

APPARITIONS;

A New Theory.

AND

HARTSORE HALL, A GHOSTLY ADVENTURE;

BY

NEWTON CROSLAND.

"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.

Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged.

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NOTE

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

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 Essay 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.

* * 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 angel 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.*"

NOTE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

The hostile reception given by the majority of reviewers to the First Edition of this Essay was exactly what I anticipated.

This little book was not intended to please or propitiate those periodical retail dealers in scientific frippery, conventional twaddle, sloppy metaphysics, or vulgar smartness, who preside at so many of the stalls in the "Vanity-fair" bazaar of criticism.

The difficulty which I, perhaps presumptuously, have endeavoured to solve, has puzzled the world, in a small way, for thousands of years. If I have failed to explain the mystery, the world is no worse off than it was before—barring my intrusion. In this Second Edition, I hope I have succeeded in strengthening and clarifying many of the statements and arguments, and thus rendering this tiny work more worthy of public acceptance. To do full justice to the subject would require an elaborate treatise as every antagonistic reader

will naturally raise his own pet "unanswerable question," or "insurmountable difficulty."

As far as I am mentally able, I have carefully and disinterestedly examined every exception that has been taken to the conclusions I have formed. My readers will, no doubt, be glad to learn that I intend to spare them the infliction of a complete analysis of both sides of the questions which I have been compelled to discuss; and I hope they will have sufficient confidence in me to believe that I would not idly pass over any points which may be considered stumbling-blocks in the path to right doctrine.

I am sorry that I am thus obliged to say so much about myself; but, unfortunately, the controversy in which I have become involved, has taken such a personal turn, that self-vindication forms too prominent a part in the successful issue of the debate.

With the view of rendering this book more "deadly lively," I have appended a ghostly adventure, entitled Hartsore Hall, which I trust will be approved by the lovers of the supernatural.

APPARITIONS.

I.

WHEN my attention was first directed to the phenomena of Spirit-manifestations, and before I knew anything about them beyond what I learnt from 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 rare and peculiar facilities for

investigating the Spirit-phenomena in my own house, and in the houses of several friends. 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 by a host of witnesses, that I scarcely think it necessary to discuss particularly this portion of the subject at any length; it is, however, an interesting topic of inquiry to ascertain what purpose is served by these Spirit-visitations. I am prepared to maintain that 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, through whom our 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 philoso-

phies 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. The argument of the infidel is, that the testimony of the Bible to its own authority is worthless evidence; and this objection cannot be conclusively answered except by some decided modern miraculous interposition. The miracles of Spiritualism, acted out in

our presence, furnish us exactly with the demonstration we require to overwhelm the reasoning of the unbeliever, and to baffle his stern logic with a triumphant success that no polemics ever yet achieved.

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 inclined to be 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 with tolerable accuracy 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, provided the Medium-exorcist took good care that he himself was animated by the requisite earnestness and purity of purpose, and that he did not carelessly take the Great Name in vain. Putting this solemn question was, therefore, not 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. To clearly distinguish good from evil spirits, requires a polished acuteness of perception and a depth of right feeling to which poor humanity is almost a stranger. In fact this part of the subject is a grand mysterious problem, of which, I am convinced, Bible-Christianity is the only solution. I do not expect to make many intellectual converts to this opinion, as it is too trite to be acceptable to those who are constantly seeking after what is novel and profound.

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. Those self-reliant rationalists who, without the proper divine key, attempt burglariously to pick the lock of the Spirit-world, will only succeed in fouling the wards, and thereby raising a new obstruction to legitimate admission.

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. The Spirits appear to work their marvels by using the vital magnetic fluid of the medium, who necessarily becomes exhausted. However pleasant and curious the Spirit-revelations may be to those persons who are merely observers and investigators, the mediums soon suffer in their health, especially if they are surrounded by other active duties of life demanding their care and attention. Mediumship is a gift, and it may be cultivated, or neglected, or suppressed, like any other faculty.

