

OUTLINES  
OF  
TEN YEARS' INVESTIGATIONS  
INTO THE PHENOMENA OF  
MODERN SPIRITUALISM,  
EMBRACING LETTERS, LECTURES, &c.

BY  
THOMAS P. BARKAS.

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"Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, &c."—1 John, iv., 1.

"If an angel or a spirit hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God."—*Acts*, xlii., 9.

"In the latter days some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons."—1 Timothy, iv., 1.

"Star unto star speaks light, and world to world  
Repeats the password of the universe  
To God; the name of Christ—the one great word,  
Well worth all languages in earth or heaven."—*Bailey*.

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## DEDICATION.

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To truth seekers everywhere, this sincere but imperfect attempt to evolve the truth, contained in the profusion of mysterious phenomena, popularly designated Modern Spiritual Manifestations, which, during the past fifteen years, have presented themselves for investigation to candid and enquiring minds in all countries, is respectfully dedicated by the Author, with the hope that it may be the means of directing the attention of honest and capable investigators to a subject which embraces within itself many extraordinary physical and psychological phenomena, the proper analysis and classification of which are of the utmost importance, in order that the cause, or causes, may be properly understood, and unjustifiable scepticism be removed on the one hand, and pernicious credulity on the other.





## INTRODUCTION.

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Without controversy this endeavour to describe the truth, and expose the errors contained in the physical, physiological, and psychological phenomena, designated "Modern Spiritual Manifestations," and the inferences drawn from them, will be received with indifference, if not with contempt, by the majority of those who open the pages of this work. That reception will not surprise any one who has studied the histories of remarkable discoveries.

Truth has invariably to fight its way into favour. The course of probation may be long, but success is the inevitable result of patient and well directed effort. The writer of a leading article, in the "*Times*" of March 3rd, asks a very pertinent question when he says, "How often must a great truth come forth to light, and be revived and overborne, and lapse back into obscurity, before it achieves general acceptance?" Cuvier boldly withstood the theory of Buckland, that mammalian animals existed in a low form of sedimentary rock; and Cuvier in his turn was opposed by the *savants* of Paris, when he contended that opossum-like creatures had, in remote ages, lived in the neighbourhood of that city, and that the teeth of them had been found in Montmartre Quarries. Both facts are now universally admitted. In the present work I have endeavoured to condense a description of ten years' enquiries into mysterious phenomena; and now for the *first time* I express my convictions as to their specific origin, the personality, and identity of the agents producing the effects, and the value of these modern events as moral and religious agencies.

Having, ten years ago, heard much of the marvellous occurrences that were reported to have taken place in the United States of America, seeing that the phenomena were authenticated by the testimonies of many reputable and capable persons, and knowing that the more elementary manifestations were making their appearance in England, I resolved to enter upon a full examination of the subject, and determined not to bend to one side or the other until I had obtained a sufficient number of facts, heard the testimonies of all with whom I was acquainted, who had examined the question, and read all the best works, *pro* and *con*, which my means and time would enable me to compass. During eight years of close investigation I carefully avoided committing myself to any theory, and, for the last two years, despite the attempts of friends and opponents to drive me to the expression of definite views respecting personality and identity, I resolved to have my convictions firmly matured before venturing to express any opinions.

Those opinions are now contained in this work. A colloquy between Dr. Fenwick and the female attendant of Margrave, in Sir E. B. Lytton's "Strange Story," aptly illustrates my own case in this matter. "Do you believe in that which you seek?" she asked in her foreign, melodious, and melancholy accents. "I have no belief," was my answer; "true science has none; true science questions all things, and takes nothing on credit. It knows *but three states* of mind, DENIAL, CONVICTION, and the vast interval between the two, which is not belief, but the suspension of judgment."

The effect of the conclusions, to which I have at length arrived, will perhaps be to alienate ardent spiritualists, who think they have good reason for believing that they are in frequent intercourse with the spirits of their departed friends; to draw down the scorn of those who are learned in materialistic philosophy; and to be pooh-poohed by scjologists and smatterers in natural, psychological, and theological lore, who are conceited enough to suppose that they have reached the truth in all these matters, and that anything beyond their limited experience must be false.

The phenomena that are adduced in the following pages, as having come within my own observation, I have been

careful to *understate*, rather than *overstate*; and some facts are introduced which appear to militate against the super-mundane origin of which I believe are extra-mundane phenomena.

These have been recorded, because I desire to place before my readers descriptions of phenomena which most nearly approximate to those that I think are produced by extra-natural agency, in order that both sides of the question may be fairly represented, and that investigators may thus be able to form opinions based upon an extensive variety of extraordinary physical and psychological facts. Natural laws are without doubt, known to produce more marvellous phenomena, than the majority of ordinarily well educated persons will allow to be ascribed to them.

The earlier portions of this production consist, for the most part, of letters addressed to local papers, and of six lectures delivered in one of the largest halls in Newcastle to very large and attentive audiences.

Some portions of the lectures bear only indirectly on the questions at issue, but as those parts are brief, and tend to illustrate and establish certain principles laid down in the lectures, it is thought undesirable to omit them.

I have not, either in the letters or lectures, said anything that I feel necessary to retract. I have advanced cautiously, step by step, and been careful not to take any position that I did not perceive was both logically and experimentally defensible. For this caution I now feel thankful. Had I, in my ardent pursuit of information on this vexed subject, formed conclusions as hastily, and on such insufficient evidence, as appears to satisfy the majority of enquirers, *both believers and unbelievers*, I should have had cause for deep regret.

I have endeavoured to give a plain, and, I trust, intelligible description of the phenomena which occurred through the mediumship of Mr. Foster—phenomena which have produced the most diverse opinions in the minds of those who were present at the *séances*; a few of whom believe the whole to be the result of trick and legerdemain; some suppose them to be a mixed influence of clairvoyance, thought-reading, and jugglery; others receive them as phenomena produced through Mr. Foster by agents from the invisible world

the effects of which are heightened by the skill of the medium; and a few receive them as genuine and bona-fide spirit communications from the agents who profess to be communicating.

I shall endeavour, calmly and dispassionately, to examine these theories, and expound and defend that which appears to me most closely to approach truth.

In the concluding chapters of this work I have endeavoured to place before my readers a succinct statement of the value of modern spiritualistic teachings, and the position of spiritualism as an educational agency. It will be seen that, while modern mysterious phenomena fully impress the vast majority of those who examine them with the conviction that they are in direct intercourse with the inhabitants of the spiritual world, they nevertheless lead to every conceivable variety of opinion as to the value of the teachings, and as to the nature of the spirit world itself; and thus, instead of alienating earnest men and women from the purest revelation of the divine will with which we have yet been favoured, they *eventually* lead honest and reverential enquirers to the only source from which they can obtain approximately satisfactory information respecting the spiritual world and spiritual things.

I am perfectly conscious of the numerous imperfections which exist in these pages, but, should this attempt to defend shamefully misrepresented phenomena lead more capable investigators to their examination and defence, and shield earnest and impulsive minds from forming hasty opinions, I shall be amply repaid.

T. P. BARKAS.

# MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

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## EARLY HISTORY AND LETTERS.

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The subject of Modern Spiritualism was first brought prominently before the public in the North of England by the publication in January, 1854, of two letters in the columns of the *Newcastle Chronicle*. The letters were headed "Supposed Conversation with Inhabitants of the Spiritual World," and excited considerable attention. No further steps were taken for openly bringing the question before the northern public until October and November, 1855, when I addressed six letters to the Editor of the *North of England News and Advertiser*. These letters called forth a large amount of criticism, and had the effect of directing general attention to the subject of spiritualism. They consisted for the most part of records of proceedings which took place in the presence of a personal friend in a distant part of the country. The concluding remark in this series of letters was, "If asked what produces these phenomena, I reply, I do not know any MATERIAL LAWS which will account for them."

With the exception of three or four lectures by myself in and near Newcastle, and an occasional negative article in the pages of the newspapers, no special excitement on the subject of modern spiritualism existed in the northern counties until November, 1860, when I commenced a series of twenty letters to the Editor of the *North of England News and Advertiser*. These letters appeared weekly; they drew forth eight leading articles from the editor of the paper, forty-three letters from correspondents, the majority being on the negative side, and five poetical effusions, burlesquing the enquiry, and ridiculing the enquirers. I shall best bring before my readers the course of enquiry I pursued, the nature of the defence I set up, and the conclusions to which I had arrived at the time of writing the letters referred to, by quoting the principal parts of the communications, only omitting such portions as had special reference to letters of opponents, which were mere interruptions to the stream of communications I forwarded, and which would not be understood unless the opposition letters were also published.

## LETTER I.

"Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."—1st. Thess. c. 5. v. 21.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamed of in your philosophy."—*Shakspeare.*

"Facts are chieftains that winna ding, an daurna be disputed."—*Burns.*

"That which we know is little, that of which we are ignorant is immense." *La Place.*

"There came a wise man and a fool; the wise man heard, investigated, and decided; the fool decided."

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*To the Editor of the North of England Advertiser.*

SIR,—Deliberately, in the face of sneering, contempt, risk of reputation, dogmatism, and prejudice, and supported by a small number of candid inquirers, sincere believers, and conviction of truth, I profess myself a believer in the phenomena and facts of spiritualism. In other words, I believe that the phenomena, commonly called spiritual manifestations, occur; that they are produced in a great majority of cases without trick, collusion, or mechanical contrivance, that the higher phenomena *cannot* be produced by mechanical contrivance; and that such phenomena are produced by some uncorporeal, intelligent, and invisible agent or agents.

Let it not be understood that I assert all manifestations, palmed off as spiritual, are genuine, nor, that all the teachings by means of table-tipping, mysterious knockings, automatic or spirit writings, are reliable; I believe no such thing, and have no wish to defend such a position. I am only responsible for, and prepared to defend, what I personally assert to be true in relation to physical manifestations, and in reference to the personality and teachings of spirits.

With these preliminary remarks let us proceed to the explanation of the subject.

In the Old and New Testament records we have frequent reference to, and illustrations of, spiritual appearances and teachings. To all, therefore, who believe the scriptures, the possibility of spiritual manifestations, and of direct and indirect spirit teaching, is indisputable. I may refer to Adam, Abraham, Belshazzar, Hagar, Isaac, Lot, Moses, Saul, Mary,

Christ, Peter, and John; angel at sepulchre, apostle liberated from prison, &c., &c. Indeed from the first chapter in Genesis to the last in Revelations, the Bible is almost one continuous record of spiritual manifestations. To those who do not believe the Bible, or who do not believe the miracles in the Bible, these recent spiritual phenomena come as demonstrative evidence of the possibility of spiritual interference, and, in numerous instances, persons who for years have been sceptical as to the truthfulness of the miracles, [and of the spiritual visitations recorded in the Bible, have become sincere believers in both.

In almost every century since the introduction of Christianity into the world, there have been remarkable, and apparently well authenticated, cases of spiritual visitations, and apparitional appearances. I need scarcely inform your readers that so materialistic had the philosophy of the world become, that none but the most credulous, or those who had personally observed apparitions, believed in their existence; and so strong is the prejudice now, that thousands of persons who have seen apparitions, and could bear testimony to the reality and truthfulness of these spiritual appearances, *dare not*, because of their fear of ridicule.

A few years ago everything was ascribed to natural, material laws, and no forces but mechanical and muscular forces were supposed to be possible in our present state of existence. Hence the blind unreasoning prejudice with which modern spiritual manifestations have been met, and the absence of that candour and severe love of truth and fair play which characterise the majority of intelligent men when anything is testified to, which does not come across their strong prejudices. I am far from asserting that we ought to devote ourselves to the investigation of every scheme and supposed discovery propounded by every hair-brained fanatic; but when we have remarkable, and apparently impossible phenomena, testified to by hundreds of respectable men and women, many of whom occupy high educational positions, and none of whom have anything but scorn and contempt to gain if their testimony prove false, it then becomes our duty to investigate, or, at least, to refrain from expressing an opinion, until we have investigated. Confident of the result, a fair and open inquiry is all spiritualists solicit.

In my next communications, I shall, with your permission, give a sketch of the history of spiritualism in America and in England, the testimonies of some of the principal investigators in both countries, and my personal testimony and experiences in the examination of these remarkable phenomena.

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## LETTER II.

Letter II. contained a sketch of modern spiritual manifestations in America, with a brief account of the principal phenomena and the names of the chief investigators. As the substance of the letter is contained in a lecture which appears in a subsequent part of this volume, it is here omitted.

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## LETTER III.

"Dare I say  
No spirit ever brake the band  
That stays him from the native land,  
Where first he walked when clapt in clay!"—*Tennyson*.

"Then the forms of the departed  
Enter at the open door,  
The beloved, the true-hearted,  
Come to visit me once more."—*Longfellow*.

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SIR,—In bringing before your readers my personal testimony relative to the phenomena of spiritualism, it may not be out of place to observe that the value of testimony depends not so much upon *quantity* as *quality*; the evidence of twelve really competent men being of more value than that of 1,000 or 10,000 incompetent. Another feature in reference to testimony is worthy of notice, viz., that the more remarkable, unexpected, and apparently impossible the phenomena testified to, the more numerous, reliable, and skilled in material and psychological science, and trained in habits of observation, should be the witnesses. I lay no claim to any extraordinary skill or knowledge, but ask to be recognised as an average observer and a truthful narrator of what I have seen, heard, and felt.



I shall be careful rather to *understate* than overstate the facts which have come before me, and will not, for the purpose of establishing my position, wilfully avoid noticing what appear to me to be the weak points in the evidence for the genuineness and extra-natural character of the phenomena. Not being a special pleader, anxious to defend a position, be it true or false, but only desirous to discover truth, if it can be shown, that the phenomena I have seen, and may yet see, are illusory and deceptive, I shall give up my present views at any sacrifice, and bear as patiently as I can the contempt to which my imperfect observations and rash conclusions entitle me. I may state to those of your readers who do not know me, that I have devoted a considerable portion of my life to the study of the natural sciences, and have perhaps seen and read more of mesmerism, hypnotism, electro-biology, phreno-mesmerism, clairvoyance, electricity, galvanism, magnetism, odylism, optica, acoustics, and other kindred arts and sciences, than the average of educated persons.

I claim, therefore, to know the substance of what has been done by these instrumentalities, and allowing the widest sweep for each and all of them, I cannot account for the manifestations I have witnessed on ordinarily recognised material or psychological principles.

(I here omit a description of the rudimentary phenomena which occurred between January, 1854, and November, 1855.)

From January 12, 1854, to September 17, 1860, I had observed many remarkable, and, to me, inexplicable phenomena in connexion with table moving, had conversed with great numbers of believers and unbelievers, had read scores of books and hundreds of pamphlets and papers on the subject of spiritualism, and could not, until I had witnessed the phenomena which were presented to me, in London, on the evenings of Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, September 18, 19, and 20, 1860, believe in what is popularly designated the supernatural or spiritual cause of the phenomena. On these evenings I received what is to me satisfactory evidence, that no natural, material, or psychological law, under the control of, or solely influenced by, any embodied human being, could produce what I then saw, heard, and felt. My letter of this week has, I fear, extended already to too great a length. I, therefore, reserve the description of the *séances* I attended in London until next week.

## LETTER IV.

"The generality of persons, by whom the most important and reliable information might be given, have been educated into the habit of concealing it entirely, or communicating it with great caution, lest it subject them to the odious suspicion of being weak, visionary, credulous, superstitious, or partially insane."  
—*Adin Ballou.*

"That the dead are seen no more," said Imiso, "I will not undertake to maintain against the concurrent and universal testimony of all ages, and of all nations."  
\* \* \* This opinion, which prevails as far as human nature is diffused, could become universal only by its truth."—*Rasselas.*

SIR,—On Monday the 17th of September, I left Newcastle for London; and, on Tuesday morning, called upon Mr. Pitman, Paternoster Row, the publisher of the *Spiritual Magazine*, to ascertain the address of its editor. I was referred to an eminent bookseller in Holborn; and, on calling upon him, at five o'clock in the afternoon, I received the addresses of three mediums, two of whom were mediums for physical manifestations, and the other for oral communications. I selected the physical manifestation mediums as the most likely to present to me reliable phenomena in the field of modern spiritualism.

