl was running after the phantom, the tree, under which she had been playing, fell to the ground, and would have killed her, if she had not been decoyed away.

Next to a jest-book, I know nothing more dull than a collection of ghost stories. I shall, therefore, not fatigue the reader's attention with more than the two following instances of apparitions, which came under my notice the other day. They are bran new from the mint of spiritualism, and have not yet found their way into general circulation:—

I know a dear, interesting little girl, nearly five years old. Her mother died in giving her birth. A few weeks ago this child was sent to visit a friend, and during her stay she prattled out this piece of information—"Mamma comes to me in the night; and I know why she walks so softly—because she's dead."

On the 30th of January this year, at the early age of thirty-three, died the Rev. Theodore Alois Buckley, formerly one of the chaplains of Christ

Church, Oxford. He was a man of extraordinary ability; his life was unfortunate, and his death sad. When he was alive and well at Oxford, about the year 1850, conversing on the subject of ghosts one day with a mutual friend, Mr. Kenneth Mackenzie, the two friends entered into a compact, that whoever departed this life first should, if permitted, visit the other as an apparition; and the signal of communication was arranged to be the placing of a hand on the brow of the survivor. On the night of the 2nd of February, about twelve or half-past twelve o'clock, Mr. Mackenzie was lying in bed, watching the candle expiring, preparing his mind for sleep, and *not thinking of his departed friend*, when he felt placed over one eye and his forehead a cool damp hand. On looking up he saw Buckley in his ordinary apparel, and with his portfolio under his arm, as in life, standing at the bed-side. The figure, as soon as it was recognised, retreated to the window; and after remaining plainly in sight for about a minute, disappeared. A few nights afterwards, Buckley again made his appearance, bearing in his hand the exact image of a letter, which Mr. Mackenzie at once identified as an old one, which he had casually picked up from his letter-box in the course of the day. The letter had been formerly written by Mr. Buckley.

The great difficulty in explaining the phenomena



of apparitions is to account satisfactorily for the spectral appearance of garments as well as persons. The candid ghost-seer, in relating his experiences, is baffled by the scoffing logician, who exclaims—“I have no objection to believe in the apparition of the soul of your grandmother, but don’t tell me that you really and literally saw the ghost of her night-cap and apron! Your dead uncle, too, whom you saw drowning; is his pea-jacket endowed with an immortal spirit?” Our credulous friend is puzzled, and meekly acquiesces in the conclusion—“Well, perhaps it was all a delusion.”

To meet this difficulty, I venture to offer as a solution the following hypothesis: that every significant action of our lives—in the garments we wear, and in the attitudes and gestures of our humanity—is vitally photographed or depicted in the spirit-world; and that the angels, under God’s direction, have the power of exhibiting, as a living picture, any specific circumstances or features to those who have the gift of spiritual sight, and who are intended to be influenced by the manifestations. These tableaux may represent still life, or they may be animated by certain spirits appointed for the purpose, or by the identical spirits of the persons whose forms are shown, when the apparitions are the images of those who have departed this world.

What an idea of infinity and divine government

does it give us, to suppose that after death we shall move through a grand picture-gallery of our own deeds self-delineated! What a subject of contemplation and awe to those who are debating in their own minds the character of their actions! What a check to those who have not yet quite decided to perpetrate something unworthy of future exhibition! And what a consolation to believe that true repentance for any vicious deeds may secure the removal of the portraits of such deeds from this gallery of celestial art!

I submit that this new theory accounts for all descriptions of the phenomena of apparitions, more satisfactorily than any other hypothesis which has been offered for public acceptance; it is at least a courteous suggestion, and does not "explain away" facts by calling witnesses "deluded or insane." The *Encyclopædia Britannica* says, that "the true theory of apparitions is the same as that of insanity."

This is a specimen of the manner in which the testimony of truthful persons is treated by our scientific investigators! No wonder that we are all of us so guarded in the relation of a ghost-story, to conceal names under blanks or initials, and to be careful not to disclose too much of our own experience. To be positive in names, dates, circumstances, and a firm belief, is to render our-

selves, in the eyes of our polite philosophers, candidates for Bedlam. A time is at last come, when we shall find less difficulty in extracting the truth, and boldly avowing it, without being deterred by the ridicule of quizzing and supercilious scoffers.