2. Because the same spirits came to us so repeatedly, and gave us the same messages word for word,

that at last we considered the occupation uninteresting and a waste of time and energy, 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 thunder-storm, 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 thunder-bolt, 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 firm pos-

session of an active 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, or represents itself to be Plato or Socrates, Bacon or Locke, 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, and the mundane speculations of dead philosophers. I do not, for a moment, doubt the fact of such descriptions and expositions 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. The similarity of the ancient and modern oracles is further shown by both being represented as sometimes true, sometimes false, and sometimes ambiguous—in accordance, doubtless, with the character

of the spirits that presided over the manifestations. The wits and scoffers among the old Greeks and Romans amused their acquaintances, and each other, with cutting or playful attacks on "the humbug of the oracles and diviners" in a fashion that is now drearily and ambitiously imitated by the satirical Joe Millers, who take upon themselves the critical duty of directing the tastes, prompting the sentiments, or petting the prejudices of the public mind.

We may readily conceive how the reputation of an oracle would rise or fall, in exact proportion with the character and power of the medium who officiated as the priest or priestess. Accordingly, we find this fluctuation of confidence very decidedly apparent in the records of ancient Divination and Theomancy.

It is quite possible that, during the decline and fall of the Grecian and Roman states, their priests and rulers—having forfeited the gift or privilege of communicating with high spirits—may have resorted to oracular artifices, to support their tottering dominion over the souls and bodies of the people. It has been asserted that "speaking statues" were constructed, with suitable acoustic apparatus, for the use of some cunning performer placed in a secret recess. We grant that nothing is more likely; but we may be quite sure that this

kind of fraud would be very soon suspected, and treated with the contempt it deserved. All falsehoods determine and deepen the mischief they are short-sightedly meant to avert.

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 physically 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. In fact their philosophy must be revolutionised and re-written.

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 that a woman who made three efforts to enter a narrow alley, was each time 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.

When in the early time of Rome, Numa Pompilius, one of the best and wisest monarchs that ever lived, represented that he was visited by an angelic nymph, Egeria, who assisted him to compose his laws, he uttered a more literal truth than we are in the habit of associating with his famous name.

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. We may thus account for the demoralising tendency of executions. If we wish to know how the death of good persons benefits the world, we must study the Mar-

tyrology. Every disembodied soul, by a law of sympathy, seeks out kindred natures to urge them to the performance of kindred deeds. God, however, is the only judge that can rightly doom a man to death, now that the Mosaic Legislation is repealed.

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 in obedience to a previous request of the spirits, 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; sometimes they were warm and pleasant, sometimes cold and clammy, according to the medium's state of health; 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.

Human nature is fond of analogies and illustrations. If we seek in the material world for a resemblance to the spiritual fact I have just related, we shall probably find it in the process of crystal-

ization, in which various forms are spontaneously assumed in obedience to laws of which we are comparatively ignorant. Electro-metallurgy may also furnish us with some analogical types to interest the imagination and convince the judgment. To the Divine Mind the laws of miracles are, doubtless, as certain as the laws of ordinary nature, although more inscrutable to us. Perhaps the end of all wise knowledge is to lead us to a consciousness of our ignorance, and to persuade us that we may unfailingly depend upon, at least, two divine principles of conduct,—belief and adoration.

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

I have frequently heard the Spirits play most exquisitely on an accordion. Musical performances are very usual and favourite modes of spiritual manifestation. To show that there is nothing new in this fact, and to trace the curious resemblance that exists between the ancient and modern mysteries, I must narrate the story of an event which happened about nine hundred years ago. St. Dunstan, the famous Abbot of Glastonbury, and Archbishop of Canterbury, was a man respecting whom two very opposite opinions prevail. By some authorities he is considered as an unscrupulous, plotting charlatan, and by his admirers he is regarded as a special ambassador of the Most High. He was probably one of the greatest men of genius and action that have ever been created to mark an era in the world. He flourished during the reigns of seven Anglo-Saxon kings, from Athelstan to Ethelred II. To his other rare and surprising endowments he added the advantage of being, what we should now call a medium. His mental accomplishments rendered him, at the commencement of his career, a favourite at the court of Athelstan.

One day after treating the courtiers to a specimen of his great musical powers, he hung his harp on

the wall; no human finger was near the instrument, when it was suddenly played by some unseen power, to the astonishment of all the persons assembled. Modern wiseacreism, of course, prates about secret machinery, as if such clumsy trickery would have long remained a mystery to the knowing investigators of the tenth century, and the very witnesses of the performance. Impounding the harp would have soon revealed the juggle, if any had been perpetrated; there was the miracle, and it did not admit of a mechanical explanation. Good society behaved then, as good society behaves now, when it meets with supernatural circumstances; it coolly sought a solution of its difficulties by denouncing St. Dunstan as an ally of the Devil, the Saint was stigmatised as a wizard, and compelled for a time to abandon his sovereign's court. Truth and Nature would not submit to be thus despised and persecuted, and the unfortunate object of the world's slanders and suspicions subsequently acquired, as we well know, a great reputation for sanctity, and became the intellectual and ecclesiastical ruler of England. Grave historians seem in modern times to ignore or despise spiritual intervention; they are perpetually disposed to sigh over the "traditions and fables of the past," as so many "delusions." Let these writers be warned that sighing people are very indifferent company. If we cannot have

our histories without so much typographical whining, our cheerfulness will be compelled, in self-defence, to abandon them to their sepulchral fate.