I went to the residence of the mediums, in company with a gentleman who lodged at the same boarding house with myself. We reached their place of abode about eight o'clock. The house is located in a poor neighbourhood, and the mediums—who are poor—occupied two rooms on the second floor. On entering the room, we found assembled the two mediums, one a stout and unintellectual-looking lady, about sixty years of age, and the other her niece, a married lady, apparently about twenty-one years of age, but neither very quick nor intelligent. I remarked, on entering the room, that we were come to observe spiritual manifestations, and would be glad to be allowed to remain as spectators. The older medium, whom I shall for the future notice as Mrs. M., said; "You are quite welcome." I immediately proceeded to take stock of the apartment, and the people who were in it. The size of the room is about 24 feet by 16 feet, and was very poorly furnished. There were in it two round tables, standing on central pillars; one table, about 2½ feet, the other 4 feet diameter; a chest of drawers, about a dozen chairs, a few in-

ferior pictures, and light curtains to the two windows, completed the furnishing of the room. There was no carpet on the floor, and no drapery on the tables. Two candles were burning on the larger table. There were present when we entered four ladies and four gentlemen. Mrs. M., her niece, a lady visitor, a gentleman, whom I afterwards learned is an artist, and a young imbecile-looking man, were sitting round the small table. The wife of the artist was sitting at a little distance from the table, and two gentlemen, apparently sixty years of age, were sitting as spectators at a distance of about eight feet. When we entered the room, Mrs. M. said to the agent moving the table, "Are either of these strangers to sit down with us?" We received the answer that I was. I sat down near the table, and the whole of the persons in the circle rested the tips of their fingers on it. We immediately got replies to several questions, some of which were true, and others could not be authenticated. At the expiration of about fifteen minutes I asked if the agent causing the knockings could tell me my name, and received three affirmative raps. I may here mention that answers to questions were sometimes given by the table rising up on two legs, and striking the floor with the third; but more generally by knockings of various degrees of loudness and intensity in various parts of the floor, on the chairs, on the table, and often, at my request, immediately below *that part* of the top of the table on which my hands rested. I could distinctly feel the vibrations through the table top. Having been promised my surname, I proceeded to repeat the alphabet, and knockings took place at various letters, none of which letters at all corresponded with my name. It is somewhat remarkable that on no occasion within my remembrance, not even when the mediums knew me, have I had my name, or particulars about myself, correctly told. It was now asked if we might be permitted to see spirit hands, and an answer in the affirmative was given by the agent moving the table. We left the smaller table, and proceeded to the larger. While this change was going on, two gentleman visitors entered the room, one of whom, together with those who had previously sat at the small table, sat down round the larger one. I sat with my back to the windows, and a space of about three feet in length was left unoccupied at that part of the table opposite to me. Mrs. M. sat at the left side of the space, and

her niece on the right. The candles were now put out, and a small hand-bell was placed upon the floor about three feet from the table; it was rung vigorously for about a minute. During this time the light from the street was sufficiently bright to enable me to see, with considerable distinctness, the faces and hands of the persons at the table, and the various spectators in the room. All the hands of the operators were on the table, and no other person sat or stood within a distance of six or eight feet of us. We were now told to expect the appearance of spirit hands. There were numerous knockings in various parts of the room, and the table cover, which was composed of oil cloth, and was about two inches in diameter larger than the top of a table, and lay loosely on it, was, at that part opposite to me, raised up two or three times. We were now on the *qui vive* for the appearance of the spirit hands. A gentleman who sat between Mrs. M. and myself, and whom I had, on entering the room, set down as of infirm mind, suddenly plunged his hand beneath the table, and at the same instant the younger medium rose screaming from her chair. She said she felt something like a heavy log fall into her lap, and the weak-minded gentleman said he felt something like a human arm, which vanished beneath his grasp. The young lady would no longer sit in what appeared to be a dangerous position, and I exchanged places with her. For a considerable time neither knockings nor any other manifestations could be obtained. The circle seemed to be disorganised, and I endeavoured, but in vain, to get a little light into the mind of the gentleman who had created the disturbance. The candles were re-lighted, a few of us proceeded to the small table, and several rapping communications were received, none of which were of much importance.

This evening's proceedings did not greatly influence me in favour of the unmixed genuineness of the phenomena, and I resolved next night to go early, and make a close examination of the whole proceedings. Before leaving the room, I turned the tables upside down, and made a minute examination of them, and of the floor. No mechanical contrivance of any kind was visible. In my next, I will give details of the second *séance*, and describe phenomena that appear to me to be inexplicable or any known natural material on psychological principles.

## SECOND SEANCE IN THE HOUSE OF MRS. M., IN LONDON.

### LETTER V.

"We talk of a credulous vulgar without always recollecting that there is a vulgar credulity which, in historical matters, as well as those in religion, finds it easier to doubt than to examine, and endeavours to assume the credit of an *esprit fort*, by denying whatever happens to be beyond the very limited comprehension of the public."—*Sir Walter Scott.*

SIR,—In my last communication I endeavoured to give your readers a sketch of the occurrences which took place at the first *séance* I attended in London. To-day I attempt a pen and ink sketch of the second. On Wednesday evening, September 19th, 1860, I entered the residence of Mrs. M., at seven o'clock, and was shown into an unoccupied room. Being alone, I took an opportunity of making a minute examination of the place. At the expiration of about five minutes Mrs. M. entered, and we engaged in conversation on the subject of spiritualism; in a few minutes we were joined by a tall, gentlemanly-looking person, whom I afterwards learned was Mr. Coleman, the author of one of the letters in defence of spiritualism, which appeared in the *Morning Star*; he was followed, in a few minutes, by Mrs. M.'s niece. We immediately formed a party round the small table, and after sitting three minutes, the table began to give signs of activity. A great number of questions were asked by Mr. C., and answers were received. I again asked for my name, but without success. We then proceeded to the large table, and, while we were being seated, the artist and the young lady, who were present on the previous evening, entered the room and joined the circle. I sat at the side of the table most distant from the window, and a space of three feet at that part of the table nearest the window was left unoccupied. The distance of the table from the window was about four feet. Mrs. M. and her niece sat on my right, the young lady, Mr. C., and the artist, on my left. The candles were extinguished, but the light from the street enabled me to recognise the features of the company, and to write without difficulty. We asked to see spirit hands, but our wish was not acceded to. Mr. C. took five pieces of paper, about the size of note paper, and making them quite level, they were laid near the window, at a distance

of four feet from any of us. I almost immediately heard a crumpling sound among the papers, as if they were being turned over, and in a short time the young medium said, "I feel something on my knee." I said, "See what it is." She put down her hand and produced a bundle of paper. I took, opened, and counted them, and found there were four pieces. I said, "Five were laid down; will you please to see if any pieces are on the floor?" The artist went to the window and produced the remaining sheet of paper. Mr. C. said to me, "Did you ever feel the spirit grasp?" I said, "No." "Could you bear to feel it?" I said, "Certainly, I am prepared to bear anything that does not seriously hurt." He then said, pointing to me, "Will the spirits touch this gentleman?" I was immediately grasped by the right leg, near the ankle, round the calf, slapped on each side of the knee, my foot lifted up, and trousers strongly pulled several times. Mr. C. said, "Let the gentleman feel your five fingers," and immediately five impressions in consecutive order were felt, as if a hand of five fingers in succession were run down my leg. I put my hand on my knee, under the table, and said, "please to shake hands with me;" but the invitation was not accepted. At this stage of the proceedings, a gentleman, who was present on the previous evening, entered the room, accompanied by a gentleman about 21 years of age. The young gentleman sat down at the table between Mrs. M. and myself. I said to him, "Have you ever attended a meeting of this kind before, or seen any 'spiritual manifestations?'" He replied "No." I said, "Do you know any of the parties at this table?" He again replied "No." Mr. C. asked "if he had been grasped by spirits?" He replied "No." Mr. C. then said "Will the spirits touch this young gentleman?" He was immediately touched on various parts of his leg, his boot was taken hold of, and his knee knocked forcibly against the table top. It was then asked if the spirit present knew this young man, and the answer being in the affirmative, he was requested to repeat the alphabet, commencing with A, and going forward until knockings took place; by this means the name R-E-Y-N-O-L-D-S was knocked out without any hesitation. I said, "Is your name Reynolds?" He said, "It is." Mr. C. then said, "Ask who is conversing with you." The young man responded, "Is it my father?" "No." "My mother?"

"No." "My sister?" "No." "My brother?" "Yes." "Will you give me your name." "Yes." The alphabet was again repeated, and the name G-E-O-R-G-E knocked out. "That," the young man said, "was my deceased brother's name." At this period a lady and gentleman entered the room, both of whom sat at the table, and the *candles were re-lighted*. The foot, leg, and dress of the lady were pulled in the same vigorous manner as were mine, and no visible agent produced these effects. We now left the larger table and proceeded to the smaller. Five sat down; I was not among the number. Mr. C. and I conversed for a few minutes, and he at length said, "Did you ever hear music played by the spirits?" I replied, "No." He then took a guitar, which was standing in the corner of the room, and *after I had carefully examined it*, he sat down, near the table, resting his left hand upon it, and between the fingers and thumb of the right hand he held the upper part of the guitar, and rested the lower part on the floor. *At the moment* the guitar touched the floor, the clock commenced to strike nine, the guitar accompanied the clock perfectly, both as to time and note. Mr. C. then said, "Will any lady or gentleman sing?" The young gentleman, who entered the room with the young lady, sang a few stanzas, and the guitar accompanied him with the greatest precision, *no one touching the strings*. I then, unasked, whistled "Yankee Doodle," and was accompanied by the guitar. *During the whole of this time two candles were burning* in the room. I stood within a foot of the guitar; no one touched it except Mr. C., and that merely to prevent it from falling. A gentleman in the room was asked to play a violin; he played several tunes, and the guitar accompanied the whole without missing a single note. During a part of this time *I held the guitar*, no one else touching it. *I felt, distinctly, the vibrations of the strings*. The old gentleman, who entered the room with Mr. Reynolds, next played on the violin, and was accompanied by the guitar. Mr. C. said "Will the spirits strike the treble note?" The treble was struck. "The bass note?" The bass chord was struck. "Will you please to run your fingers across the strings?" A succession of sounds, as if a person were running his fingers across the strings of the instrument, were immediately heard. *The responses followed the suggestions without the interval of a second*. The guitar was laid aside, and a gentleman was asked to play

the violin ; he did so, five of the company, myself among the number, were standing round the table, and resting the tips of our fingers on the top. The table danced and beat upon the floor with accuracy, as to time, the tune played on the violin. One of the company then said, "Please dance in the air," and *the table instantly rose* about six or eight inches from the floor, and *for some minutes* danced and beat time to the music, *in the air, without touching the floor.*

Mr. C. and I arose to depart. When we were about to leave the room, and were at a considerable distance from the moving table, he said, "I'll make a suggestion to the spirits to put one of these candles out." There were two candles burning on the large table. I said, "*Do so, but do not express yourself so that any one in the room can know what you want done.*" This was agreed. Mr. C. and I then went to the party round the table, and he said, "Spirits, will you please to do what I have suggested to this gentleman I would ask you to do?" Three affirmative raps immediately followed. Mr. C. said, "Do it, then." The table immediately began to dance across the room ; the people touching it appeared surprised at its actions, and it gradually came nearer the larger table. When it reached the table, I, unsuccessfully, endeavoured to anticipate the means by which the candle would be put out. After the table had moved uneasily for about half a minute, it *rose into the air, glided over the edge of the table, where the candle was burning, and coming suddenly down on the wick of the candle, knocked the wick into the grease, and then gently glided down to the floor.* Thus ended the second seance, and I walked to my lodgings with abundant food for reflection.

In my next I'll report the concluding conversazione, and, afterwards, state my present opinion respecting these mysterious phenomena, and reply to objections.

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## LETTER VI.

"God only can know the results of a determined and stupid ignorance which refuses to be taught."—*Family Herald*, December 15, 1860.

"The inductive and Christian philosopher, in this department, as in others, finds both truth and fable blended together in the same tradition ; and, therefore, neither awed by authority, nor allured by the fascinations of novelty, he institutes an examination into the merits of a subject, which, if true, cannot but



deeply interest the thoughtful ; and which, if false, should be banished from the minds of all."—*Dr. Campbell.*

"And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not."—*Luke, xxiv. chapter, 11 verses.*

SIR,—On Thursday evening, September 20, 1860, I went to the house of Mrs. M. at half-past seven o'clock, and, on entering, I found Mrs. M., her niece, Mr. G. M. Reynolds and two of his sons, an old gentleman who appeared to be short-sighted, and a military-looking gentleman, sitting at the table. Mr. Coleman was sitting at a distance from the table. Immediately on entering the room I saw that some unpleasantness had taken place among the party assembled, and, after a few ordinary manifestations had occurred, Mr. Reynolds, his sons, and the short-sighted gentleman, left the room.

I afterwards read, in Mr. Reynold's paper, for September 29th, his account of the *séance*, and having seen that report, and read its description of the unfairness which, on his own showing, he and one of his own sons manifested, I am not surprised at the feeling which prevailed in the circle.

Mrs. M., her niece, Mr. C., the military gentleman, and myself, sat down round the table. In the course of five minutes, knockings were heard. I took a small memorandum book out of my pocket, and selecting a clean page, I placed it on the floor between my feet, open at that page, and laid a pencil on it.

Mr. C. said, "Will the spirits please to write on that book?"

I immediately heard a rustling noise, and in a few minutes I stooped down and picked up the book and pencil. On examining the page, there did not appear to be any writing ; but, on looking more closely, I saw two long scratches on each side of the open page, having the appearance of having been made with a point of iron. I then looked at my pencil, and found the lead was exhausted, and nothing left but the handle and iron point. I have that book in my possession now.

Mr. C. said he would request the spirits to raise the table. I said, "Let us stand up at such a distance from the table, as merely to be able to reach it." We did so. Mr. C. said, "Please to raise the table," and the table immediately rose 18 inches in the air, and remained there until we counted 70 ; it then gradually descended. During the whole of this evening, two candles were burning in the room. I could see over and

under the table, *and there was nothing visible to support it.* Mr. C. said, "I'll ask the spirits to raise the table again, and you may press it down." I put my hand on the top of the table to keep it down; yet it rose, notwithstanding my downward pressure. It was now arranged that only two should touch the table, and three remain spectators. The young medium placed her hands on the top of the table, and the military gentleman, who was sceptical, placed the ends of his fingers underneath the edge of the table next to him. In that position the table was lifted several inches from the floor, and I could see both above and beneath with perfect distinctness. I said to the two ladies present, "I wish, for my own satisfaction—but more particularly to be able to meet the objections of inquirers—your permission to examine carefully the tables, floor, your feet, and the skirts of your dresses." They at once said, "You are at perfect liberty to do so." I immediately examined the tables, floor, and feet, and skirts of the mediums. There was no contrivance about the table, no crevice or hole on the floor; their feet were covered with ordinary strong laced boots, and their skirts were of the material, but less ample, than those usually worn.

I have now placed before your readers an outline of my experience in modern physical manifestations, and, am desirous, before we proceed to expound and defend theories, to know what appear to be the weak points in the evidence adduced, in order that by removing objections as to the reality of the phenomena, we may have a recognised basis of facts, on which to build hypotheses. It is useless to argue, for a single second, respecting the causes of certain phenomena which I believe to be genuine, if the majority of your correspondents believe them to be delusive. I shall, therefore, wait until next week, in order to obtain the opinions of those of your readers who are interested in this matter, and shall, in my next, give the additional testimonies of trustworthy and well-known witnesses.

I may mention, in concluding this week's epistle, that the following are the common theories on the subject of spiritualism:—

I. That the phenomena are produced by disembodied human beings, some bad and some good.

II. That they are produced by demons.

III. That they are produced partly by demons and partly by disembodied human beings.

IV. That they are produced by a mixed influence of demons, disembodied spirits, and automatic cerebral action.

V. That they are produced by disembodied spirits, powerful embodied human beings acting mesmerically; and by automatic action of the brains of the mediums.

VI. That they are not produced by spirits, but solely by the influence of magnetisers and the automatic action of the cerebral, spinal, and sympathetic nerve centres of mediums, acting through the agency of, and using an imponderable and all-pervading fluid designated by Reichenbach, ODYLE.

VII. And, lastly, by those who know little or nothing about the matter, that the phenomena are the result of trick and mechanical contrivance.

As an indication of the interest which has recently been taken in this remarkable subject, I may mention that articles and letters on spiritualism have appeared in the following serials:—*Blackwood, Bentley, Cornhill, Once-a-Week, All the Year Round, Punch, Times, Saturday Review, Nonconformist, Lancet, Press, Family Herald, Morning Star, Morning Advertiser, Reynolds, Daily Chronicle, Daily Express, North of England Advertiser, &c., &c.*

I intend next week to quote the testimonies of the following gentlemen to the truth of the phenomena of modern spiritual manifestations:—The late Robt. Stephenson, Esq.; Mr. Robert Chambers, publisher, Edinburgh; Dr. Collyer, London; Dr. Garth Wilkinson, London; Mr. Newton Crossland, London; Professor De Morgan, London; Dr. Ashburner, London; Mr. Robert Bell, author of Annotated Edition of the Poets, London; Mr. B. Coleman, London; Mr. Wilkinson, London; Mr. Rymer, Australia, &c., &c. I could quote the testimonies of many gentlemen residing in this locality, were it not that dread of prejudice and fear of ridicule will not allow them to permit the publication of their names. It's an amusing feature in the history of this question to notice that, although a considerable number of persons have, within the last few weeks, written letters to the *Daily Express, Daily Chronicle, and North of England Advertiser*, with the exception of the Rev. A. A. Rees and myself, both of whom believe in the modern mysterious phenomena, none of the writers have had courage enough to sign their names to their epistles.

## LETTER VII.

"*Magna est Veritas, et prevalebit.*"

"Before you condemn this, or any other novelty, sit down five minutes and ask yourselves what you *know* about it.

"Laughter at strange things is often as much a proof of ignorance as of knowledge; and I believe it is so in this case."—*Rev. Arthur Augustus Rees.*

SIR,—Before entering upon an examination of the various hypotheses which have been propounded to account for the remarkable phenomena I have described, I wait the opinions of those of your readers who are interested in the matter, as to the reality and genuineness of the manifestations already portrayed. I find that conversions to the belief, in the reality of the phenomena—and even to the theory of their spiritual origin—are of daily, almost hourly, occurrence; and the only apprehension I now have is, that those believers in their genuineness, rush too hastily to conclusions as to their cause or causes. Let me caution such not to arrive at any decision respecting the power or powers by which the manifestations are produced, until they have carefully examined the whole subject; and that, I am sure, they will not be able to do in less than twelve months.

I hope to be able to illustrate the seven theories laid down in my previous letter, and *eventually to point out the hypothesis that appears to me to have most evidence in its favour.*

I now fulfil the promise made in my letter of last week, by quoting the opinions of several gentlemen of eminence:—

The late Robert Stephenson, Esq., M.P. I know on the testimony of a personal friend of the late Mr. Stephenson, that he attended *séances* in the residence of Milner Gibson, Esq., M.P., and saw manifestations which convinced him that the effects were not produced by any trick or mechanical contrivance. What his opinions were as to the agent or agents producing the phenomena, I have not been informed.