This idea of vitally photographing in the spirit-spheres the persons and scenes of this world, may also be used to explain another curious class of phenomena — those exhibited in what is called “travelling clairvoyance,” in which the spirit of the clairvoyant is stated to leave the body and go on journeys; describing events happening at a distance. But in studying this subject, a great difficulty presents itself. The clairvoyant sometimes sees places not as they appear now, but as they existed many years ago, before modern improvements and restorations were effected; and minute events, of which the clairvoyant never had, and never could have had, any knowledge, are narrated as occurring, which really happened perhaps half a century before the time they are seen. Here our Spiritual-photographic Theory comes to our assistance, and helps us to clear up the mystery.

We are at liberty to suppose that the angels unroll before the spiritual sight of the clairvoyant, a grand panorama of past scenes and events in their order of time and sequence of action; so that

without leaving the body, the soul can discern literally and faithfully things and persons that have long since disappeared from this world, as well as those that are now actually in existence. Or we may believe, that in the trance, another spirit enters and takes possession of the body of the clairvoyant to perform this descriptive office.

Remarkable dreams and visions are also explicable by the same hypothesis; but in investigating any of these spiritual phenomena, we must always observe the state and condition of the dreamer or seer. The faculties may be half-developed—half-clouded; the constant struggle going on between good and evil spirits to occupy our minds and senses, must also be taken into consideration; we may then arrive at some shadowy clue to the causes of that hopeless confusion which sometimes prevails in the spiritual experience of sleeping and waking humanity.

While this faculty of communicating with spiritual intelligences may be a natural and healthy gift in some persons, in others it may be superinduced by an abnormal condition of the system. The phenomena then require watchful care, and the attention of a tender and cultivated physician, rather than of a scientific materialist. For instance, excessive mental study may tend so to disentangle the soul from its physical organization,

that a want of concord may ensue between the animator and the animated. To a being thus disordered, a glimpse of the realities of spiritual life may be sent as a warning, that one portion of his nature has received undue attention at the expense of the other, and to bring back the man to a happier appreciation of the laws of his existence. We ought to cultivate in wise moderation those gifts with which we are naturally endowed. The soul is a sword which ought to fit and love its scabbard; but it should be drawn occasionally to receive a polish, and to glisten for a while in the sun of spiritual truth.

The argument that phantoms are delusions always caused by some bodily disease, can be very easily met. I readily acknowledge, that these appearances may be familiar to valetudinarians; and that attention to the rules of health may be followed by the cessation of such supernatural experiences. What theory does this admission confirm? That the unearthly things discerned are the unreal products of disordered senses? To answer this question in the affirmative, would be to jump to an unwarranted conclusion. Suppose by way of illustrating our meaning, we take one of the greatest poetical geniuses of the age, send him out for a day's hunting, and when he is ravenous with hunger, load his stomach with the heaviest

description of food and drink. For what will he be fit after his gorge? Will he display fine fancies, bright imaginings? Will he utter oracles that shall guide and rule a people? He will be incapable of anything of the kind. He will certainly turn round and go to sleep, and appear no higher in the scale of being than a rude and healthy sportsman. When we watch this treatment, and its result, do we argue that genius is the absence of much beef and beer, and that a want of genius is the presence of these gross commodities? We indulge in no such stupid and short-sighted reasoning. We simply infer that one condition of the body is favourable, and that the other is unfavourable to the manifestation of the man's grand mental powers. Exactly so. We wish to apply the same style of argument in reference to the development of the faculty of becoming acquainted with the spiritual world and its revelations. In one state of constitution the soul can discover existences, which, in another state are out of the reach of its observation.

With regard to the communications received through Spirit-rapping and Table-tilting, I can testify to the following facts, which, among a hundred others of more or less importance, I myself experienced.

On the 21st of June, 1855, an old relative of

mine died at the age of eighty-two. She appointed myself and a friend her executors. Among the creditors of the estate was another still nearer relative, who made a claim for an amount which I and my co-executor knew to be morally due; but as the claim had not been previously enforced, as the Statute of Limitations might have been pleaded against it—as the matter was left to my decision—and as I thought I might naturally be suspected of unduly favouring my living relative, I proposed paying, as a compromise, one-quarter of the sum claimed.