Macaulay tells us with pictorial and epigrammatic contemptuousness, that in the reign of our Charles II, about one hundred thousand persons were touched by the monarch for the disease known as king's-evil, a form of scrofula; and that the court physicians, the ablest practioners of the time, bear solemn testimony to the extraordinary and even miraculous character of many of the cures effected; whereupon modern philosophers are scandalised and amazed at the blind and stupid credulity of our ancestors. Here spiritualism comes to our aid, helps us to clear up and brighten the facts, and show us on which side to array our convictions. There can now be little doubt that many of our kings were hereditary Healing-mediums, and that the cures attributed to them were really the result of the exercise of their special spiritual gift. The touching was part of a religious service—the most favourable condition for obtaining the necessary assistance of angels in manifesting the curative power. The gradual development of Truth is always rendering a portion of even the best books false or shallow. What are called “popular delusions,” are, most frequently, substantial “popular realities.”

The Death-Watch! Science never chuckled so heartily over Superstition as when she discovered

an insect to which were traced the sounds invested with so ominous a name. Poor old, blundering, blasée Science here, with misplaced confidence and abortive merriment, turned up another choice specimen of her numerous mare's nests. No one presumes to doubt the existence of the insect and the noises it makes, but this creature has nothing whatever to do with that particular kind of gentle ticking or tapping which is sometimes heard as a forerunner of death, and which we are now satisfied is of the same genus as spirit-rapping manifestations. The death-watch of science, and the death-watch of superstition have nothing in common except a faint resemblance in the sound they emit; and as Science refuses to acknowledge any source of sound but that which she can see, feel or handle, we can easily understand how the old lady would confound two distinct causes and arrive at one materialistic conclusion. The proper occupation of natural knowledge is to wallow in the mire of results; when it endeavours to soar into the region of primary causes, it is likely to meet the fate of the ambitious quadruped who attempted, from a precipice, to imitate the flight of the eagle.

There is a limit beyond which science cannot prosper in its researches, and that limit is marked out by the finger of divine philosophy, which guides us to the point where knowledge must be merged in faith.

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 theosophic 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.

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 inhabitable, 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 presumed 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 probably have killed her, if she had not been

decoyed away. May we not infer that there was here a direct spiritual interposition for the purpose of rescuing this child from an impending catastrophe, and reserving her for a brighter destiny? I believe that those circumstances which we call coincidences are always planned by angelic ministers.

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, 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 R. H. 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 ghostly 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, the spectral 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 when alive.

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 when you and he were a thousand miles apart; 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 intelligent and 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 ourselves, 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.

Let us here for a moment fancifully indulge in a reflection on the resemblance, faint and distant though it be, that exists between the objects of man's feeble manufacture and the grand handy-work of the Almighty. How curious and suggestive is the analogy! In our ribbons we may see humble attempts to copy the hues and shapes of rainbows and flower-borders. The Parisian diamonds are poor weak forgeries of the gem crystallised in the unknown laboratory of Nature. And our artificial sun-pictures may be, after all, but mean and petty unconscious imitations—intuitively suggested—of the sublime results accomplished in the divine *camera* of the Eternal. Surely everything that exists in material creation is but a coarse representative or symbol of what is first designed in full glory in the Spiritual-world.

This idea of vitally photographing in the spirit-spheres the persons and scenes of this world, may 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 discerning and 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 super-induced by an abnormal condition of the system. The phenomena then require watchful care, and the attention of a religiously tender and cultivated physician, rather than of a scientific materialist. For instance, excessive mental study, or the misuse of stimulants, 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 hastily 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 the 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 disputed claim for an amount, a great portion of which I and my co-executor knew to be morally, if not legally, 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 virtually left to my decision after much rambling discussion, 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. On that evening we neither of us entertained the least idea that we should experience this special visitation. Through the alphabet the spirit then spelt out her three names, and 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, as the business was surrounded with legal difficulties and family jealousies, 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, which she had confided to my trust, 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.