Mr. Robert Chambers, publisher of *Chambers' Journal*, has attended *séances*, and witnessed many of the most remarkable phenomena. On one occasion, at the private residence of a friend, he was informed by knockings, that he was in conversation with the spirit of his father. In order to test the reality of this connexion between himself and the invisible agent, he asked the

power to play upon the accordion, which was lying on the floor, the favourite air his father was accustomed to play on the flute. The accordion immediately—*no one touching the keys*—played “Ye banks and braes o’ Bonny Doon.” “That,” said Mr. Chambers, “was my father’s favourite Scotch tune, and that the manner in which he used to play it.” He then said, “Play my father’s favourite English air,” and the accordion immediately played “The last Rose of Summer.” Mr. C. acknowledged that it was his father’s favourite English tune. Mr. Chambers is so impressed with the extraordinary character of the proceedings he has witnessed, that he has proceeded to America with Mr. Dale Owen, author of “Footfalls on the boundary of another World,” for the purpose of fully investigating the subject. When he returns we may hope to have from his pen some remarkable disclosures.

Dr. Collyer, Beta House, 8, Alpha Road, St. John’s Wood, London, has for several years been a lecturer on biology, popular delusions, &c., and until the last three months, was an entire unbeliever in the genuineness of the kind of phenomena I have brought before you. He first attended a *séance* on the 11th October, 1860. Since that time he has seen several remarkable manifestations, and now admits that they are not, and cannot be, produced by any mechanical contrivance, or optical illusion. He does not say they are produced by spirits, but is evidently inclined to that belief.

Dr. James John Garth Wilkinson, St. John’s Wood, London, author of a work on “The Human Body, in its connexion with Man,” has for many years investigated this subject, and has had physical and psychological manifestations in his own house and among his own family. He is thoroughly convinced of the genuineness of the phenomena; and, if I mistake not, recognises the spirituality of their origin.

Mr. and Mrs. Newton Crossland, London, have frequently witnessed the manifestations. Mrs. C. is a writing and drawing medium, and has published an elaborate work on the subject of spiritualism.

Mr. De Morgan, professor of mathematics, London, one of the greatest mathematicians of the age, is not only a believer, but, if I am not wrongly informed, a medium.

Dr. Ashburner, London, is a believer, and has, at considerable length, and with great ability, defended spiritualism through the press.

Mr. Robert Bell, London, one of the cleverest literary critics of the day, is the writer of the article in No. 8 of the *Coruhill Magazine*, entitled "Stranger than Fiction," and believes in the genuineness of the phenomena.

Dr. Gully, Hydropathic Institution, Malvern, one of the shrewdest and most cautious physicians in the kingdom, says, in speaking of a modern spiritual *séance* he attended, "Then, the accordion music. I distinctly saw the instrument moving, and heard it playing when held only at one end, again and again. I held it myself for a short time, and had good reason to know it was vehemently pulled at the other end, and not by Mr. Home's toes, unless that gentleman has legs three yards long. I have heard Blagrove repeatedly, and it is no libel to say, that he never did produce such exquisite distant and echo notes as those which delighted our ears. I believe I am speaking the truth when I say, that not one person in that room could play the accordian at all. Mr. Home cannot play upon it."

Mr. Rymer, solicitor, late of Ealing, near London, now in Australia, says in his lecture on spiritualism, delivered in London, "I stood for a few moments at the end of the table; my attention was immediately arrested by sounds; it was stated to be my little boy who had passed away some years ago. I asked if he recollected how pleased he was when on earth to place a chair on my return home. The chair was immediately moved round the corner of the table, and by no visible agency, it was placed behind me, and I sat down upon it." Mr. Rymer further said, "It was then spelt out by sounds on the table—*some will show you their hands to-night*. The table was then gently raised, and lifted up several times. *A hand appeared above the table, and took from the dress of one of the party a minature broach, and handed it to several at the table. Several hands and arms were then distinctly seen by all at the table, of different forms and sizes. A spirit hand took up a Bible which was on the table, and opened it. This was seen by all. A leaf was folded down. The hand took a pencil and marked two verses, 16 and 17 of 13th Matthew,—* 'But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they

hear. For, verily, I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see these things which ye see, and have not seen them ; and to hear these things which ye hear, and have not heard them.' ”

A personal friend of mine, who resides within twenty miles of Newcastle, was present when the above occurred, and vouches for the truth of the statements. *Allow me again to ask your readers if they want more evidence.*

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### LETTER VIII.

“ Reason determines, that for every phenomenon there is an agent ; but never, without sufficient data, does she determine *what that agent is*. The imagination often assumes this prerogative, and gives conclusions *without facts*. Those persons who are the most ignorant of the principles of nature, are the most positive and precipitate in their decisions upon any question of mystery. They know (!) that there is no natural explanation, and the man is a fool (!) who attempts to find one.”—*Rogers*.

“ Truths, both great and small, and they alone, amongst all-changing things, are perennial, and do not fail.”—*Spiritual Magazine, January, 1861.*

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SIR,—In addressing a promiscuous audience, such as the 50,000 readers of the *Advertiser* may fairly be supposed to be ; on a novel, mysterious, and abstruse subject—such as that the phenomena of which I have for some weeks been endeavouring to describe—I feel the difficulty of communicating the views taught by others, and *eventually those held by myself*, to persons who stand at different degrees of elevation, have such diversities of mental penetration, and consequently occupy greatly varied stand-points of observation. In my sixth letter I recorded seven theories ; the FIRST being the spiritual theory, and the last that the phenomena are the result of trick and mechanical contrivance. I shall now omit the latter theory as entirely out of court. No rational man who has read or thought much on the subject can conceive that 2,000,000 of *believers* and *thirty thousand* mediums, from all classes of society, and of every degree of intelligence, could lend themselves to an imposture ; an imposture so clever and daring as to solicit and encourage the closest scrutiny, and yet never in the course of ten years be discovered. Is it within the region of possibility—not to say probability—that 30,000 impostors should daily and for several years deceive the public,

without one of them ever, in a fit of remorse, or for love of gain or notoriety, exposing the delusion? While my offer of £100 to any person who will produce, in my presence, by hidden and not easily discoverable mechanical contrivance, such phenomena as I have seen produced without any contrivance whatever, remains unclaimed, and even unthreatened, your readers are perfectly justified in believing that theory No. 7, the least defensible of all theories, is not the truth. Let those who believe it is, explain how the supposed tricks are performed.

Theory 6 is—"The phenomena are not produced by spirits, but solely by the influence of magnetisers and the automatic action of the cerebral, spinal, and sympathetic nerve centres of mediums, acting through and using an imponderable fluid, designated by Baron Reichenbach *odyle* or *od.*"

The best, most candid, learned, and elaborate defence of this theory is written by Professor E. C. Rogers, of America, who has devoted many years to the study of the occult sciences, and has brought a logical mind, stored with numerous and varied facts connected with physical and psychological phenomena, to illustrate this recondite, and at present mysterious subject. This theory divides itself into three heads:—I. The influence of magnetisers. II. Automatic action of the cerebral, spinal, and sympathetic nerve centres. III. The imponderable fluid *odyle*.

Professor Rogers admits, and I agree with him, that magnetisers have the power of producing, with more or less certainty, the following effects:—They can render rigid any of the muscles of their patients, whether voluntary or involuntary. For example, they can catalypse the muscles of the arm, or retard or accelerate the action of the heart. They can render inoperative, or entirely change, the normal characteristics of the five senses of their subjects. In other words, they can render their patients *blind*, deaf, dumb, incapable of smell, taste, or feeling, or they can produce spectra, which are entirely subjective, making those under their influence believe that a table is a race-horse, that they are hearing beautiful music, where no music is being played, that they are eating the most delightful viands when they are not eating anything whatever, that they are enjoying the most delightful scents when surrounded by the most obnoxious odours, that arti-



cles which are in reality cold are intensely hot, and those that are really hot are very cold. *Mesmeric patients are subject to every conceivable delusion.*

Mesmerisers have also the power to control susceptible subjects without their being conscious of any influence being exerted, and that, too, at great distances. Mesmerisers have the power of placing their subjects *en-rapport* with themselves, so that whatever is done to the operator shall be felt by the patient, and whatever is *thought* by the operator shall be *read* by the patient. *Another remarkable phase of mesmeric phenomena is, that the mesmeric subject, when PERFECTLY AWAKE, is entirely under the will of the operator, and does whatever the operator wills him to do, without a word being spoken, a sign made, or the mesmeriser and subject seeing each other.*

Mesmerisers have also the power of rendering their subjects clairvoyant. In the first stage, the subject has the power of reading the mind of the operator, next of reading the minds of those with whom he is placed *en-rapport* by his magnetiser, and finally the power of describing what is being done at distant places, when neither the operator nor any one in the locality has any knowledge of the place to which the attention of the clairvoyant is directed. With the exception of the last, or independent clairvoyance, *I have personal knowledge of facts* which illustrate the whole of the above statements, and the testimony of well accredited persons makes clairvoyance a fact as certain as the electric telegraph.

Automatic action means involuntary, unconscious action. The cerebral, spinal, and sympathetic nerve centres, are, 1, the brain, 2, the active nerve matter of the medulla oblongata and spinal cord, and 3, the numerous ganglia of sympathetic nerves which are scattered throughout the abdomen.

Od or Odyle, is an emanation or force discovered by Baron Reichenbach, and visible to a class of persons who are designated sensitives. This force emanates from the human body, and more or less from all organised and unorganised substances. It is not electricity, and has properties very different from that fluid. To understand this subject with a moderate degree of completeness, your readers should peruse Dr. Gregory's translation of Reichenbach's *Researches*, Gregory's *Letters to a Candid Enquirer*, Sandby's *Mesmerism and its Opponents*, Townsend's *Facts in Mesmerism*, Haddock's *Somnolism* and

Pyscheism, Noble on the Brain, Illustrated Practical Mesmerism, Dr. Carpenter on Human Physiology, Spurzheim on the Brain and Nervous System, Rogers' Philosophy of Mysterious Rappings, Judge Edmonds on Spiritualism, and fifty other books which it would be tedious to name; a list of which I shall be happy to give to any of your readers who, after reading the above, desire further information. To understand this subject apart from the theory of the interference of disembodied spirits, we must recognise the reality of what is termed by the Germans, *doppel ganger*, or double walking; that is, that a person living in the body, may by means of his spiritual body, or of an influence proceeding from his spiritual body, make himself the true *Ego*, visible at great distances from his natural body, and move articles of furniture, pencils, &c., &c., his material body being at the same time at a great distance, and it may be, unconscious of any action whatever. Several illustrations of these peculiar phenomena are given in Dale Owen's Footfalls on the Boundaries of another World, Mrs. Crowe's Night Side of Nature, Cassell's Tract on Spiritual Manifestations, and in some excellent articles in Chambers' Journal. From this acknowledged basis the advocates of the phenomena, being the result of natural laws, and not the production of disembodied spirits, assert that in many instances mesmerisers impress and control their patients in such a manner that they unconsciously produce the phenomena, and that many of the movings may be accounted for on the *doppel ganger* principle of some embodied being, by means of his spiritual body, acting through the influence of odyle, producing the physical manifestations. Professor Rogers, the great exponent of this theory, accounts, apparently to his own satisfaction, for all the common manifestations, for the appearance of spirit hands and bodies, and for the answers to oral, written, and silent questions, but he does not refer to (and his theory does not *even appear to touch*) the hypothesis that will account for the performance of the most complicated and beautiful music, played at the request of any person in the audience, where no person present is capable of playing at all, and produced from guitars or accordions without any person touching the strings or keys. That theory is the most deserving of recognition which most satisfactorily accounts for ALL THE phenomena. In a case of this kind, where evidence is

so various and contradictory, we cannot hope to arrive at demonstration, but merely to decide according to the balance of probabilities.

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### LETTER IX.

Is confined to replies to opponents, and was made brief for the purpose of allowing one of them full space in which to annihilate my views.

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### LETTER X.

SIR,—All the theories I have broached as those held by different classes of believers in "Modern Mysterious Manifestations," acknowledge the genuineness, objectivity, and reality of the phenomena described in the various works on modern spiritualism. I think the evidence that has already been brought before your readers will have convinced them, or, at least, will have rendered them less sceptical as to the reality of the marvellous occurrences related. Every day increases the number of believers. Mr. N. Morgan, lecturer on mesmerism, visited, at my recommendation, Mr. Henry Porteous, of Blackhill, and has been convinced of the genuineness of the phenomena, and that they are not produced by any mechanical means, nor by voluntary or involuntary muscular pressure.

The time is not far distant when all persons capable of understanding and being convinced by evidence will acknowledge the *bona fide* character of the majority of the occurrences that are described in works and letters on spiritualism.

Many negative and affirmative writers on spiritualism, believe that the following embraces all the various grades and classes of *finite* spirits, viz., good and bad angels, and good and bad disembodied human beings. The bad angels and bad disembodied human spirits are popularly designated devils or demons. There is *little reason*, however, to suppose that the term *demon* is ever *rightly applied*, except to bad disembodied human spirits. In the majority of instances, if not in every case, where persons are said to be possessed by *devils*, and to

be under demoniacal possession, the meaning of the sacred writers would be more correctly expressed if the word translated *devil* or *devils* were translated *demon* or *demons*. *Demon* is said to be of GRECIAN origin, and means to *discriminate* or *know*. *Demon* means therefore a *knowing one*. Men were anciently called demons as a title of honour. Aristotle, for his great learning, was called a demon. Demon from simply meaning an *embodied knowing one*, became a title of disembodied spirits, and these became the demi-gods of the ancients. *Hesiod*, the oldest of the Greek bards, says, according to *Plutarch*—"The spirits of mortals become *demons* when separated from their earthly bodies." In the times of the patriarchs, long before the time of Moses, we find demons were recognised and worshipped. Among the Jews demons were generally, if not universally, denoted unclean or wicked spirits; but, among the Pagans, demon as often represented a good as an evil spirit. Instance the *good demon of Socrates*. In the Christian scriptures the term demon, in one form or other, is mentioned seventy-five times, and in all but one or two cases it indicates unclean spirits." When we are told "The devils believe and tremble," it ought to be rendered "the demons believe, &c." Demon, then, we think we are justified in saying generally means, in the Christian phraseology, an evil disembodied human spirit.

Our Saxon ancestors called the spirits of the departed GHOSTS. Guest and ghost with them were nearly synonymous. They regarded the *body* as the *house*, and the *spirit* as the *guest*. Tyndale, in his version of the New Testament, very properly makes the *Holy Spirit* of the Old Testament the Holy Ghost of the New. He was the promised *guest* of the Christian temple. Notwithstanding this fact, there appears to be, in the majority of minds, a natural fear of *spirits, ghosts, or supernatural appearances* of any kind. Instance Job, 4th c. 15th v.—"Then a spirit passed before my face, and the hair of my flesh stood up; it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof; an image was before mine eyes; there was silence, and I heard a voice." Matthew, 14th c. 26th verse.—"And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying it is a spirit; and they cried out for fear." Luke, 24th c. 37 to 39th v.—"But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen

a spirit \* \* \* Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." *Angels* are never said to enter into any one. *Demons* have entered into human bodies, and into the bodies of inferior creatures. I know of no instance in scripture where the term *demon* and angel can properly be used interchangeably. We may, therefore, with some show of propriety, believe that demons are disembodied human spirits.

We will now, for a few minutes, look at the five unexplained spiritual theories. I admit, and, if it be necessary, can prove, that the manifestations which take place, and the communications which are received, are more or less influenced by mesmeric and automatic cerebral action. I shall confine my remarks, therefore, to the first three theories, which are 1.—That the phenomena are produced by disembodied human spirits, some bad and some good. 2.—That they are produced by demons. 3.—That they are produced partly by demons and partly by disembodied spirits. These three theories were constructed in accordance with the prevailing notions about angels, demons, and departed spirits. With the preceding definition of demons before us, it will be seen that the *three theories* properly take the form of *two*, viz. :—1. The phenomena are produced by disembodied human spirits, some bad and some good. 2. They are produced by demons, or, in scripture phraseology, unclean spirits. The latter view is held by many religious and well-meaning people, who have witnessed few, if any, of the phenomena, but who believe the statements that are made by well accredited persons. They assert that the events and mysterious occurrences we have been attempting to describe were foretold, and "That there are now abroad in the earth SPIRITS OF DEMONS WORKING MIRACLES, spirits making known their presence by visible signs and lying wonders, such as we have no example of in the recorded history of the world ;" this, they say, "is not a mere opinion, it is an ascertained and awful fact." They further quote various passages of scripture in proof of their hypothesis, thus 1 Timothy, 4 c., 1 v., "in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons ;" Revelations, 16 c., 14 v., "For they are the spirits of demons working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world ;" Revelations, 18 c., 2 v., "Babylon is become the habitation of demons and the hold of every foul

spirit." We are further told by persons holding these opinions that the teachings of modern spiritualism are subversive of the teachings of the scriptures, and it becomes every religious, spiritual, and moral man and woman to have "neither part nor lot" in the investigation of the subject. Next week, all being well, I shall refer to theory No. 1.

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## LETTER XI.