On the 26th of August, some members of the family met at my house, and tried to persuade me not to acknowledge the claim in any way. After they were gone, I and my wife sat down as usual to our little table alone, when lo! it tilted *eighty-two times*, the exact number of years my deceased relative lived. Through the alphabet the spirit then spelt out her three names, and then gave me this message—

“ You want to pay M— too little; you must pay her half her claim.”

On three or four subsequent occasions, the same spirit came and repeated the same message; after much entreaty, on my part, I induced the spirit to give a reluctant consent to my paying one-quarter of the claim—an arrangement, which I am happy to say, was amicably carried into effect.

Finding myself in communication with my departed relative, I determined to try to discover through her means an important guarantee which was missing; and such was its value, that I refused to wind up the estate until this document was produced. Search was made for it in vain; and my co-executor, a solicitor in the country, told me that he had it not in his possession. I, therefore, thought it might be still among the papers in town, which I considered had not been minutely examined; and with this impression on my mind, I sat down to the table, on the evening of the 27th of August. The first spirit that came was that of my departed sister.

I asked, "Do you know our aged relative in the other world?"

Answer, "Yes."

"Will you be kind enough to bring her, as I want to talk to her?"

Answer, "Yes."

For about two minutes the table was motionless. It then tilted eighty-two times. After satisfactorily identifying the spirit, and ascertaining that it was not an impostor, I said, "Do you know why I want you?"

Answer, "Yes, you want the guarantee in D——'s case."

"I do; can you tell me where it is?"



Answer, "Yes; it is with other papers in Mr. T——'s possession."

The very next day, I wrote to my co-executor in the following terms:—"With regard to the guarantee, *I have ascertained that it is in your charge.*"

His answer, dated the 29th of August, was in these words:—"When I was in town, I obtained from Mr. W—— a small bundle of papers relating to Mr. A—— P——'s affairs (about which I was then making inquiry), and on receipt of yours this morning, and reading your intimation of opinion that the guarantee in D——'s case *must be with me, I, by way of being more completely satisfied that it was not*, referred to the bundle named; and, to my surprise and satisfaction, there, sure enough, I found it. It must have got there by mistake, and continued there till now. On that head, therefore, all's right."

In my reply, I told my friend that some day or other I should let him know how I made the discovery. This is his answer, dated the 1st of September:—"Your letter this morning has greatly excited my curiosity. How can you have 'found out' that which I did not know myself? Pray don't lose any time, but astonish me at once."

Will the philosophers be good enough to favour us with a commentary on these facts, without

heaping any insults upon our sanity? I have been engaged for more than eighteen months in investigating this subject of Spirit-rapping; and I can come to only one conclusion—that which I have endeavoured to expound in these pages. I have not been misled by my imagination or my feelings; for I am not bountifully supplied with either. I am not a medium; I never in my life saw a ghost; I never experienced an optical illusion; I never had a remarkable dream; I never was, and never could be, mesmerised or biologised. In short, I believe there could not easily be found a more ordinary mortal, or a person more completely on good terms with himself and his senses.

Much has been said with regard to the frivolous character of many of the spirit messages. To this objection I reply: "Frivolous" you call them! They may be frivolous, when measured by the standard of what has been already revealed to us; but we must, however, bear in mind that the question to be decided now, is not whether the messages are sometimes frivolous or not, but whether they are real. The importance of a communication depends frequently upon the character and authority of the person from whom it proceeds. "Yes" or "No" are "frivolous" words, easily spoken by any one who can talk; but when they are uttered by a sovereign or a prime minister, by a judge or a jury,

or by a spirit sent from God, they may rule the destinies of a life, an age or a country.

You tell me that it is a stupid, an unnecessary and an absurd notion, to suppose that immortal spirits are ever engaged in knocking chairs and tables about! Let us suppose for a minute that you are a disembodied spirit, and that you wish to communicate with me, how will you make your appearance?

Will you come silently and invisibly, and impress and guide my thoughts and instincts? This result is accomplished every hour of the day; and I call such impressions the fruits of my own sagacity and experience.

Will you come in all your radiant glory as an angel, and amaze me with your visible presence? Such visitations are now sometimes made to the Seeing Mediums, and received with awe and rapture; but until I become knowingly one of that select band, I should not be able to acknowledge the reality of such a presence. I should think it the phantom product of a diseased mind. I should exclaim, "Avaunt!" and rush pale and alarmed to my physician. He—good man—would prescribe certain drugs for me, and warn me against "exalting myself." My soul would soon again become buried in my materiality. The celestial messenger would rightly think me a fool and avoid my

society in future. How then would you come, so as to satisfy the grossness of my understanding, and convince me that I was dealing with an independent intelligence?