I have anxiously and faithfully endeavoured to find an explanation of the manifestations of Spiritualism, by ascribing them solely to some physiological disturbance of the mental and bodily structure of exceptional humanity; but I feel that such a hypothesis is sadly and recklessly chimerical. It may, perhaps, feebly and unsatisfactorily account for some of the more simple and insignificant phenomena; but the whole range of those results, which I have either witnessed or studied, cannot, it appears to me, be traced to any other sufficient origin than the direct interposition of disembodied spirits. Those respectable old gentlemen, who write and talk learnedly about “sensorial changes,” “abnormal states of the cerebrum,” and “excited auditory illusions,” may be left with the calmest indifference to flounder about in the mazes of their

pseudo-science. Our scientific cardinals keep a formidable "*index expurgatorius*," in which they gravely enter some of the rarest and brightest, mental and spiritual privileges under the head "Delusions." Laymen are not permitted to read and interpret the scientific book of life, without the authorised glossary, under a penalty of logical ex-communication. In these days, we surely need some heretical investigator, to counteract the effect of the orthodox psychological researches, which are really becoming little better than additions to the dead and unwholesome materialisms still permitted to litter and infect the world. We may fondly hope some day to perform a solemn funeral service over materialistic philosophies and their logical kindred, and, perhaps, posterity may condescendingly think it worth while to erect an encyclopædial tomb-stone to their decent memory.

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. Those persons who raise the objection, that the spirit-messages are totally unworthy of the source to which they are attributed, and who look for displays of supernatural wisdom from disembodied souls, expect a great deal too much, and deserve the counter-charge of being unreasonable. We must reflect that only the divine mind can transcend human genius, and that any supermental revelations could not be understood: they would be foolishness unto us. As the soul is endowed and cultivated in its fleshy tabernacle, so will it continue in the spirit-world. The same drowsy mind and respectable virtues, that rendered a man such an estimable bore in society here, will, doubtless, be perpetuated after death, and be manifested in his discourse with those to whom he is permitted to reveal himself. The humble and noble qualities of the heart seem, in the future state, to be far more highly valued than the brilliant properties of the intellect, and to be, consequently, more decidedly characteristic of the good spiritual communications.

The trivial character of many of the messages cannot, with any pretence to rationality, be urged in evidence against the separate existence of the spiritual messengers. Indeed, right argument leads us necessarily to the inference, that the tone of a revelation will naturally partake of the disposition of the revealer. Let us instance a case in point. The editors of A, B and C, in their present mundane existence, exhibit a very active faculty for perverting facts and libelling evidence. In the disembodied state of these beings, mental profligacy would probably still be their characteristic exponent; and if they ever recommunicated with the living, the careless ribaldry of these spiritual visitors would furnish us with the surest proof of their identity.

In the next place, 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 and stimulating my imagination." 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." Who among us shallow mortals can venture to decide what is or is not most consistent with angelic dignity?

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 made, 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 ! ”

Many sensible people, poets and sentimentalists, are quite prepared to advocate the ministry of angels and disembodied spirits, as a kind of sublime abstract doctrine, but directly we offer a practical demonstration of the literal truth of the guardianship in which a random belief is professed, every one is shocked at the “profanity” of the proof. Humanity loves an ideal, but is disappointed and offended when it finds its ideal realised.

In conclusion, I wish 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, and perverted by public ignorance. 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, but in discussing this subject we must be prepared to meet with the curious but human result, that they who have not investigated Spiritualism and who know little about it, will be most loud and bitter in denouncing those who after having carefully and candidly given their time and energy to its strict examination, and unbiassed consideration, have arrived at a conviction of its verity. This treatment we must patiently endure; we cannot expect the world to surrender its prejudices without an obstinate and painful struggle. If, however, sceptics would be good enough to inform us, what amount of evidence they require to convince them of facts contrary to their ordinary experience, we should be better prepared to meet them on their own ground, for the purpose of forming a mutually good understanding. It is, of course, unphilosophical to multiply causes unnecessarily; but it is equally fallacious to attribute results to inadequate causes—a deliberate mistake to which our opponents seem most perseveringly determined to adhere. At present they labour under the considerable difficulty of not being able to furnish us with a satisfactory explanation of certain wonderful phenomena, which, during the last few years, have

been in very obvious existence and activity throughout the world, and which have been more or less manifested in all ages of which we have any records.