"I am inclined to think there would be *frequent intercourse* between good spirits and us, did not our deep lapse into sensuality prevent it."—*The Mother of John Wesley.*

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SIR,—Theory one, viz., "That the phenomena are produced by a mixed influence of good and bad spirits, and are partly influenced by the persons who form the spiritualistic circle," is adopted by the majority of educated spiritualists. This view is held because *there are no known* mechanical or psychological laws that will account for the higher forms of manifestations. The mere tipping and moving of tables, spelling out names, indicating ages, and amounts of money in the pockets of the various persons present, &c., might perhaps be accounted for by *mesmeric*, or, as medical men *now* term it, and *now acknowledge* the reality of *hypnotic* influence. Those who know most of what can be (or rather has been) produced by these means, cannot account for the higher forms of phenomena which frequently occur; such, for example, as stating the exact amount in £. s. d. of a series of small sums of money which have been paid by a person in the room, the account never having been added up by any one, and the amount not known to the person who paid the money, nor any one else; writing communications of various kinds, when no embodied human being is near the pencil or paper; folding down leaves of books, and indicating important passages, no one touching the books; playing on guitars, accordions, &c., any tune asked for, no one touching the instruments, or touching them in such a manner as to render playing upon their strings or keys impossible to the holders; these, and others of a similar kind, are more satisfactory proofs of the existence of independent spiritual interference than the mere moving of

tables, spelling out of names, exhibition of "spirit-hands," and relating of occurrences whether known or unknown to persons forming the audience.

The foregoing phenomena being believed, induces many persons to ascribe them to the agency of disembodied spirits, acting through the instrumentality of an emanation given off by a class of persons who are popularly called "mediums," the agents or "spirits" making communications by tippings, independent knockings, automatic writings, writing independently of any visible agent, references to passages in a Bible, and other books, &c., &c.

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## LETTER XII.

"Oh, my dear Kepler, how I wish that we could have one hearty laugh together. Here, at Padua, is the principal professor of philosophy, whom I have repeatedly and urgently requested to look at the moon and planets through my glass, which he pertinaciously refuses to do. Why are you not here? What shouts of laughter we should have at this glorious folly, and to hear the Professor of Philosophy, at Pisa, labouring before the Grand Duke, with logical arguments, as if with magical incantations, to charm the new planets out of the sky."—*Galileo*.

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SIR,—When I commenced this series of letters on the subject of spiritual manifestations in the columns of your extensively circulated paper, I did not anticipate, by the publication of my experiences, to make many converts to the views I held; nor did I think that even the corroborating testimony which could be brought before your subscribers, would be the means of inducing the majority of them to give entire credence to the astonishing and marvellous phenomena which thousands of credible and competent observers have witnessed, and the genuineness of which they thoroughly believe. Mankind appear to alternate between two opposite extremes. *Two hundred years ago*, society exhibited the extreme of *credulity*, and, as a natural reaction, the civilised peoples of the present day manifest the extreme of *incredulity* as to the existence of, or at least as to the power which any finite spiritual being has of manifesting its presence, or of producing physical effects in this mundane sphere. The success which has attended this controversy has been much greater than I anticipated.

Judging by the letters which appeared in your last issue, by the positive statement of Mr. White, my redoubtable antagonist, that *he believes in the phenomena*, by the apparent conversion of nearly all who have expressed an opinion on the subject, to the belief that the phenomena are well accredited, and by the general feeling that prevails among those who have read, observed, and thought on the matter (the opinions of those who have neither read nor observed are not worth a moment's consideration), that the phenomena have occurred, are probably not the result of trick and contrivance, and deserved examination at the hands of competent persons. This state of feeling indicates a larger amount of success in the propagandism of strange facts, than I expected to realise, and than would have been realised, had all your readers been as cautious as the writer of this letter in accepting as true, strange physical and psychological occurrences.

My conviction of the super-mundane and extra-physical nature of the cause of the phenomena has not been the result of a few weeks' reading, nor of the observation of a few isolated facts, but has been produced by many years of tolerably close observation, and the reading of every book, pamphlet, and letter *pro* and *con*, which came within my reach.

You, Mr. Editor, appear to be the only philosophical Sadducee who has courage or inclination to defend the tenets of those who believe that "invisible, incorporeal, and intelligent beings," have nothing whatever to do with the production of the "spiritual phenomena" which are reported to have occurred. You are perfectly justifiable in holding this opinion, until you obtain evidence to convince you that the contrary is true. I don't find fault with you for holding a negative view of the subject, I only object to you dogmatically defending it when you have not examined the positive side of the question *on which side is all the evidence*, while for that view held by yourself, and a few followers, who persistently close their eyes, there is no more evidence than there is for the astronomical theories held by Martin Korky and his disciples, who asserted that if Galileo's telescope did reveal four moons travelling round the giant planet of our system, Jupiter, *that appearance* like the tables which tens of thousands of competent observers have seen floating in the air, was a mere optical illusion. If we place ourselves under the incubus of the apneumatic theory, I



know of no amount of evidence that would be satisfactory to abnormal sceptics, and convince them of spiritual interference. If the Almighty, in his wisdom and power, wrote upon the face of the heavens in letters of fire, and in a manner visible to all mankind, the glowing words "*There is another and spiritual state of being for all mankind, and spirits now from the unseen world are around you, influencing your actions and giving you physical manifestations of their presence,*"—if even this were done, and were made manifest to all, still there would be some who would not receive that as evidence; who would deny the spirituality of the communication; who would say it was the result of natural law, or who would deny the objectivity of it altogether, *as there are now some, who deny the reality and objectivity of the material universe.* It must, however, be quite manifest to ordinarily constituted minds that, if we deny the reality of wonderful facts, as well attested as the facts of modern Spiritualism, we have no merely evidential grounds on which to base our belief in some of the great facts of history and science, and in the recorded facts and miracles of Christianity itself.

You say, Mr. Editor, that we ought to appeal to reason more, and facts less. On the contrary, I think, with the experience of mankind before us, we ought to appeal to both facts and reason more; let each have its proper influence. As to your not having seen tables float without mechanical aid, why, that proves nothing, so far as modern physical manifestations are concerned, beyond the fact that *you have not seen what others have.* I presume you have never seen a murder, a ship on fire, a lunar rainbow, nor Napoleon the Third; does it follow, therefore, that none of these phenomena have occurred, or that Napoleon does not exist? Certainly not. But this does follow, that you ought to be a little more modest in the expression of your opinions, and *investigate before you decide.*

The question before us resolves itself into three branches:—

I.—Do the phenomena, such as have been described, occur?

II.—Are they the result of trick, mechanical contrivance, or optical illusion?

III.—If they are not the result of trick, or illusion, by what agency are they produced?

To question No. 1, I say they do occur.

To question No. 2, I reply they *are not* the result of trick, or illusion, and *cannot* be produced by a combination of these agencies. I challenge any man, or number of men, to produce by hidden and not easily discoverable mechanical contrivance, the phenomena I have described.

To question No. 3, I respond, that they are, probably, produced by a mixed influence of embodied and disembodied human spirits, or if not by disembodied human spirits, by invisible and intelligent agents of some kind. I am driven to this conclusion by the fact, that I have not been able to find any law, physical or psychological, which will satisfactorily account for the phenomena; and also, because such a solution of the difficulty is more in accordance with the teachings of the Scriptures, with the history of all religions, with the testimony of many of the best men and women who have ever lived, and with the natural and instinctive promptings of the human mind.

Having arrived at this conviction, I may very properly be asked, what is the design of these modern spiritual communications; what good are they likely to do, and what evil do they warn us to avoid?

Let me, in conclusion, briefly answer these queries.

I.—The probable design of these spiritual manifestations is to impress upon an unbelieving and Sadducean age the reality of a spiritual world, and of a future state of existence.

II.—The good, will probably never be fully known; and the immediate benefit appears to me to be the proof, almost amounting to demonstration, of the existence of a future state of being, and of the fact that we are overlooked by spiritual beings who see our actions, read our thoughts, divine our motives, and perhaps control us for evil or for good, as we resist or yield.

III.—The evils which these communications teach a thoughtful person to avoid are many. They teach him that there are good and bad spiritual agencies; that our evil lives do not terminate here; that miscellaneous communications from the spiritual world are not reliable; that we are not to give up our minds to the unchecked guidance of any unseen finite spirit; that the mysteries and miracles of the Old and New Testament are very probably true, and not mere alle-

gories, myths, and fables, which some would have us to believe; and that the only reliable being, in whose hands we ought confidently to leave ourselves, and to whom we ought to look for guidance *in this life*, is the ALMIGHTY.

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### LETTER XIII.

"How pure at heart and sound in head,  
 With what divine affections bold,  
 Should be the man whose thought would hold  
 An hour's communion with the dead.  
 They haunt the silence of the breast,  
 Imaginations calm and fair,  
 The memory like a cloudless air,  
 The conscience as a sea at rest.  
 But when the heart is full of din,  
 And doubt beside the portal waits,  
 They can but listen at the gates,  
 And hear the household jar within."—*Tennyson*.

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SIR,—Having committed myself to the hypothesis that the phenomena which are currently designated "Spiritual Manifestations," are not entirely the production of any merely mundane agency, I may fairly expect to be roundly abused by a large number of your readers who have not taken the trouble to examine the subject, and who, like yourself, act according to the absurd notion, that anything which does not to a considerable extent coincide with their previous experience and supposed knowledge of natural laws, cannot be true. May I ask such as have read the evidence which has already been adduced, and who yet do not believe in the supermundane character of the phenomena, what kind of testimony they think would be stronger than that already produced? Before any of your subscribers answer this question, allow me to suggest to them the propriety of their reading Mr. Robert Chambers's work on "*TESTIMONY: its Posture in the Scientific World.*" I shall obey my own feelings, and probably consult those of your readers, by curtailing my letter for this week, reserving myself for the defence of the position I have taken.

Any rash and incautious person may say the things recorded are *impossible*; but to whom does it belong to determine the limits of possibility, limits which science and obser-

vation are extending every day? "Let us examine, let us doubt, but let us not be too hasty in *denying the possibility* of such occurrences."

## LETTER XIV.

Dr. Abercrombie considers "The reception of facts on testimony as a fundamental principle of our nature, to be acted on whenever we are satisfied that the testimony possesses certain characters of credibility. These are chiefly referable to three heads: that the individual has had sufficient opportunity of ascertaining the facts; that we have confidence in his power of judging of their accuracy; and that we have no suspicion of his being influenced by passion or prejudice in his testimony, or, in other words, that we believe him to be an honest witness. Our confidence is further strengthened by several witnesses concurring in the same testimony, each of whom has had the same opportunities of ascertaining the facts, and presents the same characters of truth and honesty. The concurring evidence of numerous credible witnesses gives a decided preponderance to the testimony; and upon a certain amount of testimony we might receive any statement, however improbable."

"We learn by descending to the sober work of seeing, and feeling, and experimenting. I prefer what has been seen by one pair of eyes to all reasoning and guessing."—*Dr. Chalmers.*

"It is a strange thought; but possibly some truths may have been knocking at the door of human faith for thousands of years, and are not destined to be taken in for many yet to come—or, at the utmost, may long receive but an unhonouring sanction from the vulgar and obscure, all owing to this principle of scepticism, that facts are valueless without an obvious relation to ascertained law. Should the contrary, and, as I think, more inductive principle be ever adopted, that facts rightly testified to are worthy of a hearing, with a view to the ascertaining of some law under which they may be classed, a liberal retrospect along the history of knowledge will probably show to us that, even amongst what have been considered as the superstitions of mankind, there are some valuable realities."—*Chambers.*

"Seeing is believing, only when the reality of the object supposed to be seen can be made to harmonise with our previous knowledge. The man who trusts chiefly to an effort of the senses, makes more blunders than the man who trusts to an effort of reason."—*Ed. of N. of E. N. & A.*

"Think not, though men were none,

That heaven would want spectators, God want praise:

Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth

Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep," &c.—*Milton.*

SIR,—Four philosophers, holding *slightly* different notions, furnish me with extracts for the heading of the present letter; the design of *three* being to show that testimony to hitherto unknown and apparently impossible facts is deserving of reception provided it be that of credible and competent witnesses, who have had proper means of investigation, who have no strong motives for deceiving, and whose accounts coincide in all material particulars. The *three* who agree on this point are *Dr. Abercrombie, Dr. Chalmers, and Mr. Robert Chambers.* You alone defend the contrary opinion, that testimony is value-

less and deceptive unless it can be made to "*harmonize with our previous knowledge.*" I know that numbers are not always a guarantee of truth, yet I would rather pin my faith to those three gentlemen than cut my coat of opinion on abstruse subjects according to your very circumscribed cloth. Let us see how far we are indebted to our senses and their testimony for the knowledge we possess. For all our knowledge of light and its common properties, we are indebted to the sense of sight; the more recondite properties of light are known to us by observation of experiments and facts, and by the application of reason to those experiments and facts. Without the faculty of sight—that is, the *sense* of seeing—we would have no knowledge of light whatever. I may safely say, reasoning from analogy, that no being who does not possess, or has not possessed, the *power of seeing*, can be made to understand the illuminating and colouring properties of light. Our entire knowledge of it, therefore, has a sensational basis.

We are to believe only such things as "*can be made to harmonize with our previous knowledge.*" Then the King of Siam was right when he said, "there is no such thing as ice." His previous experience had not brought ice within the sphere of his observation. The philosophers of the 17th century, who denied the *fall of ærolites*, were quite right; they came not within the range of, and did not "*harmonize with their previous knowledge.*" Benjamin Franklin was, with propriety, looked upon as a fanatic by the learned world, when he said he had drawn electricity from the clouds; that was beyond, and not in "*harmony with our previous knowledge.*" A foolish man was Dr. Harvey, to assert and defend his theory of the circulation of the blood; *all physicians* knew that was quite contrary to and out of "*harmony with our previous knowledge.*" Travel across the Atlantic by steam, and in opposition to wind or current. Nonsense; that's not in "*harmony with our previous knowledge.*" Send communications from London to Edinburgh in an instant of time. Pooh, pooh; that's not in "*harmony with our previous knowledge.*" Exercise absolute control over a person, and render him deaf, dumb, blind, incapable of motion or sensation, and stop or accelerate the action of his heart at will. Fudge; that's not in "*harmony with our previous knowledge.*" Read without the use of any of the five senses,

and by means of an agent more subtle than light. Can't be; that's not in "*harmony with our previous knowledge.*" Convert the sun into a taker of the portrait of any dirty urchin who will sit before a camera. Impossible; that's lowering his dignity, and is not in "*harmony with our previous knowledge.*" Write as rapidly as the most fluent speakers talk. Preposterous; that's not in "*harmony with our previous knowledge.*" Photograph and render perfectly apparent and distinct on a space not larger than the *sixteenth of an inch*, a landscape covering an area of many miles. Ridiculous; that's not in "*harmony with our previous knowledge.*" Exhibit 1,000 perfect living animals, swimming, diving, feeding, and playing, in the tenth part of a drop of water. Monstrous; that's not in "*harmony with our previous knowledge.*" See and hear a table answer questions correctly, no one in the room knowing the answers; observe accordions and guitars played, no visible being touching them; perceive tables float in the air without any mechanical contrivance, recognize spectral hands raising pencils and writing communications, that can afterwards be preserved and read with ease. Impossible; that's not in "*harmony with our previous knowledge.*"

An Editor of the *North of England News and Advertiser* in the year 1600 might have replied "That is not in harmony with our previous knowledge" to *any one* of the preceding statements, and yet the only statements to which the Editor of the *Advertiser* in 1861 can, with any kind of propriety, say that "is not in harmony, &c.," are the last; and the only justification that he has for so treating them is, that he "errs in ignorance."

Almost all our knowledge of anatomy and physiology is the result of observation, and not of reason. Reason, *without observation*, teaches us nothing of the germination and foetal growth of the human body—reason does not enlighten us as to the myriad processes that are continually operating in the human frame—reason would, in all probability, never teach that from blood there could be secreted *bone, muscle, nerve, skin, hair, nail, wax, saliva, lachrymal fluid, gastric juice, pancreatic juice, bile, urine, spermatozoa, &c.*; these are all learned by observation, and where observation teaches not, reason is at fault. Observation does not teach the use of the spleen and the pineal gland, and the result is, that medical

philosophers, from the time of Hippocrates to the last student who has alternately become pale and crimson in the presence of the professional examiners in the Royal College of Surgeons, have not been able to give any satisfactory theory as to the functions of these two portions of the human body. You, Mr. Editor, may tell your readers, as did the ancients, that the pineal gland is the seat of the soul, and that the spleen colours or supplies discs to the blood; but they, for anything you *know* to the contrary, may be as near the truth if they say, No! the pineal gland colours the blood, and the spleen (judging by the actions of many men) is the seat of the soul.

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Letters 15, 16, and 17, were exclusively devoted to replying to leaders by the Editor, and letters of correspondents.

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## LETTER XVIII.

"All newly-discovered truths have, at first, the lot of struggling against old beliefs, but, in the end, they are always victorious."—*J. H. Fichte.*

"I have studied the question of Spiritualism wherever I have gone (in America), and the result is most satisfactory. There, the great fight is over, and you hear little comparatively said of it, but you find it in all the churches. It has given *new evidence*, new life, and a new heaven to Christianity there."—*Robert Chambers.*

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After replying to several correspondents the letter concludes thus:—

The work that lies nearest the hands of the opponents of spiritualism, and that which they ought to do, is to expose the fallacy of, or account for, the facts which are every week brought before your subscribers. Until that is done, it is no use raving about "impossible," "opposition to natural laws," "optical illusions," "hypochondriacism," &c. Show how, under the various circumstances that have been referred to, that all persons who profess to have seen modern spiritual phenomena have been deceived. Every question has *two sides*. The affirmative theory, that modern spiritual manifestations are true, is not without weak points, and the fact that our opponents have never attacked the apparently vulnerable places, is a clear indication that they have never seriously

examined the subject. *It would be amusing if each writer on the negative side would next week state how much time he has devoted to, and in what manner he has examined the question. We would then see "the nakedness of the land."*

## LETTER XIX.

SIR,—I may with perfect safety leave your article of last week in the hands of the readers of the *Advertiser*, "without note or comment."