When we asked the spirits why they manifested themselves by moving tables, their answer was significant and in these words: "If we came with more solemnity, we should awe you too much."

You think it derogatory in spirits to move a table; what will you think of the Almighty, himself, condescending to move a house? Do you doubt that he did so? Then turn to Acts chap. iv. ver. 31, and you will find these words: "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together." The meaning of this passage is emphatically shown in the heading of the chapter: "The church fleeth to prayer; and God, by moving the place where they were assembled, testified that he heard their prayer."

On one occasion we asked the spirit of a venerable deceased relative what she saw at the moment she departed this life? When we put this question our minds were merely lively blanks on the subject. We neither formed, nor could form, the slightest conception of what the answer would be: it was spelt out word by word as I now record it, and I need hardly add, it disclosed a state of being

the very reverse of what my reason then considered possible. She said:—"I saw Jesus Christ, the Saviour of man, with his mingled Godhead and Manhood, welcoming me to the world of saints." All the spirits have been imperative in requiring us to address our prayers to this one divine Mediator. They assert that all devout prayers are taken up to him and answered; and that there is an angel always in attendance upon every human being, to receive and soar up with any prayer that is sufficiently true and earnest to pierce the cloud of individual selfishness and materiality that encases every human heart in its natural state. Before the angel can seize the petition, it must possess sufficient divine momentum to bear it within his reach, otherwise it falls back a dead and useless abortion. That this office of Angels is entirely consistent with scriptural teaching may be shown by reference to the Revelations, chap. viii. vers. 3, 4.

The influence and might of prayer to God in elevating and controlling the thoughts and actions of man are theoretically accepted and maintained; but practically we have too feebly and unfaithfully tried the efficacy of prayer in regulating and benefiting our lives. We all know the old story of the lazy waggoner who prayed to Hercules to lift the waggon from the mud in which it was embedded.

The god answered the petition by rebuking the sluggishness of the man and ordering him to put his own shoulder to the wheel. This fable has been too often misinterpreted, as if it was meant to teach the superiority of human exertions in comparison with appeals for divine assistance. How much truer is the lesson, that without the prayer the god would never have descended to rouse the dormant energy of the labourer, and nerve him to the execution of his task. We may be sure that if we want to succeed in any endeavour that is right to be done, prayer to God is the most effectual means of raising our motives to a high principle of duty, and stimulating our righteous resolves to triumphant performance.

What is true of an individual is also true of a nation. While we are a praying nation, we can never become degraded. If any tyrannical foe lay a sacrilegious hand upon the ark of our civil and religious liberty, the earnest prayers of good men have power to bring down the succouring host of heaven—the legions of God! The angels of the Almighty can be in an instant sent from town to town, from city to city, from mountain to mountain, and from valley to valley, to rouse up the elect souls of those whose mission and privilege it is to live or die in the cause of holiness!

Read in this light, the following verses convey a meaning not only poetically fanciful, but intensely and sternly real:—

“Yet do not curl your lips with scorn,  
That others are not great as ye ;  
Your fathers fought ere ye were born,  
And died that thus it now should be !  
I tell ye, spirits walk unseen,  
Excepting by the soul's strong sight ;  
Hampden and Washington, I ween,  
Are leaders yet in Freedom's fight !

And shadowy hosts, I need not name,  
Are leaders in the cause to-day ;  
From dungeon's rack and martyr's flame,  
Their spirits mingle in the fray.  
See how their sorrowing eyes look down  
On every craven's drooping head :  
Oh be your nobler nature shown,  
If but in homage to your dead !”

In conclusion, allow me to observe, that I went to the investigation of the phenomena of Spiritualism as a simple inquirer after truth. I determined to undertake this task in neither a friendly nor a hostile disposition. I was for the time a self-appointed commissioner, to ascertain what was real and what delusive, in a matter occupying public attention. The results of my study I have now feebly brought before my readers; and I trust

that they will, at least, give me credit for being animated with a sane and honest desire not to mislead them, however little they may feel disposed to compliment my acumen. I have told the truth, simply and literally.