I have previously mentioned Mr. Daniel Home, the medium. Recently, he went to Italy, for the benefit of his health. While there he attracted the notice of a nobleman, who took him under his protection, and succeeded in making him a convert to the Roman Catholic Church. I do not attach much importance to this conversion, as Mr. Home is an affectionate, impressionable, destitute young man, who is always ready to be biassed by the strongest kindly influences which happen to be nearest to him. I believe he has lost a great deal of his mediumship, and that he has ceased to seek spiritual manifestations. As the practice of his peculiar gift was making sad havoc with his delicate constitution, if he now finds his health improved, he will probably attribute his recovery to the wrong cause—his new tenets. He talks of having abandoned the spirits: it remains to be seen whether the spirits have deserted him. It is not improbable that some day, when he is engaged in public devotion, a hand may possibly appear out of space, and in the eyes of all present, touch the priests and attendant devotees. The miracle would be hailed by the Roman Catholic Church, and, naturally and

sincerely enough, used for the spreading of its own sectarian dominion. The manner in which this church can appeal to its supernatural experiences is one of the greatest sources of its converting progression, especially as a pioneer among benighted races.

All honour and love be to Protestantism, as an enlightener and civiliser of the world! yet Protestantism, ignorantly and materialistically, shrinks from owning the miracles wrought within her own pale. She vacantly stares at the pillar of flame offered for her guidance, and sceptically calls it an *ignis fatuus*; she childishly resigns one-half of her inheritance of light, and hands it over to less worthy keeping. Let us pray that our holy Protestant churches—many in form, but one in essence—may become less scientific, and more devout.

HARTSORE HALL.

“For though my nature rarely yields
To that vague fear implied in death,
Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,
The howlings from forgotten fields ;

Yet oft, when sundown skirts the moor,
An inner trouble I behold—
A spectral doubt which makes me cold.

* * * * *

Come then, pure hands, and bare the head
That sleeps, or wears the mask of sleep ;
And come, whatever loves to weep,
And hear the ritual of the dead !”

In Memoriam.

MY name is Martin Brown. I am now an old man, but age has not dimmed my recognition of modern progress, or clouded my love of the beautiful in nature. I do not look back with regrets to the past, or forward with forebodings to the future, but encourage a high and holy faith that the world is busy in working out a great and an immortal destiny, and that every year added to our

existence ought also to add to our relish and appreciation of what human genius is creating. I am even content, sometimes, to learn humbly from my grandchildren, and very often to think that they are in the right whenever their sentiments and feelings come into collision with my own. My young folks maintain that modern poetry and modern wit transcend what delighted our ancestors; and though we may have lost the secrets of some curious arts, we of the present day are unapproachable in the power of exhibiting and fixing the prismatic hues of thought and life. It may be so; for I find myself looking with a very indulgent eye upon the world, and thinking it "a very good sort of world, after all." The nearer I approach that future home to which we are all travelling, the more does its beneficent light hallow my perceptions, cheer my path, and brighten my passage to the tomb. This state of belief and content is, however, quite the product of recent times. In my youth I harboured a morose and gloomy creed, which allowed me no rest and no hope; I spent my days in sadness, and my nights in trembling; I quailed before my own fancies and visions; I prognosticated the speedy destruction of this beautiful world, and all that it inhabit; I considered merriment as profanity, and a jest as an insult to human reason. My purpose in living appeared to

be to cover the earth with a pall, and to marshal my thoughts as its funeral procession. Nevertheless, I did not sit down in apathy and despair; I was full of enthusiasm, and I determined to act in the dark and moody cause which clung to my heart and brain. I took the Holy Book, whose meaning I had thus perverted, and went forth to propound my sad interpretation of its revealings. I seemed destined to become a fanatical preacher.

One day I rang the bell of my study: my man attended to the summons.

"Blake," said I, and I did not look him in the face as I spoke, "I have made up my mind to wander from home for a week. Saddle my favourite black mare, and do not let my friends be impertinently curious about my destination; and, Blake, do not forget to give the mare a good feed, poor thing!"

"Will you take anything yourself, sir?"

"No." I felt more kindly disposed towards animals than towards my own species.