There is only one paragraph to which I desire to draw your attention, and the attention of all who are interested in this exciting subject. You say, "He (Mr. Barkas) still continues to avoid the SUBSTANTIAL OBJECTIONS to the truth of his doctrine, and to adopt a style of argument which might be advanced in support of any absurdity." I might occupy your time and space by showing that this is an unjust and unreasonable *critique*, and that the facts of the controversy do not bear your statements out; but decline that mode of rejoinder, for one which will be more satisfactory to your readers, and I trust to yourself, viz. :—to respectfully request you to state as *briefly as possible, and in distinct and numbered paragraphs*, what you believe to be "Substantial Objections" to the facts and doctrines I have recently been advocating. I have endeavoured to meet and refute all the popular objections, and such of the scientific ones as are likely to be understood by your readers, and yet I am told that I "avoid the substantial objections."

Grant me, from your pen, a list of the "Substantial objections," concisely expressed, and I'll undertake to *reply to them, or acknowledge that I cannot*. It will be a great convenience if your objections appear in the same issue of the *Advertiser* as this letter.

I hope to hear from you, and shall have pleasure in giving my hypotheses respecting the *modus operandi* and *utility* of modern Spiritual Manifestations, when time and space permit.



## LETTER XX.

"Shut up within the brazen circle of dogmatism, Professor Powell (the author of one of the articles in *Essays and Reviews*) one afternoon, came across Spiritualism. A professor, learned as himself, in his own speciality, related to him, a few months before his death, the wonders he had himself witnessed in a recent spiritual *seance* with Mr. Squire; and how he had seen a table rise from the floor, and remain suspended in the air, while he passed his hands under its feet. How, also, direct writing had been done in his presence.\* Professor Powell was amazed beyond measure, and admitted that, were the facts so, a dreadful rent would be made in his philosophy. He desired strongly to see the facts for himself, and, had his life been spared, he would shortly have been gratified. As it was, he offered to his brother professor that, if he would give a statement, with his name, of what he had seen, he would insert his letter *verbatim* in these very *Essays and Reviews*. What a wretched system of doctrine that is which is at the mercy of facts like these, and whose entrance therein works such utter ruin and destruction in the negative philosophy of a lifetime. Professor Powell talks of invariable law, and so we will talk of it too. Spiritualism, as we understand it, is a search into this higher and invariable law, and it appears to us as the only solvent for all these honest materialistic thoughts and gropings after reality."—*Spiritual Magazine*, April, 1861.

SIR,—The following are the "SUBSTANTIAL OBJECTIONS" to the facts and doctrines of spiritualism, quoted from the *Advertiser* for March 30, 1861:—

Objection 1st. "Supposing the appearances to be real, it is *possible*—man's perceptibility not being omnipotent—that they are produced by some undiscovered contrivance of interested persons: history presenting many examples of ingenious deceptions which have for long periods puzzled the most intelligent minds."

2nd. "The witch and other manias prove that men's minds, like their bodies, are subject to diseases of an infectious character, by which their testimony on certain questions is rendered unreliable; and that this is the case in reference to spiritualism is exceedingly probable, when we find that the so-called "manifestations" are very capricious and uncertain."

3rd. "At any rate, until the believers in spiritualism can give some more reasonable explanation of their doctrine than they have done, wise men must refuse to put the slightest confidence in it: it being unphilosophic and superstitious to imagine an unnatural cause when a natural one is afforded—to doubt the most indisputable truths in order to account for phenomena which may have no existence."

Reply to No. 1. If the appearances are real, it is much more improbable and absurd to believe that they are *all* done by trick and collusion, than it is to suppose that they are

genuine, and produced by an agent or agents over which the mediums do not exercise control. To suppose that *all the persons* who have practised what you appear to think a gigantic deception, *could by any possibility learn an art*, which has been *effectually hidden* from the hundreds of thousands—of more intelligent and educated persons—whom you suppose have been deceived by them, would present a phase in the history of mankind which “is not in harmony with our past experience and previous knowledge,” and would shake our faith in human testimony and human honesty to its very foundations.

Reply to No. 2. I admit that men are subject to hallucinations ; but the greatest and most preposterous hallucination to which intelligent minds can be subject is that of believing they know *all* the natural and spiritual laws of the universe, and of asserting that, because certain well-accredited phenomena do not accord with their previous notions of natural and spiritual laws, and have not come within their insignificant sphere of personal knowledge, that, *therefore*, such phenomena are impossible. As regards the “capriciousness” of the spiritual manifestations, *they are no more capricious than practical operations in the photographic art*. No photographer can confidently assert that his experiments will be successful ; and, if this be true in relation to those chemical and dynamic laws of which we know a little, how much more likely is it to be true with reference to those spiritual and more occult laws of which we know scarcely anything. Experience teaches me that spiritual phenomena are *not more capricious* than photographic phenomena ; and both are capricious, for the sole reason that we are not acquainted with the laws which govern them, and do not, in experimentalizing, observe the requisite conditions to invariably secure success.

Reply to No. 3. If the persons, whom you designate “wise men,” would exhibit their wisdom by carefully reading and reflecting upon the evidences, which are already published, as to the facts and doctrines of spiritualism, they would see the unphilosophical nature of the arguments in opposition to spiritualism which are advanced by those alone *who have never fully examined the subject*. No single writer in the pages of the *Advertiser*, who has defended the negative side of the question, *ever professes* to have given it a thorough examination.

The "natural cause" which you offer in explanation of the phenomena of spiritualism, is *no cause at all*. You say, they are probably "produced by some undiscovered contrivance of interested persons." You might, with an equal amount of propriety, say they are done by the "Man in the moon," by capillary attraction, by elective affinity, by the Mosaic cosmogony, by gun cotton, or by anything else, as say that they are "produced by some undiscovered contrivance of interested persons," and give no proof whatever that such is the case.

I am, yours truly,

T. P. BARKAS.

April 2nd, 1861.

[We really must close this discussion. It has taken Mr. Barkas twenty weeks to lay before us what he calls the "facts" of spiritualism, and we are no more convinced of their reality than when he commenced. He utterly failed to produce the "facts" before us at the Central Exchange, and he has been just as unsuccessful in showing that they are reasonably probable. We, therefore, see no object to be attained by the insertion of another series of letters on the "theory" of what appears to be all theory together. It appears to us that Mr. Barkas has now written sufficient on the subject, and that, if he wants to make converts to his doctrine, he must get up a "spiritual-manifestation" entertainment, and allow our readers the opportunity of seeing for themselves some of the flying tables! We have received a number of more letters on the subject, which, our space having been so already intruded upon by the subject, we are compelled to withhold.—*Ed. of N. of E. N. & A.*]

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At this stage the Editor of the *North of England News and Advertiser* abruptly closed the discussion, which, for twenty weeks, had proceeded in his columns. With the exception of an occasional shot from anonymous correspondents in daily and weekly papers, and a brush with Mr. Graves, one of the leading agents in connection with the Electric Telegraph Company, who professed to explain "Spirit Rapping" by means of electrical apparatus; no spiritual manifestations nor discussions

on the subject of spiritualism, of peculiar interest occurred, under my own observation, until November 16th 1861, when, having occasion to be in London on business, I requested a friend to whom I had recently been introduced to go with me to Mrs. Marshall's, the medium, who resides in 23, Red Lion Street. We entered her residence at a quarter before three P.M., the weather being quite clear. Being ushered into a front room we found the floor carpetless and newly washed. Designedly, no names were mentioned. A gentleman sat near the fire conversing with Mrs. Marshall. He retired to a distant part of the room, and took no part in the proceedings.

After a little conversation Mrs. M., her niece, who entered the room, my friend Mr. Bowren, and myself, sat down to a circular table, about thirty inches in diameter. Several rapping communications were received, when the table leaned strongly towards Mr. Bowren, who was an entire stranger to Mrs. Marshall, and had never seen any modern spiritual phenomena. Mr. B. asked his name, and, to his astonishment, Joseph Bowren was knocked out. After obtaining replies to various questions, we said to the agent moving the table, will you please to write your name? Receiving an affirmative reply, I laid a thick hearth rug on the floor, and placed the table, which we carefully examined, on it. I sat with my back to the window, Mr. Bowren on my left, Mrs. M. opposite, and Mrs. M.'s niece on my right. I took a slate, and after carefully washing it on both sides, I laid it on the floor between my feet, and placed a pencil upon it. Mr. B. placed his foot at one end of the slate, and rested his left knee against Mrs. Marshall's. With the slate thus protected, I said will you please to write, and immediately the pencil began to move over the surface of the slate, making a scratching noise similar to that made during writing on slate. In a short time the pencil fell. I took up the slate, and on it was written JOSEPH, in large and legible characters. Mr. B. said "that is my father's name." To convince my friend that no imposition had been practised, I suddenly and immediately removed the table, and requested as a favour that both the ladies present would shew their feet. They instantly did so, and we found them covered by ordinary boots, and no appearance of contrivance to enable them to write, supposing that writing under the circumstances named were possible.

On another occasion Mr. B., his son, and myself, visited Mrs. M. and her niece. The young man was a perfect stranger to the mediums. He asked his name, and Charles Derfla was knocked out. Derfla backward is Alfred. Mr. B. asked his, and Hpesoj was given. Reversed, Joseph. They then asked for further communications, and the following letters were indicated by knockings :—*ymraednostilliwebblewofuoyhtobotkoolniottiripemsilauroftisimorfehtdrol*. This, being divided into words, and read in single words backwards, is "My dear sons, it will be well for you both to look into spiritualism, for it is from the Lord." At this stage of the proceedings a lady and gentleman entered the room, and, after a little conversation, he fell into a trance condition, and spoke for a while as an impressional medium. His wife passed into a catalytic state, her arms and limbs being almost as rigid as iron. On these occasions all the names were quite correct and the phenomena could not have been pre-arranged, as they generally arose and succeeded each other in accordance with my suggestions.

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## LECTURES.

Having read the principal works on spiritualism, conversed with the leading defenders of the theory, and seen many of the more remarkable phenomena, I announced and delivered a course of Six Lectures in one of the principal Lecture Halls in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Each lecture occupied about sixty minutes in delivery, and, at the close of each, sixty minutes were allowed to the audience to ask questions, offer objections, or in any way attack or defend the views I advanced. This privilege, which ought to be more generally accorded than it is, was abundantly, and, on the whole, judiciously taken advantage of, and on each evening several gentlemen opposed the phenomena and the theories I defended. I endeavoured in this course of lectures to state the strongest arguments on both sides, and attempted to show that the balance of evidence lay on the side of the spiritual hypothesis. Some of the illustrations in the lectures were drawn from phenomena described in the preceding letters. These I shall not requote, but merely refer to the pages in this work where they may be

found. All the new and more striking illustrations are here given ; some of them abridged, but where abridgment is adopted, footnotes refer to the titles and pages of the works from which they were taken and readers who desire the statements *in extenso* can gratify their wishes by turning to the works indicated.

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## LECTURE I.—THE PHENOMENA OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

Delivered to a very large audience in the Lecture Room, Nelson Street, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, December 5th, 1861.

Pythagorus, 500 years before Christ, propounded the true theory of the Universe. His hypothesis was rejected until the end of the 15th century, when it was received and finally demonstrated by Copernicus. With one or two trifling exceptions, all philosophers and the mass of mankind rejected the theory of the revolution of the earth on its axis and round the sun, as absolutely absurd ; and not until long after the demonstration of its truth by Copernicus, and its further elucidation by Kepler, Galileo, and Tycho Brahe, was it generally received and taught in the schools of learning.

Before and since the time of Noah, majorities have been no certificates of truth, and the beliefs of 19-20ths of comparatively educated men and women, in reference to many subjects, are unworthy of the name of beliefs, and might with more propriety be termed prejudices ; because they are not founded upon investigation, and have not been arrived at by independent and full enquiry.

In the consideration of the subject that has gathered us together this evening, it may be well to bear the foregoing facts in mind. Things are not always what they seem—the earth is not stationary, because to the senses of universal man it appears to be so, and unexpected phenomena are not to be hastily rejected, because they have not come within the sphere of our limited observation.

Notwithstanding the lessons taught by the discovery of the Copernican system of the universe, the great law of gravitation, the marvels of modern geology, the triumphs of steam, the influence of vaccination, the chemical mysteries of pho-

tography, the revelations of the microscope, the almost ubiquitous phenomena of the telegraph, and the now admitted apparent impossibilities of mesmerism and clairvoyance, all of which have had to fight their way through difficulties and prejudices that nothing but truth could surmount. Notwithstanding these facts, men still act as though our present discoveries were final, as though we had apprehended the whole material of spiritual arcana of the universe, and that any mysterious phenomena not already acknowledged by us, and especially those of a spiritual character, could not possibly be true.

The one great lesson which it is most important to learn, is that of our imperfect knowledge of natural and spiritual laws, and our utter inability to say, *a priori*, what can and what cannot be done, what is and what is not true. No amount of experience seems capable of driving mankind into the Baconian and only true method of reasoning, viz. to observe facts, and from them to deduce theories. So far as spiritualism is concerned 99-100ths of even the intelligent and educated portion of the community reject it scornfully and without the least enquiry. The time has now arrived, however, when witnessing the amount and quality, and the rapid development and dissemination of testimony; many men who, a short time ago, treated the subject with supercilious contempt, hold their judgments in abeyance, and wait for further evidence and personal experience. This is as it should be. No reasonable man would look for the reception of phenomena and theories so extraordinary, and so antagonistic to preconceived notions, without overwhelming evidence.

The more remarkable, unexpected, and apparently impossible any series of phenomena, the greater the amount of testimony requisite in order to render belief in them reasonable.

Knowing the imperfection and limited scope of our knowledge in reference to the occult and hidden powers of nature, and our almost entire ignorance of spiritual or extra-natural laws, we ought to be very modest in the expression of our opinions about possibilities; and where numerous, intelligent, and previously credible witnesses testify to remarkable occurrences, and draw scientifically unorthodox inferences, we ought to examine before we either approve or condemn.

Such is the present position of spiritualism as regards phenomena and explanatory theories. It is testified to by tens of thousands of most credible witnesses, it has received the homage of many of the most educated and competent men in the civilized world, it is believed by millions of men and women, it has a literature almost as extensive as that of the steam-engine, and much more extensive than the electric telegraph, and it is daily triumphing over the unparalleled prejudices of every description of people.

I know that the history of mankind is substantially a history of delusions, and that the greatest caution is necessary in investigating this mysterious subject. Many men have large faculties of wonder, and great love of the marvellous, and the field of the human soul is ever ready to receive the most preposterous phantasies. We should endeavour to avoid credulity on the one hand, and incredulity on the other. The credulity of the educated incredulous is amazing; a complete work on such a subject would be a treasure.

The conservatism which clings with a death grasp to old opinions, and the radical iconoclasm, which madly destroys the old, and rushes after every novelty, are both useful in their spheres. One enters fearlessly into untrodden fields of enquiry, and the other enforces upon all original thinkers the necessity of demonstrating their novel propositions and discoveries.

I desire to bring before you to-night *facts*, testified to by credible witnesses—witnesses whom we know as personal friends, or who are well known in the wide fields of theology, literature, and science. In a subsequent lecture I shall endeavour to expound the various theories that have been broached, to account for what are termed Modern Spiritual Phenomena, and shall attempt to show that no hypothesis founded on merely natural, material, and psychological laws, will account for them, and that the only theory which easily covers the whole ground, and satisfactorily explains the manifestations, is that of their being produced by invisible, intelligent, spiritual agencies. To strengthen this view, I shall, in addition to the phenomena of modern spiritualism, introduce some well accredited ancient and modern instances of apparitions, or ghosts, and shall quote the corroborative testimony of sacred and secular writers, historians, law-givers, philosophers, theologians, and poets, of all ages.



This evening I solicit your patient attention, while I endeavour to place before you a mere skeleton and outline of the *phenomena* which establish, as I think, the hypothesis that we have direct personal intercourse with the world of spirits.

I know your prejudices, am conscious of the unpopularity of my position, feel, but am not in the least afraid, of the amount and quality of the opposition I have to encounter, and all I desire is, that which I am sure an assembly of Englishmen will fully and frankly grant—a fair field and no favour, a full, free, and impartial discussion, a laying aside, as far as possible, of all preconceptions, and a verdict according to the evidence which shall be adduced.

The first regularly recorded modern Spiritual Manifestations occurred in the year 1834, in Canandigua, New York, and recurred in various parts of Pennsylvania, in 1836. Many remarkable occurrences took place in the house of Mr. Doda, the origin of which was never discovered. In the village of Hydesville, New York, there was a house occupied, in 1846, by Mr. Weekman, and in 1847 it passed into the occupation of Mr. J. D. Fox. Mysterious noises were frequently heard in that house, much to the disturbance of the family. The following, is an extract from Mrs. Fox's Journal, on the evening of March 21st, 1848:—"My husband had not gone to bed, when we first heard the noise this evening. I knew it from all other noises I had ever heard in the house. My daughter, who was fifteen years of age, said, in sport, 'Now, just do as I do,—count one—two—three—four, striking one hand upon another.' The blows which she made were repeated. She began to be startled, I said, 'Count ten,' and then it made ten strokes or noises. I then asked if it was a spirit? and if it was, to give two sounds. I heard two sounds as soon as the words were spoken."

In the foregoing extract, abridged from the record of Mrs. Fox, we have a sketch of the first faint indications of direct modern intercourse with the world of spirits, which is now attracting the attention of enquiring minds in all parts of the globe. Extraordinary physical and psychological manifestations followed each other in quick succession; and in a few months, instead of being confined to three or four localities, they spread over the length and breadth of the American States. Mediums rapidly increased in number, and thousands

from all classes of society, were weekly added to those who believed in the reality of the phenomena, and the spirituality of their origin. In an incredibly short space of time, the manifestations increased in number and variety; and in addition to those which consisted merely of responses to questions produced by tables rising and rapping on the floor, to indicate letters pointed out on the alphabet, or expressed *visa voce*, there occurred knockings on the tables, chairs, floors, and walls of the rooms, &c., the knockings being heard in places quite beyond the reach of any one present. The rising of tables entirely from the floor, and the dancing of the same in the air, the hands of the operators being on the tops of the tables; ringing of bells; knotting of handkerchiefs; pulling of clothes; pinching of the bodies of those in the rooms; tables, chairs, &c., moving without contact, and quite beyond the influence of mediums and spectators; writing automatically by mediums; independent spirit writings,—no visible person or thing touching either pencil or paper; music played on guitars, concertinas, pianos, &c.—no one touching the keys or strings of the instruments; appearances of spirit hands, such hands occasionally shaking those of the persons forming the circles; spirit drawing, by automatic action, through mediums; trance, and impressional speaking; ponderous bodies, such, for example, as tables and chairs, floating in the air,—and not only without any visible person or agent aiding their flight, but when full-grown men sat down upon them, for the purpose of preventing their movements,—on several occasions tables, chairs, and men have floated about the rooms: spelling out the names of long series of persons living in this world, and those who have departed to the spirit world; forwarding of communications to very distant places, and almost immediately returning with messages that weeks after have been verified;—these, and myriads of other occurrences, have taken place without any mechanical contrivance or collusion, and under every variety of circumstances,—the great majority of the mediums being private and unprofessional. These extraordinary phenomena continue of frequent occurrence in all the States of America. Mr. Robert Chambers, who has recently visited the United States, says: "There are now two million of spiritualists in America, and they support fourteen papers, almost entirely devoted to the advocacy of spiritualism." Judges, senators,

men of science, and theologians have investigated the phenomena, and, so far as my reading extends, I have not been able to ascertain that any single person has fully investigated them, and arrived at the conclusion that they are not genuine. The names of Professor Hare, Dr. Bush, Judge Edmonds, Senator Tallmadge, Rev. C. Beecher, Dr. Dexter, Lloyd Garrison, and Professor Rogers may be quoted as those of gentlemen of elevated talent and position in America, who have investigated, and defend the genuineness of modern spiritual manifestations.

Judge Edmonds says, "In the meantime another feature attracted my attention, and that was 'physical manifestations,' as they are termed. Thus, I have known a pine table with four legs lifted bodily up from the floor, in the centre of a circle of six or eight persons, turned upside down and laid upon its top at our feet, then lifted up over our heads, and put leaning against the back of the sofa on which we sat. I have known that same table to be tilted up on two legs, its top at an angle with the floor of forty-five degrees, when it neither fell over of itself, nor could any person present put it back on its four legs. I have seen a mahogany table, having only a centre leg, and with a lamp burning upon it, lifted from the floor at least a foot, in spite of the efforts of those present, and shaken backward and forward as one would shake a goblet in his hand, and the lamp retain its place, though its glass pendants rang again. I have seen the same table tipped up with the lamp upon it, so far that the lamp must have fallen off unless retained there by something else than its own gravity, yet it fell not, moved not. I have known a dinner bell taken from a high shelf in a closet, rung over the heads of four or five persons in that closet, then rung around the room over the heads of twelve or fifteen persons in the back parlour, and then borne through folding doors to the further end of the front parlour, and there dropped on the floor. I have frequently known persons pulled about with a force which it was impossible for them to resist, and once, when all my strength was added in vain to that of the one thus affected. I have known a mahogany chair thrown on its side, and moved swiftly back and forth on the floor, no one touching it, through a room where there were at least a dozen people sitting, yet no one was touched, and it was repeatedly stopped within a few inches of me, when it was

coming with a violence which, if not arrested, must have broken my legs.

"This is not a tithe—nay! not a hundredth part of what I have witnessed of the same character, but it is enough to show the general nature of what was before me.

"At the same time I have heard from others, whose testimony would be credited in any human transaction, and which I could not permit myself to disregard, accounts of still more extraordinary transactions, for I have been by no means as much favoured in this respect as some."\*

W. Lloyd Garrison says, "As the manifestations have spread from house to house, from city to city, from one part of the country to the other, across the Atlantic into Europe, till now the civilized world is compelled to acknowledge their reality, however diverse in accounting for them—as these manifestations continue to increase in variety and power, so that all suspicion of trick and imposture becomes simply absurd and preposterous, and as every attempt to find a solution for them in some physical theory relating to electricity, the odic force and clairvoyance, and the like, has thus far proved abortive, it becomes every intelligent mind to enter into the investigation of them with candour and fairness, as opportunity may offer, and to bear such testimony in regard to them as the facts may warrant, no matter what ridicule it may excite on the part of the uninformed or sceptical. As for ourselves, we have been in no haste to jump to a conclusion in regard to phenomena so universally diffused and of so extraordinary a character. For the last three years we have kept pace with nearly all that has been published on the subject, and we have witnessed at various times many surprising manifestations, and our conviction is that they cannot be accounted for on any other theory than that of spiritual agency."

Numerous other testimonies might be quoted as to the reality of the phenomena, I restrict myself to one, and that is given by one of the principal *opponents* of the spiritual theory in America.

Professor Mahan, in page 42 of his valuable work on *Modern Mysteries Explained and Exposed*, says, "For ourselves, in conducting the argument, in the present treatise, we shall

\* *Spiritualism*, by Judge Edmonds and Dr. Dexter. Page 74.

admit the facts claimed by spiritualists, and join issue with them simply and exclusively in regard to the conclusions which they deduce from them. We admit the facts for the *all adequate reason*, that after careful inquiry, we have been led to conclude that they are real. We think that no candid enquirer, who carefully investigates the subject, can come to any other conclusion. While we honestly believe, that there is more imposition connected with this movement, than with almost any that can be named, yet we as fully believe, that a denial of the facts claimed by spiritualists, as comprehended under the classes above-named, has its exclusive basis either in ignorance, or a state of prejudice which is blind to valid evidence. We have ourselves witnessed physical manifestations which, in our judgment, can be accounted for by no reference to mere muscular pressure."

Professor Rogers, in his elaborate work, "The Philosophy of Mysterious Rappings," frequently acknowledges the genuineness of the phenomena.

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## INTRODUCTION INTO ENGLAND.

The phenomena of spiritual manifestations were first introduced into England about ten years ago, they were in the early stage very elementary, but gradually increased in number and complexity. At present, occurrences are taking place in London and the provinces, which rival the most remarkable, of American parentage.

The earlier advanced phenomena took place in the residence of Mr. Rymer, Ealing, through the mediumship of Mr. Home. Several gentlemen of eminence visited Mr. Home, at the residence of Mr. Cox, and witnessed the phenomena. Amongst whom may be mentioned Lord Brougham and Sir D. Brewster. The following extract from the *Spiritual Magazine* for December, 1861, page 540, will give some idea of the *séance* attended by these *savants* :—

"So long ago as the early part of 1855, Sir David Brewster accompanied Lord Brougham to a *séance* with Mr. Home, at the invitation of Mr. William Cox, of Jermyn Street, and seated in a private room, in the open light of day, they saw, among

other extraordinary things, a good sized heavy table rise from the floor. The very fact which Professor Faraday had but a short time previously asserted that 'the undeviating truth' of Newton's law would not permit, and which to believe in was proof of 'deficiency of judgment,' then occurred in his (Sir D. Brewster's) presence.

"Here are the very words of Sir David Brewster on this point, conveyed in a letter which he subsequently wrote to Mr. Benjamin Coleman, dated October 9, 1855, at the time when he was disengenuously endeavouring to free himself from admissions he had previously made on the subject to Mr. Coleman and to others. But he was forced, nevertheless, to admit 'it is true that at Mr. Cox's house, Mr. Home, Mr. Cox, Lord Brougham, and myself, sat down to a small table, Mr. Home having previously requested us to examine if there was any machinery about his person, an examination, however, which we declined to make. When all our hands were upon the table noises were heard—rappings in abundance; and finally, when we rose up, the table actually rose, *as appeared to me, from the ground.* This result I do not attempt to explain.'

"It will thus be seen that the occurrences were so extraordinary that Sir David Brewster, the philosopher, whom we are taught to look up to as an authority, was disposed to mistrust the evidence of his senses, and choose, as has been said of him by the Rev. Dr. Maitland, 'to place himself before the public as a person who really could not tell whether a table under his nose did, or did not, rise from the ground.' The same learned divine contemptuously asks—'Is it on men, so grossly and avowedly incompetent to judge of plain matter-of-fact submitted to their senses, that we are to pin our faith in matters of physical science?'

"We are further enabled to inform our readers that after the *séance* at Mr. Cox's house, Sir David Brewster, in a conversation which he had with Mr. Coleman, expressed his astonishment at what he had witnessed in company with Lord Brougham; that he scouted the idea of there being either trick or delusion in the matter, but that though unable to explain the agency by which the phenomena were produced, he was not prepared to admit the claim of spirit power; using these memorable words, which could never have escaped the lips of a true philosopher, '*Spirit*

is the last thing I will give in to.' Sir David also expressed to Mr. Coleman his desire to witness something more, and being asked by Mr. Rymer, at whose house Mr. Home, the medium, was then residing, to fix his own time, he selected the following Sunday evening, when in the company of Mrs. Trollope and her son, Mr. Thos. Trollope, Sir David examined every surrounding condition with the utmost care, and 'he appeared' to be thoroughly satisfied that it was no known power that effected the marvels which he witnessed.

"On this occasion, Sir David sat for some time *under* the table, which was a heavy dining table ten or twelve feet in length, whilst the rapping sounds were all around him. He asked for the air of 'Scots wha hae' to be played on the accordion, which was done by the unseen agencies. He afterwards stood at the end of the table, and the spirits being requested to prevent his raising it, Sir David was unable to lift it. Again he tried, and the spirits being requested to help him, the table was easily raised to a considerable height. These experiments were repeated several times, so as to leave no doubt in the minds of all present that there was an independent and intelligent invisible power at work in that room. Sir David 'appeared' to be seriously impressed with all that he saw and heard, and he talked over the events of the evening with Mr. Trollope in a way which assured that gentleman that Sir David was profoundly impressed with the spiritual manifestations, and when Sir David afterwards wrote to the *Morning Advertiser*, attempting to cast ridicule on the subject, Mr. Trollope, Mr. Cox, and Mr. Coleman each wrote to refute Sir David, and succeeded in placing him in a position which humbler men would have sunk under."

Mr. William Howitt says, "I wish some of your negatives could have seen what I and Mrs. Howitt, and Mr. and Mrs. Wilkinson saw at the house of a lady in Regent's Park about three months ago, and the like of which some of our most distinguished nobility have seen there repeatedly of late. There were, besides us, Mr. and Mrs. Home, and a Russian, Count Steinbock. We had beautiful music played upon the accordion when held in one hand by Mr. Home, who cannot play a note, and the same when held by Mrs. Wilkinson. We had the clearest and most prompt communications on different subjects through the alphabet, and flowers were taken from a

bouquet on a cheffonier at a distance, and brought and handed to each of us. Mrs. Howitt had a sprig of geranium handed to her by an invisible hand, which we have planted and is now growing ; so that it is no delusion, no fairy money turned into dross or leaves. I saw a spirit hand as distinctly as ever I saw my own. I touched one several times, once when it was handing me a flower. My wife's silk dress was pulled so strongly that she thought it would tear out the gathers, and was rustled so loudly, that it was not only heard by all of us, but might have been heard in another room. My wife's handkerchief was taken from her knee, and brought and whisked against my hand at the opposite side of the table ; I thought, with the intention of my taking it, but the spirit, would not allow that, but withdrew it a little, then whisked my hand with it anew, and then flung it into the middle of the room. The dress and the handkerchief were perfectly visible during these operations, but the motive power was invisible.

"Then the spirits went to a shrine of bronze idols, belonging to the lady of the house, who bought them in India. Some of these are very heavy. They pitched them down on the floor, and with such violence that the clash might have been heard all over the house. The larger of these idols,—perhaps all—of that I am not certain—unscrew, and the screws work exactly the opposite way to our screws ; but the spirits unscrewed them, and pummelled their heads lustily on the floor, saying, through the alphabet, ' You must all do your best to destroy idolatry, both in India and in England, where it prevails in numerous ways. Idolatry of rank, idolatry of wealth, idolatry of self, idolatry of mere intellect and learning,' &c., &c. The different parts were thrown under the table, that you might tread them under foot, and two parts of the idol Mahadeo, of heavy bronze, were placed on the table by a visible hand. The head of the idol felt to me to weigh four or five pounds.

"Mr. Home was lifted about a foot from the ground, but did not float, as he frequently does, in the strongest light. The table, a very heavy loo table, was also several times lifted a foot or more from the ground, and you were invited to look under it and see that there was no visible cause. To us who have seen so much of these things, to whom they are as fami-



liar as the sight of a bird flying, and far more familiar than the present comet, this was not necessary."\*

Mr. Joseph Barker says, "Whether they are right in their belief in the existence of disembodied spirits or not, we do not know. One thing is certain, they are not without grounds for their faith. They have what, to them, appears no less than ocular demonstration. They have what would once have appeared as conclusive as ocular demonstration to us. And though we are obliged to confess ourselves doubters, we cannot help feeling at times as if our doubts were *unreasonable*. We cannot help feeling as if the faith of the Spiritualists was more reasonable than our own unyielding scepticism. It seems to us, at times, as if, in the nature of things, we *ought* to believe. And we certainly have no disposition to quarrel with *them* for believing. We think them perfectly justified in doing so. They have not, in our judgment, the least reason to be ashamed of their belief. We are more disposed to envy them their cheering and consoling belief than to quarrel with them for cherishing it. We hope they will be able to keep their faith, and we should be glad if they could convince the whole world that the doctrine of a happy immortality is true. We should esteem it a blessing,—a great, inestimable blessing, to be ourselves convinced. Like mankind at large, we have a strong and inextinguishable desire for immortality. It is certain that men generally do not get enough of life and enjoyment here, and how could we have the heart to blame them for cherishing the hope of something more and better hereafter. It certainly seems too bad that men like Parker and Pascal should die in their prime, and know no resurrection. It seems too bad that any should wholly perish who have distinguished themselves by their virtues, or by their capacities of virtue. It seems too bad that good fathers, good mothers, and good children should be parted by death and have no reunion. The belief in immortality is certainly a great comfort. Lord Byron was not far from the truth when he said, that this hope, even if false, is worth all this world's best truths. To the mother who has lost her child; to the child who has lost his mother; to the friend who has lost his friend; to the just, who have seen the good pass away without due honour, or the youthful

\* *British Controversialist*, 1861. Page 89.

student and reformer perish without a chance of full development or of honourable service ; to the benevolent who mourn over the many sorrows of a suffering race, the hope of a future life for man is past all price."\*

Mons. Canti, the celebrated French conjuror who witnessed the phenomena produced through Mr. Home, told Prince Napoleon "that he could in no way account for the phenomena he saw on the principles of his profession." He also published a letter expressing the same opinion.

In addition to some of the above testimonies, I quoted those of Dr. Gully, Mr. R. Chambers, Mr. B. Coleman, Dr. Collyer, Dr. Ashburner, Dr. J. G. Wilkinson, Mr. Newton Crossland, Mr. N. Morgan, and others, some of which, with a sketch of the more remarkable of my personal experiences, are recorded in previous parts of this work.†

I here add two :—To the private residence of a friend I took a gentleman, for the purpose of enabling him to witness extraordinary phenomena, which, at that time, I did not believe to proceed from super-mundane agencies. There were in the room about eight persons, principally members of the family. Three of the household and myself sat at a table, and several questions had been answered by knockings on the floor. The stranger whom I had introduced, remained silent during the greater part of the evening, and after we had experimented a considerable time, I said to him "Have you any questions to ask ?" He replied "Ask how much money I paid into the Custom House to-day ?" I made the enquiry of the agent moving the table, and was informed the sum was £39 15s. 9d. I turned to my friend, and said, "How much have you paid ?" He remarked, pulling a piece of paper out of his pocket, "I do not know till I reckon up the amounts ; there are several small sums." On adding the items together, the amount exactly corresponded with that knocked out by the table.

During my early investigations into the phenomena of spiritualism, I sat one evening with a delicate young lady, at a heavy spanish mahogany four-legged table, about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet long by 21 inches wide. Gas and fire were burning brightly, and no one was near the table with the exception of the young lady and myself. An old gentleman sat smoking in the chimney corner and a young lady sat at a considerable distance

\* Barker's Review, page 312.

† Pages 6 to 14, and 40 to 41.

from us. The manifestations on this occasion were unaccountably irregular and eccentric. The old gentleman who sat smoking and joking, said, sneeringly, "Don't talk to the table, talk to the cat, it has got brains and the table has not."

The table immediately began to move in the most violent manner, *and rocked and rolled like a light ship on a very rough sea*. I requested it to stop, and it suddenly ceased to move. The young lady and I again sat down, one at each end of the table and resting the tips of our fingers on it, I said, "If you disapprove of the mode of criticism adopted by the old gentleman smoking in the corner, will you please to manifest your disapprobation by rising up endwise." The table instantly rose up at my end, and stood for a considerable time at an angle of about 45 degrees. I said, "Drop," and it immediately fell.

On trying the amount of pressure requisite to accomplish the elevation of the table, I found, that by placing my hands in the best possible position, the pressure necessary was about five stones. The lady, during the time the table was elevated, merely touched it with the tips of her fingers.