Thus earnest, confident, and unprepared, I betook myself zealously to my new and self-imposed calling. Nature was just beginning to draw her nocturnal curtains, and to send round her celestial lamplighter, when I rode forth on my moody and quixotic errand. My mare, as she clattered out of the court-yard, seemed to exhibit an unusual re-

luctance to proceed on the journey, as if she felt that my mission was something too strange and dubious to deserve her assistance; and the gate, which swung after me as I made my exit, was some time in making up its mind to close against my return: it clicked backwards and forwards on its latch, as though it were appealing to me to "Come back—come back!" But I shut my heart to the influence of its metallic entreaties, and went on my way.

Two hours' smart riding brought me into a dilemma. In the first place, I had lost my way; and in the next, the weather had become very stormy. Dark clouds had been some time mustering their threatening ranks, and preparing to do battle with the earth. These dangerous warriors had already formed themselves into light skirmishing parties, and were fast bringing up their whole force, when I anxiously looked about for shelter, but none was to be found: only scattered hedge-rows and stunted trees were to be seen, and these tended rather to make the prospect more spectral and forbidding. At last, at a turning of the road, I came upon a little low cottage, in which there appeared to be a timid light burning. I knocked at the window with the handle of my whip, and, after a smothered scuffle inside the house, a man in his night-dress opened the lattice, and indignantly began to exclaim—

“In the name of ——”

“Pray, my good friend,” said I, in a bland tone, “can you tell me the way to Graysboro’?”

“Graysboro’! Lor’ bless ye, sir! you be going directly from it.”

This information was anything but comforting; and I then asked if he knew “where I could obtain shelter for myself and my horse.”

“Why, sir,” he good-naturedly replied, “if you like to step in, you shall be welcome to my arm-chair to rest in; but I am sorry I can’t offer your horse a seat. You had better tie him up to the gate.”

“Thank you, my kind friend, but I cannot accept your hospitality on these terms: I must see my faithful animal safely housed before I can make myself comfortable. Is there no inn anywhere near?”

“There’s not a house within three miles of us, and the nearest is a dreadful kind of place, although there is always a spare bed there for a wayfarer. People say the house is haunted; and, after all, I’m afraid you’ll never find it, for I never went to it by the road myself. I can tell you the way across the fields; but you must leap a stile or two, or scramble through the hedge, to get there.”

“Can you tell me the name of this very unpromising abode, and give me any idea of the route to it?”

“Well, it is called ‘Hartsore Hall.’ You must go to the end of the lane on the right, and then turn to the left across a wheat-field, until you come to a barley-field, when you must take the second wide path on the right, and then the second narrow one on the left, and go on until you see a beech-tree—I mean the farthest one, for you will see several beech-trees—and bear off towards the sycamores, and then up by the gravel-pits; and then make for the copse, until you come to where six paths meet; take the one facing you, towards the south—not the one in a straight line, but a little curved, and mind you don’t take the path that’s very crooked, but moderately bent—and then you’ll see a heap of stones, if they’re not removed—and then another very crooked path, which leads to a plank over a stream; go straight along, but lean first to the right and then to the left; take the first turning on the left, and the second on the right, and the third on the left again, and then you’ll come out directly opposite the lodge-gates of Hartsore Hall.”

For a moment I was dumb-founded with astonishment and perplexity. I had frequently been sorely puzzled by mathematical questions at college; but the problem now before me was a specimen of rustic science, to which, with my limited memory and deficient organ of locality,

I could not see even the shadow of a solution. Nothing but a very careful survey of the ground, some years after this adventure, has enabled me to give this report of the directions I received.

My silence seemed to satisfy my informant that he had done his duty and achieved a masterpiece of lucidity, for in another moment he had wished me "Good night!" closed his window, and left me to pursue my journey.

"Go to the end of the lane on the right!" thought I to myself, "there can be no harm in making an attempt thus far."

I had scarcely trotted more than three hundred yards, when my horse shied, trembled, and almost threw me from my seat. I very soon ascertained the cause of this fright: near the hedge was a gipsy's tent, out of which was crawling its black, shaggy, forbidding owner. The idea immediately struck me that I would enter into a treaty with this suspicious-looking nomad, and make him my guide to Hartsore Hall. So I accordingly opened the negotiation with a remark respecting the "dreadful state of the weather," which the gipsy did not seem disposed to dispute; and it was certainly not a subject which admitted of any controversy. After some debate about terms, it was agreed that he would, for a crown-piece, consent to conduct me to my destination.

Two tall decayed stone pillars, surmounted with wrinkled and moss-covered urns, gravely towering above a rusty iron gate, formed the entrance to the grounds of Hartsore Hall.