After quoting this evidence, I observed, Unless the phenomena be admitted, we are forced to the conclusion, that the testimonies to matters of fact, and things seen, heard, and felt, by tens of thousands of disinterested, intelligent, and hitherto unimpeachable witnesses, are utterly valueless, and that the witnesses have either become impostors, are self deceived, or have been made the dupes of designing persons. There are many reasons for believing none of these inferences to be true. 1st.—The persons who have been witnesses are many of them well skilled in all the natural sciences, whilst those who are the media, are often illiterate and unlearned. 2nd.—Although thousands of persons in England and America have had the phenomena produced in their presence, no single instance, with which I am acquainted, of the discovery of any trick, has yet been established. 3rd.—The testimonies are to matters of fact, seen under every variety of circumstances, appealing to all the senses, and testified to by all who have been present at the *séances* where they took place. 4th.—Although the occurrences take place in localities widely apart, sometimes originating quite suddenly, and in the presence of persons who have never seen similar phenomena, yet the descriptions of

the transactions which take place, are substantially the same in all instances. 5th.—It is not conceivable that tens of thousands of media could produce these things by arts of deception, and yet, never in one case, confess, make known, and expose the jugglery! So hopeless is the case of the adherents of the theory, that modern spiritual manifestations are the result of trick, that this view of the subject has been given over to those, and to those only, who have never examined the question, and who write and speak from prejudice, rather than from knowledge and investigation.

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## LECTURE II.—THE THEORIES BY WHICH THE FACTS ARE ATTEMPTED TO BE EXPLAINED.

Polarity and compensation are the general characteristics of the material, intellectual, moral, and spiritual worlds. We have light and darkness, positive and negative, heat and cold, attraction and repulsion, male and female, in the material world; ignorance and knowledge, capacity and incapacity, genius and mediocrity in the intellectual; virtue and vice, right and wrong, truth and falsehood, reverence and irreverence in the moral world; and in the spiritual we have angel and demon, saint and sinner, high and low, infinite and finite, God and his creatures.

Between these two extremes, in various spheres, man has continually vibrated. Now advancing and now receding, now high and now low; in constant struggle between light and darkness, truth and error, credulity and incredulity. As there are tides in the natural ocean, so there are in the progress of humanity. Periods when forms of genius like those possessed by Shakspeare, Milton, and Newton, flash forth and leave the old landmarks of human progress far behind; and times when for years, nay, for centuries, there appear to be dead uniformity and universal stagnation. Two hundred years ago we were steeped in credulity, it was the ebb tide of manly, independent thought, and the *high spring tide* of superstition.

By a natural and almost uniform reaction, we have until lately been in the outer darkness of Sadducean scepticism.

Now, the tide is turning, is indeed turned, and it behoves every man of individuality and intelligence to examine the facts that are daily being brought before us in relation to our supposed manifest and tangible connection with the inhabitants of the invisible spiritual worlds, and to direct rightly, but not attempt to stem, that current of belief which is setting so strongly, in the direction of the supernatural, which, if not properly guarded, will sweep away our present fancied infallible landmarks, and land mankind once more on the broad shores of superstition.

Man, as man, is not, in a controlling sense, a logician; the majority yield to the influence of their feelings, and believe what most strongly appeals to the heart. Let those who have got head and pure thought, as well as heart and strength of feeling, throw their weight into the trembling scales, and steady them with a proper proportion of head and heart, of logic and love, of reason and emotion. My principal fear in relation to this inevitable spiritual movement is, that the intelligent and educated will hold aloof and allow the uneducated and superstitious to rush to violent and hurtful extremes.

The first mysterious rap on a table top, and a few instances of clear and unmistakeable revelations of secret thoughts, and still more secret acts, which were conceived to be entirely unknown to any but the thinker and doer, are sufficient to convert thousands of simple minded, well meaning, unlearned persons into the veriest devotees of modern spiritualism.

Such should not be the case, and will not be the case, if the scientific and well-balanced mind of the country would be more catholic and less dogmatic, and enter the arena of broad investigation, notwithstanding the popular prejudices, and the almost universal contempt which is poured upon this subject; daring to be singular and preparing themselves to expose error and to find and defend truth at all hazards.

In my former lecture I endeavoured to bring before you as briefly and clearly as possible, without clap-trap or circumlocution, the phenomena of recent spiritism.

This evening we shall assume, if you please, that these phenomena are genuine. Of course I am perfectly aware that they are not believed by all present, but, in order that we may reason upon the hypotheses that will account for them, we must for the present, admit their reality.

Before stating the various positions which are before us for discussion, permit me to refer to the corroborative evidences which we have for the possibility at least, of intervention in material concerns by spiritual agents.

The Bible records are based upon the reality of spiritual interferences. The fact is not reasoned upon, it is assumed. This is also the case with the being of God. The first verse in the sacred writings states, that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Taking his existence as an incontrovertible fact. Records of spiritual interposition by secondary beings termed angels, messengers, and demons are not introduced with any hesitancy, as though they needed to be proved; they are spoken of as indisputable phenomena, and so far as we can glean from the sacred records, were recognised as such by the then existing race of mankind.

I need not occupy your time by reading lengthened extracts, but refer Bible readers to the following narratives in proof of my position.

The three Angels who appeared to Abraham in Mamre,—Genesis, xviii.

The two Angels who appeared to Lot,—Genesis xviii. 16.

The Angel who appeared to the wife of Manoah.—Judges, xii.

Ditto..... Gideon.—Judges vi.

Ditto..... Daniel, viii. and ix.

Ditto..... Zacharias.—Luke, i.

Ditto..... Virgin Mary.—Luke i.

The appearance of Moses and Elias on the Mount of Transfiguration.

The Angel who liberated the Apostles from prison.

The Angel who rolled the stone from the door of the sepulchre.

The Angel who sat in the sepulchre.

The Bible also indicates that there are *two bodies*. 1st Corinthians, xv., Paul says, "There is a *natural body* and there is a *spiritual body*."

All these statements indicate the *possibility* of spiritual beings visiting the earth, and also the fact that in many instances they are robed in such a form as to be cognizable to the ordinary senses of mankind.

Besides beings termed angels, the Bible also fully recognises the existence of *devils*, which, according to the original word, ought, in the majority of cases, to be rendered *demons*, and gives many striking accounts of persons being possessed or obsessed by them.

The histories of the Greeks, Romans, and Hindoos are full of supernaturalism. Socrates, one of the wisest and best of the Greeks, believed he had a familiar spirit or demon, with whom he used to converse.

In more recent times, we have the theory of familiar spirits and apparitions contended for by Bacon, Jeremy Taylor, Dr. Johnson, Oberlin, Wesley, Stilling, Sir Walter Scott, and many other intelligent men.

Poets in all ages, in their inspired poetical moments, whatever may have been their views from the scientific or material plane, indicate their belief in the existence and proximity of spiritual beings, and some of their finest productions are based upon that hypothesis, and appeal, *therefore*, to the deepest instincts of our nature.

The immortal Milton says :—

“ Millions of spiritual beings walk the earth,  
Both when we sleep and when we wake.”

Tennyson writes :—

“ Dare I say,  
No spirit ever brake the band  
That stays him from his native land,  
Where first he walked when clasped in clay.”

Longfellow sings :—

“ All houses wherein men have lived and died  
Are haunted houses ; through the open doors  
The harmless phantoms on their errands glide,  
With feet that make no sound upon the floor.

We meet them at the doorway, on the stair,  
Along the passages they come and go,  
Impalpable impressions on the air,  
A sense of something moving to and fro.

There are more guests at table than the hosts  
Invited ; the illuminated hall  
Is thronged with quiet, inoffensive ghosts,  
As silent as the pictures on the wall.

The stranger at my fireside cannot see  
The forms I see, nor hear the sounds I hear;  
He but perceives what is, while unto me  
All that has been is visible and clear.

We have no title-deeds to house or lands;  
Owners and occupants of earlier dates,  
From graves forgotten, stretch their dusty hands,  
And hold in mortmain still their old estates.

The spirit-world, around this world of sense,  
Floats like an atmosphere, and everywhere  
Wafts through these earthly mists and vapours dense  
A vital breath of more ethereal air.

Our little lives are kept in equipoise  
By opposite attractions and desires;  
The struggle of the instinct that enjoys,  
And the more noble instinct that aspires.

These perturbations, this perpetual jar  
Of earthly wants and aspirations high,  
Come from the influence of an unseen star,  
An undiscovered planet in our sky.

And as the moon from some dark gate of cloud  
Throws over the sea a floating bridge of light,  
Across whose trembling planks our fancies crowd  
Into the realms of mystery and night.

So from the world of spirits there descends  
A bridge of light, connecting it with this,  
O'er whose unsteady floor, that sways and bends,  
Wander our thoughts above the dark abyss."

And the unapproachable Shakspeare, who wrote as never man wrote, beautifully portrays the mixed fear and daring which somehow are connected with the presence of visitors from another sphere, when he makes the philosophic Hamlet exclaim, when he sees his father's ghost—

"Angels and ministers of grace defend us!  
Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damned,  
Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell,  
Be thy intents wicked, or charitable,  
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,  
That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,  
King, father, royal Dane: O, answer me:  
Let me not burst in ignorance."

And again when the Ghost of Banquo rises, the soldier-king, Macbeth, exclaims—

"Avaunt, and quit my sight! Let the earth hide thee!  
Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;  
Thou hast no speculation in those eyes  
Which thou dost glare with."

"What man dare, I dare:  
Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,  
The armed rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger;  
Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves



Shall never tremble; or, be alive again,  
 And dare me to the desert with thy sword;  
 If trembling I inhibit, then protest me  
 The baby of a girl. Hence! horrible shadow!  
 Unreal mockery, hence!—Why so: being gone,  
 I am a man again.—Pray you, sit still."

And now let me relate to you some modern instances of apparitions.

The fear of ridicule prevents many an apparition story from obtaining circulation and authentication. Since I have acknowledged my belief in spiritualism, I have heard from credible and intelligent witnesses personal experiences of spectral visitations, with which, except for my sympathy for, and defence of, this mysterious subject, I would never have been made acquainted.

Mr. Young, of Gateshead, was at eleven o'clock one evening, some years ago, sitting alone in his parlour reading *D'Aubigne's History of the Reformation*, he had finished the perusal of a chapter, and laying down the book, he looked up and saw the figure of a friend who resided in Kent, with whom he had had no intercourse, and whom he had not seen for many years, sitting in the chair opposite him. He distinctly saw the figure, which gradually disappeared. Next morning he mentioned the circumstance to his family, and was, as is usual in such cases, laughed at. An early post brought the intelligence that the friend, whose spectre had been seen, died that night, at that hour.

Mr. —, Surgeon, Newcastle-on-Tyne, a few weeks ago, said to me "Why are the spiritual manifestations so trifling?" I replied "What do you want? Do you wish a ghost to walk in here, speak, and shake hands with you?" He became pale, and said "No, and although I rarely mention it, I'll tell you why. When I was eight years of age, I lived with a grandmother and uncle. My grandmother died, and two years after I lived in D—— with my uncle. We lived on the banks of a river, and my playground was on the opposite side, but, to get to it, I had to go some way round by the bridge. One summer evening, returning home from the playground, I heard some one shout Richard. Not heeding the voice, Richard was repeated a second time, and was again repeated more loudly, when a man who met me said, "Boy, why don't you stop, there is a person calling of you." I turned round, and saw a grey female figure standing at a distance of

about thirty yards from me ; it was instantly at my side ; I looked up, and saw the face of my grandmother. The sight paralysed me, and I could neither move nor speak. The figure said, in solemn tones, " I once had a little grandson." This roused me ; I fled in terror to my uncle, and since then I have not desired to see an apparition."

In the month of April, 1861, a gentleman whom I shall designate Mr. A., and who was engaged in business as a general dealer, died. His death took place after a short illness. He left the settlement of his affairs, which were in a very incomplete and unsatisfactory condition, in the hands of Mr. B., a personal friend. Mr. B., on entering upon an examination of the business transactions of his friend, found the estate in the utmost confusion. There were no books, nor systematic statements of accounts to be found among the papers of the deceased. The executor, after a considerable amount of trouble, and by obtaining statements of accounts from various parties indebted to the departed, thought he had got the affairs in as complete a condition as he possibly could.

In the month of July last, three months after the death of Mr. A., Mr. B. dreamt that his friend visited him, and asked him how he was getting on with his affairs. He replied that everything was now satisfactorily settled. Mr. A. said, " How does Messrs. C.'s account stand ?" Mr. B. replied, " There were no particulars in your papers of any account against them, but they have rendered to me details of two transactions which have been placed to your credit ; after deducting the amount of these accounts from the sum you owed them, there is a balance of £120 due to them." Mr. A. said, " That account is wrong ; there is another invoice for which I ought to have credit. You will find it in an old basket in your possession, among some waste papers. On examining that invoice, you will see that there are five entries—two are charged out, and three are not, because I had not the weights of the goods supplied. If you send the invoice to Messrs. C., they know the amounts and prices, and will complete the invoice." Mr. B., impressed by the dream, searched the basket, and discovered the identical invoice referred to, in the handwriting of Mr. A., with the various particulars above enumerated. Mr. B. took an early opportunity of presenting the invoice to Messrs. C., and telling them how he had received

it, requested them to examine their books, fill in the particulars, and return the invoice completed. The invoice is now before me as completed by Messrs. C., and it reduces the balance due to them from £120 to £50. I am well acquainted with the parties concerned, and can vouch for the genuineness of the above record.

A few months ago a Mr. Walker, residing in Edinburgh, dreamed that his mother, who was residing in America, visited him: she presented to him a card covered by illuminated letters, in a language which he could not read. So impressed was he by the dream, that, on awaking, he wrote the letters from memory, and, not being able to understand them, he presented them to his employer, who, also unable to read them, called in a student who was passing, and asked him to translate or explain the sentence. The student said it is latin; and translated, it means "My son, fear thou the Lord, walk thou in His ways." In the course of a few weeks the young man heard that his mother died in America on the night of the dream.

All these yield strong presumptive evidence of the reality of intercourse between the natural and spiritual worlds, and with modern spiritual manifestations, to support them, as I think, satisfactorily prove the fact.

Assuming the genuineness of modern mysterious phenomena, and fortifying them by the Bible records, by the concurrent history of all ages and all peoples, by the recent testimony of credible witnesses to supposed supernatural visitation, we now proceed to enquire what theory will most satisfactorily and reasonably account for them.

That theory is most likely to be the true one which most easily covers the whole field of enquiry.

We may, in a general manner, divide the theories into *three classes* :—

I. That the phenomena are produced by known or undiscovered natural laws.

II. That they are produced by spirits or invisible intelligences.

III. That they are produced by a mixed influence of natural laws and invisible spiritual intelligences.

The natural laws that are most generally referred to as likely to account for modern spiritual phenomena are elec-

tricity, frictional, magnetic, and galvanic ; biology, braidism, pathetism, mesmerism, mesmeric rapport, clairvoyance, clair-audience, od, odylic rapport, neurology ; automatic, cerebral, and spinal actions ; optical, auditory, and tactile illusions ; objective illusions, subjective illusions, doppel-gangers, &c.

Every well-established fact, connected with any of the above, or any other phase of natural, material, and psychological philosophy, will be admitted as valid evidence, if legitimately used in favour of the natural hypothesis.

I may fairly assume that those who intend to contend for the sufficiency of the natural hypothesis to-night, are already well acquainted with the sciences above enumerated, and, of course, I need not state to what extent I admit them, beyond saying that I will admit all that can be or has been fairly proved in relation to them, taking as authorities the works of the most reliable authorities on the various subjects.\*

I may perhaps state what I will concede in reference to mesmerism and clairvoyance, for, if spiritualism has a weak point, it is there. I shall probably admit more than the majority of my hearers would even claim to be recognized as truth, and, therefore, I put the opponents of the spiritual theory in the best position for overthrowing it.

I now quote a few cases of absolute mental and physical control and sympathy, when the patient *was quite awake, and out of sight of the operator*. We will find that "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

The operator I shall designate Mr. R., the patient Mr. B. Some years ago Messrs. R., B., and myself met in a Temperance Hotel, in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, the subject of conversation being mesmerism. Mr. R. professed to be able to control Mr. B., when in his waking condition, without either speaking, seeing, or making signs to him of any kind. In order to test this statement, I took Mr. B. to a distant part of the house, and, returning to the room where Mr. R. sat, I shut the door, and sat near the fire-place, with the mantelpiece on my right, and Mr. R. on my left. I took a small pipe, which was lying on the table, and hiding it behind some chimney-piece ornaments, I said to Mr. R. "In order to test your powers over Mr. B., will you please to rest your hands on your knees,

\* Lecture 4th contains an Exposition of the Natural Hypotheses.

and look to the floor near your feet. When *I touch you*, WILL Mr. B. to enter the room, walk across to where I sit, take down the pipe from behind the ornaments, look at it, lay it on the table, and then walk out, without speaking a word." At the end of three minutes I touched Mr. R.; he immediately willed Mr. B. to enter. Mr. B. almost instantly entered the room, and *did precisely what I requested Mr. R. to will him to do*. I said to Mr. B. why have you done this?" He replied, "I don't know: I just felt that I had to do it."

On another occasion, I took Messrs. R. and B. to the residence of a friend, who still resides in Newcastle, the object being to test the powers of Mr. R. over Mr. B. The following experiment was tried at my suggestion. I obtained a large blanket, and got two gentlemen to hold it at arm's length across the room. On the window side of the blanket Mr. B. was placed, and on the dark side Mr. R. I then went with two gentlemen to a distant part of the room, and on a long slip of paper we each wrote three or four instructions to the operator, such, for example, as "place your thumb upon your nose, and extend your fingers." "Lift your right leg, and scratch your left knee." This paper, one of the gentlemen took to Mr. R. and said, "Will you please to do what you are instructed to do by this paper? and let each act be done without speaking or noise of any kind." Mr. R. on one side of the blanket did all that he was instructed by the paper to do, and *Mr. B. on the other side of the blanket repeated every act exactly in the manner they were performed by Mr. R.*

The book on the negative side of this question which exhibits the greatest show of learning, and in which the author attempts to prove experimentally and logically that the modern mysterious phenomena, although perfectly genuine, may yet be accounted for by reference to merely known natural laws, is a work by Professor Rogers, entitled "The Philosophy of Mysterious Rappings."