As I took leave of my guide, the clouds gathered themselves together as if to prepare for an orderly retreat; and the moon, in her silver chariot, came out to chase these dark battalions from the sky.

I lifted the latch, and entered the winding avenue leading to the Hall, when a picture of the saddest desolation presented itself. No sound was to be heard but that of my horse's hoofs, and the melancholy sighing of the wind among the branches: the trees, like animate things, seemed to have grown into shapes and attitudes of sadness and neglect, and to be incapable of uttering any tones but those of bereavement and despair. The roadway was in ruts, the paths were overgrown with rank vegetation, and every feature of the scene indicated Nature collapsing into her original state of dreariness, decay, and death. No distant crow of a cock, no baying of a dog, gave a hint of social life, or indicated the presence of humanity.

At length I stood at the door of Hartsore Hall. It was a terminus congenial to the character of my journey, and a perfect instonement of architectural insanity. It was a chaos of windows and gables, every one of which appeared like a rigid frown or

a hideous leer petrified by the enchantments of some Titan wizard, who had thus determined to show his demoniac power over a human habitation. I knocked loudly at the door, and the echo died away in a thousand spectral responses. Presently a faint glimmer appeared through the fan-light, and very gradually increased in intensity, as though the passage were a long one, and the bearer of the illumination taking her time in approaching. I heard a number of bolts withdrawn, the door was opened, and I stood in the presence of a tall, grave woman, dressed entirely in white. She spoke in a solemn, monosyllabic manner:—

“Have you lost your way, and do you want to sleep here?”

I replied in the affirmative, and she then summoned a grotesque-looking urchin to take charge of my horse, while she conducted me into a large room, the extensive dimensions of which could not be clearly defined by the imperfect light she carried.

I declined having anything to eat; and, as she placed the lamp on the table, I asked her if she did not find her mode of life lonely and miserable.

“Rather; but I have lived here since I was a child, and I intend to die here.”

“Pray may I ask whether the mansion and its grounds have been always in this sad and ruinous state?”

“Not always: thirty years ago it was a pleasant place, and noted for its hospitality. Every night a bed was prepared for any chance visitor or benighted traveller—stranger or friend, a custom which I am paid for keeping up to this day. When I first knew the Flemyngs, better people could not exist; but a dreadful event destroyed their happiness and dispersed the family. Yes, sir, it was in this very room——” And as she spoke, my informant cast an anxious and startled look round the apartment.

“‘A dreadful event!’ My good woman, you have excited my curiosity. I hope you will put a stop to my inquiries when you think them impertinent; but have you any objection to tell me the story, which appears to have been so connected with your destiny?”

“None whatever; but I am afraid you will find it a bad preparation for a night’s rest. You see, sir, old Mr. Flemyng was a model of a good gentleman; but, unhappily, his only son, Henry, became dissipated, and was always filling the house with his riff-raff companions, and leading a reckless life. The conduct of the son filled with grief the heart of the father: he sorrowed and sickened, and was at last confined to his room with wounded spirits and failing health. One night Master Harry, as we called him, gave a grand supper to all his

reprobate friends; and when the orgies were at their height, it was noticed that there was one place at the table vacant.

“ ‘I say,’ roared one of the friends, ‘shall we go up stairs, and pull down the old man, to give us a lecture on moral propriety? What say you, Harry, my boy?’

“ ‘With all my heart!’ was the callous reply; and immediately a detachment of these ruffians rushed up to the sick man, dragged him down stairs, seated him at the head of the table, and then cried out—‘Now, old fellow, give us a toast and a speech!’

“I shall never forget the agonised look of my old master, as he turned his countenance upon the gang that surrounded him: his eye became glassy, his lips quivered, and in the dim light his thin grey hair appeared like a halo round his brow; he attempted to stand—he attempted to speak; but his limbs and his speech refused their office, and he fell back in his seat—dead!

“At the same moment some one put out the lights, and then followed a horrible uproar: that night my mistress’s hair turned as white as snow, and Master Harry was found in the garden—raving mad!”

“Mercy on us!” I exclaimed. “What did you do then?”

“Do! why, after the funeral nearly everything was sold off, and the family removed to the Continent, whence they have never returned.”

This certainly was not a good preparation for repose. As I walked through the long corridors to the chamber appointed for me, I felt as if I was surrounded with phantoms from another world. My shadow startled me, and as the light struggled through the mildewed atmosphere of the mansion, it seemed to shape out the forms and features of the revellers, whose deeds had taken such possession of my mind.

The bed-room into which I now entered was old-fashioned and dreadfully still. I would have given a fortune for a good rousing familiar noise. A fire was burning in the grate, and tapestry lined the walls. The beams of the moon struggled in through the lattice windows apparently with the pleasant purpose of being my companions, and I felt soothed by the heavens thus seeking communion with a troubled soul.

I had not, in all probability, been asleep long, when I was awakened by the noise of carriage-wheels coming up the avenue. At last I could distinctly hear the champing of the horses, the challenge of the grooms, the drawing up of the vehicle, the lowering of the steps, the thundering rap at the door, the descent of a visitor, and his

entrance into the hall; the steps were then thrown up, the carriage wheeled round, and rapidly retreated down the avenue. I had scarcely done wondering at this arrival, when there came, in exactly the same manner, a second carriage, and a third, and a fourth, and then more, until I counted thirteen.

“Good Heaven!” I exclaimed, “what can be going forward in the house? Have the self-banished family returned unexpectedly, or is that old hag entertaining an assembly of guests? There is something very strange occurring.”

I then listened attentively, and I heard a human footstep approach my chamber, and a gentle tap at the door.

“Who is there?” I asked in a faint tone.

“My master has returned, and requests the honour of your company to supper,” was the reply, uttered in a sepulchral tone.

“Give my compliments to your master, and tell him that I have been in bed some time, and I beg him to excuse me to-night.”

The messenger retired; but in a few minutes he returned, with a heavier tread and a more determined rap.

“My master desires me to say that he cannot possibly accept any excuses for your absence from his table.”

I began to tremble violently, and to utter a variety of disconnected apologies. I begged the messenger to say I was ill, and I could not, therefore, pay proper respect to the "gratifying invitation."

Again all was silent for a minute, and I began to chuckle over my security, when feet shod with iron thundered along the corridor, and the next moment my door was almost burst from its hinges by an appalling blow. The messenger rather howled than spoke this summons:—

"My master is enraged at your refusal, and if you do not follow me immediately down stairs you shall be dragged by force."

I now knew that it was useless to trifle any longer with such a determined and horrible invitation, so I slunk out of bed, put on my clothes, opened my door, and followed my mysterious guide through the dark passages, led by the heavy sound of his iron heel and the occasional flash of his armour. I advanced into the hall in which I had sat and conversed that evening; but how different was its appearance! It was brilliantly illuminated and superbly furnished. A long table was covered with numerous delicacies, and down each side sat a splendid array of guests, clothed in the richest attire, and bearing flashing coronets of gold on their heads. There was one seat vacant, behind

which a man in armour, with a drawn sword in his hand, appeared to be attentively watching the lord of the banquet. I stood in mute astonishment, while a majestic individual rose, pointed to the unoccupied chair, and, with a frown of fearful import, exclaimed—"You have kept us waiting too long. Guard, take care that your *prisoner* does not leave us, meanwhile let him join in the feast *until* ——"

I felt that a demoniac spell was fast closing over my spirit, and that my destruction was contemplated. At that moment a spark of courage flashed into my heart, and I said, "With all deference to this august company, I cannot sit down to any entertainment without first saying *grace*; you must, therefore, permit me to ask *a blessing*." As I spoke, a kind of shuddering silence fell upon the assembly; the lights became paler, and each guest seemed to quiver with an evanescent transparency. I began, "WE BESEECH THEE, O GOD!——" but before I could finish the sentence, the scene vanished.

"Here have I been rapping at your door for the last ten minutes; it is quite time to get up."

The expostulation proceeded from the hostess of HARTSORE HALL, and effectually awakened me. I rubbed my eyes, and very soon satisfied myself that a frightful dream had been playing its tricks in my brain. Ill and out of spirits I returned

home immediately, and I have never since ventured on any quixotic expeditions. "My ministry of horrors" was effectually arrested by an incident in itself a horror. This adventure was thus not without its influence on my future life, for, while it fortified my disposition to look to HEAVEN for aid against all perils, it has taught me to be contented with the quiet practice of my social duties; and I now steadfastly believe that HOME is the chief sphere for the inculcation of our true precepts and the evidence of our good example. Virtue is better promoted by a simple and earnest demeanour than by thundering forth threatening theories and oracular vengeance.