In that book, man is converted into a kind of electro-odyle-cerebro-spinal machine. The cerebral and spinal nerves acting voluntarily or involuntarily through the medium of odyle, are said by Mr. Rogers to produce all the phenomena of modern spiritualism. In support of his theory he quotes, among others, the following records :—

"Angelique Cottin was a native of La Perriere, and aged fourteen, when on the 15th of January, 1846, at eight o'clock in the evening, while weaving silk gloves at an oaken frame, in company with other girls, the frame began to jerk, and they could not by any efforts keep it steady. It seemed as if it were alive; and, becoming alarmed, they called in the neighbours, who would not believe them, but desired them to sit down and go on with their work. Being timid, they went one by one, and the frame remained still till Angelique approached, when it re-commenced its movements, while she was also attracted by the frame; thinking she was bewitched or possessed, her parents took her to the presbyter, that the spirit might be exorcised. The curate, however, being a sensible man, refused to do it, but set himself, on the contrary to observe the phenomenon; and, being perfectly satisfied of the fact, he bade them take her to a physician."

"Meanwhile, the intensity of the influence, whatever it was, augmented; not only articles made of oak, but all sorts of things, were acted upon by it, and reacted upon her; while persons who were near her, even without contact, frequently felt electric (?) shocks. The effects, which were diminished when she was on a carpet or a waxed cloth, were most remarkable when she was on the bare earth. They sometimes entirely ceased for three days, and then recommenced. Metals were not affected. Anything touching her apron or dress would fly off although a person held it; and Monsieur Herbert, while seated on a heavy tub or trough, was raised up with it. In short, the only place she could repose on was a stone covered with cork; they also kept her still by isolating her. When she was fatigued, the effects diminished. A needle, suspended horizontally, oscillated rapidly with the motion of her arm, without contact; or remained fixed while deviating from the magnetic direction. Great numbers of enlightened medical and scientific men witnessed these phenomena, and investigated them with every precaution to prevent imposition. She was often hurt by the violent involuntary movements she was thrown into, and was evidently afflicted by chorea.

"It was thought, by some who witnessed the case of Angelique Cottin, that the agent which acted so powerfully from her organism, overthrowing the tables, twisting chairs

out of stout men's hands, raising a man in a heavy tub, was electricity. C. Crowe says it did cause the deviation of a magnetic needle ; but M. Arago, who knows more about this abused agent than a nation of theorizers, could not detect the least sign of it by the nicest tests. And yet it would give the person who touched her, or her dress, a powerful shock, as if it were electricity.\*

"No single case has perhaps excited so much interest and attention as that of Frederica Hauffe, the Seeress of Prevorst. Certainly, there is no case that presents so great a variety of this class of phenomena, in connection with many others, which belong to this field of enquiry. We may safely say, in fact, that the wonderful phenomena presented in this lady's life, cover nearly, if not the whole field, of the present manifestations, and extend much beyond. The town of Prevorst is a little village in Germany, of not more than 400 inhabitants, situated in a mountainous district, the inhabitants of which are very liable to attacks of chorea, or St. Vitus' dance. In early childhood she manifested great susceptibility to all kinds of nervous influences. She frequently fell into nervous spasms, and lost all self control. Once, when in a trance, she spoke for nearly three days entirely in verse. Her susceptibility was now so great that she heard and *felt* what happened at a distance.

Persons of various temperaments now began to magnetise her, visions of whom would appear to her like *visions of spirits*. When she was asleep, knockings occurred on the walls of the room, and articles of furniture were moved."

Dr. Kerner says, "As I had been told by her parents, a year before her father's death, that at the period of her early magnetic state she was able to make herself heard by her friends, as they lay in bed at night, in the same village, but in *other* houses, by a *knocking*,—as is said of the dead,—I asked her in her sleep whether she was able to do so now, and at what distance. She answered that she would sometimes do it. Some time after this, as we were going to bed,—my children and servants being already asleep,—we heard a knocking, as if in the air over our heads. There was six knocks, at intervals of half a minute. It was a hollow, yet clear sound,—soft, but distinct. We were certain there was no one near us, nor over us, from

\* Rogers' *Philosophy of Mysterious Rappings*, pages 53, 103.

whom it could proceed ; and our house stands by itself. On the following evening, when she was asleep,—when we had mentioned the knocking to nobody whatever,—she asked me whether she should soon knock to us again ; which, as she said it was hurtful to her, I declined.”

And yet, at no great interval after this, Kerner gives the following as having taken place at his house :—

“ On the morning of the 23rd (of March, 1837), at one o'clock, I suddenly awoke, and heard seven knocks, one after another, at short intervals, seeming to proceed from the middle of my chamber. My wife was awakened also ; and we could not compare this knocking to any ordinary sound. Mrs. H— (the seeress) lived several houses distant from us.”

“ On the 30th of the same month, Rev. Mr. Herrmann came into *rapport*, or special relation, with the seeress through the medium of psychological sympathy, as well as through the physical influence. Previous to this he had not been troubled with strange sounds at his house ; but after that period he was awakened every night, at a particular hour, ‘ by a knocking in his room,—sometimes on the floor, and sometimes on the walls,—which his wife heard, as well as himself.’ \*

I now direct your attention to the two Smyrna girls, who visited France in the year 1839, and exhibited what was called their electrical powers in moving tables without contact.

“ The two girls landed at Marseilles, about the first of November, 1839. ‘ In hopes of realizing a splendid fortune, they intended to exhibit themselves in France and other parts of the continent. Immediately on their arrival, several persons, including various men of science, and professors, visited them, and ascertained the following phenomena :—

*First.*—“ The girls stationed themselves, facing each other, at the ends of a large table, keeping at a distance from it of one or two feet, according to their electrical dispositions.”

*Second.*—“ When a few minutes had elapsed, a *crackling*, like that of electric fluid spreading over gilt paper, was heard, when,

*Third.*—“ The table received a strong shake, which always made it *advance from the ELDER* to the younger sister.

*Fourth.*—“ A *key*, *nails*, or any piece of *iron*, placed on the table, instantaneously *stopped* the phenomena.

\* Rogers' *Philosophy of Mysterious Rappings*, pages 63, 79.



*Fifth.*—"When the iron was adapted to the *under part* of the table it produced no effect upon the experiment.

*Sixth.*—"Saving this singularity, the facts observed constantly followed the known laws of electricity, whether glass insulators were used, or whether one of the girls wore silk garments. In the latter case, the electric properties of both were neutralized. Such was the state of matters for some days after the arrival of the young Greeks ; but,

*Seventh.*—"The temperature having become cooler, and the atmosphere having loaded itself with *humidity*, all perceptible electric virtue seemed to have deserted them."

"In this case we have the 'manifestation' of a force, in the production of phenomena, greatly analogous to that often witnessed at the present day. The writer calls the agent electricity ; and yet, in one important respect, it acted differently from this agent, in that it was broken by simply laying a *key*, or a small piece of *iron*, on the object which it had acted upon, and was not affected when the same piece of iron was placed under the table." \*

The unintelligent raps are said to be produced by the involuntary action of the spinal cord, and the independent nerve ganglia, that lie along its edge and cluster among the viscera. The intelligent raps are said to be produced by the brain or cerebral nerves proper, voluntarily and involuntarily as regards the media.

Professor Mahan has written a more readable book than Professor Rogers, and one which is more likely to produce an unfavourable impression regarding the spiritual hypothesis on the minds of superficial enquirers. Professor Mahan can be understood by ordinary people, Professor Rogers cannot. Mahan endorses Rogers' philosophy, and quotes a number of cases to prove that the phenomena are natural and mundane, and that in no instance is there satisfactory proof of *ab extra* spirit influence. His arguments for this view are based upon the statements quoted from Professor Rogers, and upon the puerility and contrariety of the communications received, but specially upon the supposition that the manifestations can be more or less, he seems to think, perfectly controlled by the presiding or most powerfully mesmeric mind in the circle.

\* Rogers' Philosophy of Mysterious Rappings, page 100.

I have not time to quote many illustrations from his work, but give three as fair specimens of the whole.

"On Monday, January 6th, 1772, about ten o'clock in the forenoon, as Mrs. Golding, the hostess, was in the parlour, she heard the china and glasses in the back kitchen tumble down and break: her maid came to her, and told her the stone plates were falling down from the shelf. Mrs. Golding went into the kitchen and saw them broken; presently after a row of plates, from the next shelf, fell down likewise, while she was there, and nobody near them. This astonished her much, and while she was thinking about it, other things, in different places, began to tumble about, some of them breaking, attended with violent noises all over the house; a clock tumbled down, and the case broke. The destruction increased with the wonder and terror of Mrs. Golding. Wherever she went, accompanied by the servant girl, this dreadful waste of property followed. Mrs. G., in her terror, fled to a neighbour's, where she immediately fainted. A surgeon was called, and she was bled; the blood, which had hardly congealed, was seen all at once to spring out of the basin upon the floor, and presently after, the basin burst to pieces, and a bottle of rum that stood by it broke at the same time. Mrs. G. went to a second neighbour's as the valuables that were conveyed to the first were being destroyed, and while the maid remained at the first, Mr. Gresham's, the former was not disturbed, but while the latter was putting up what few things remained unbroken of her mistress's, in a back apartment, a jar of pickles, that stood upon a table, turned upside down, and other things were broken to pieces. Meantime, the disturbances had ceased at Mrs. Golding's house, and but little occurred at the neighbour's while Mrs. G. and her servant remained apart, but as soon as they came into each other's company, the disturbance would begin again; at all these periods of action, says the detail, Mrs. Golding's servant was walking backward and forward, in either kitchen or parlour, or wherever some of the family happened to be, nor could they get her to sit down five minutes together, except at one time, for about half an hour, towards the morning, when the family were at prayers in the parlour; then all was quiet; but in midst of the greatest confusion, she was as much composed as at any other time, and, with uncommon coolness of temper, advised her mistress

not to be alarmed or uneasy, 'as,' she said, 'these things could not be helped.' Thus she argued, as if they were common occurrences which must happen in every family. Everything which Mrs. Golding had touched seems to have been in some way affected, so that afterwards, on the approach of the maid, it would be frequently broken to atoms, sometimes without even her touch. Even the blood of Mrs. G. was highly susceptible under the same circumstance, and the bowl in which it was contained, and the glass ware standing by it, burst to pieces." \*

"We will give in illustration, a fact which occurred some years since, when a medium was entertaining circles in Cleveland, at the house of the distinguished spiritualist, Joel Tiffany, Esq. We do not hold him responsible at all for the acts of the medium. The case was this. 'A gentleman, a member of the bar, in that city, on his first introduction to the spirit-circles, was strongly inclined, to say the least, to embrace, in full, the doctrine of spiritualism, so inexplicable, on any other theory, did the undeniable facts presented appear. Subsequently, however, he became fully convinced, that while the rappings were a reality, and no imposition, the force which produced them was sometimes consciously, but more generally, unconsciously, controlled by spirits in and not out of the body. He accordingly, having gained the confidence of the medium, one of the best that ever appeared amongst us, united with her in deceiving temporarily, for his own amusement, some of his friends, who visited these circles. On one occasion, he remarked to those present, that none of the tests which they had applied, were, or ought to be, fully satisfactory; because, that, in all instances, they had to depend upon the testimony of individuals, in regard to the question, whether their inquiries were or were not correctly answered. He would propose a test about which, there could be no mistake, and of the character of which they could all alike judge for themselves. He would retire from the circle, and write down seven questions, and having returned, he would put them in succession, mentally, no one, as they could all testify, seeing the paper but himself. The answers, as rapped out, they should take down, and when completed, he would read each question in order, and they should read the answer, and see for themselves how they cor-

\* Mahan's Spiritualism Exposed, page 75.

responded, each to each. Seven questions were accordingly written out and put as suggested, and seven answers were rapped out. When compared, it was found that each question had been specifically and correctly answered. We will give three of them as examples of the rest, namely, the first two and the last. Question—‘How many days are there in a week?’ Answer—‘Seven.’ Question—‘Who performs these wonders?’ (This was put in Latin) Answer—‘The spirits.’ Question—‘What do the spirits think of any in this circle who are not convinced?’ Answer—‘If an angel from heaven should speak to them, they would not believe.’ All who understood not the facts as they were, were astounded and convinced, of course. The gentleman subsequently informed his wondering friends, that he had, prior to that meeting, put all those answers, in writing, into the hands of the medium, informing her, that corresponding questions would be put in the form stated, and that she must prepare herself accordingly. The answers, as he affirms, were given word for word, as he wrote them. The spelling, however, was hers, she being a poor speller. Yet the rappings, he further adds, were no imposition, and remain to this day, to his mind, a deep mystery. The deception lay exclusively in persuading the persons present that spirits out of circle, and not the minds in it, controlled the actions of the force by which the answers were given forth.\*

“Let us now look at another very important case. ‘A gentleman in Boston, a devoted spiritualist, while sitting in a spirit circle, was struck with the revelation to his mind of the fact that the responses to the questions propounded by inquiries, so frequently corresponded with the conceptions previously formed in his own imagination. This led to more careful reflection and observation, and finally to important experiments, in which he found, that he could determine beforehand what answers should be given to any questions propounded by any persons present, and that he had, in a similar manner, been unconsciously directing the action of this mysterious force, and that, while he had been supposing that spirits out of the circles had been doing it. A totally new theory pertaining to these so-called spirit manifestations now stood revealed to his mind. He saw that mere reflections of

\* Mahan's Spiritualism Exposed, page 135.

the thoughts of individuals in the circles had been mistaken for the voices of spirits out of the circles.'

"A gentleman of very strong mesmeric power, in the State of New York, also found, after the most extensive experiments, that he could enter any circle whatever, and by simply willing it, could utterly silence 'the spirits,' so that no communications whatever could be obtained from them—that he could, in a similar manner, utterly confuse their responses, or determine beforehand the answers which should be given to any questions proposed by any person present. The bearing of such facts cannot be mistaken. Any person that in their presence will attribute these manifestations to disembodied spirits must be a spiritualist by mere dint of will, and because he is determined to be deceived."

"A Professor of the Ohio Medical College, at the earnest solicitation of friends, visited, on one occasion, the spirit-circle of Mrs. Fish and the Foxes, in the city of Cleveland. All his questions, the first excepted, his mind not being in a collected state at the moment, were answered with perfect correctness, though they pertained to subjects with which he alone, of the members of the circle, was acquainted; all his questions, we say, were correctly answered, till the spirit communicating, that of a sister, was requested to specify the christian name of their father. The moment he put the question, his thought recurred to his brother, concerning whom, he had just before been enquiring. The name of the brother instead of the father was immediately rapped out. The occurrence, he remarked, threw a flood of light upon his mind, in regard to the origin and cause of these manifestations. The spirit, professedly communicating, understood the names of each of the individuals referred to, as well as the professor himself, and would have corrected the mistake, had it been that person that was communicating. No such correction, however, was made. He concluded, therefore, that his thought caused the answer, and not that of a spirit out of the circle. Who can doubt the correctness of his conclusions? Had it been an intelligent being out of the circle, especially the mind professedly answering, it could have made no difference whatever to what subject the thoughts of the enquirer should turn, after asking his question. If, on the other hand, the action of this power on the production of the answer, was controlled by the

mental states of the inquirer himself, then the accidental diversion of attention, in this instance, would occasion the identical answer that was received. On no other principle can its occurrence be accounted for."\*

"Spirit" said Sir David Brewster, "is the last thing that I will give in to." Unphilosophical and unbecoming a candid enquirer as this expression is, it is practically, if not in words, what I also confess to having said. The influence of early associations, and the impress of the anti-spiritualistic philosophy of the age, made me very unwilling to be convinced of the spirituality of the phenomena, I last week attempted to describe. I struggled in the meshes of doubt and disbelief for about eight years, and after vainly attempting to solve the problem of their causes by the operation of merely natural laws, I was at last, by overwhelming force of facts, driven into the belief of their being produced by extra mundane powers, or *ab extra* spirit agency.

I can, therefore, be tolerant of scepticism on the part of unbelievers in either the phenomena or theory of spiritualism, and desire to force no man's conviction. Indeed, as a general rule, I request persons not to receive implicitly my testimony, but to examine for themselves, and from personal observation, either receive or reject, cautioning them at the same time not to expect to reach the top of the ladder of spiritualism at a single spring. That would be the extreme of unreason. There is no royal road to learning. The mountain of knowledge is not to be climbed in a day. Let us learn the lesson that experience teaches all wise men and women, that truth is only to be acquired by slow and laborious research, and that he is a fool who expects to reach the mountain heights of any subject at a bound. If such a thing were practicable, we would neither realize our privileges, nor understand our position.

What could a student understand of the higher mathematics who had not previously studied the elementary branches of arithmetic? What of the higher branches of spiritual or any other philosophy or literature if he had not gone through the preliminary steps? It is recorded of but *one man* that he was *born a man*; all since have been born *babes*, and have had everything to learn.

\* Professor Mahan's *Spiritualism Exposed*, page 194.

You and I are in that position, and respecting any conclusion to which we have come, it is only valuable as evidence in proportion to the application, the ability, and the honest enquiry we have devoted to its examination.

I infer that modern mysterious phenomena are produced by invisible spiritual intelligences. I.—Because no known natural laws, giving them their widest latitude, have yet accounted for them. II.—Because there is no appearance of the probable discovery of a natural law that will account for them. III.—Because the interposition of invisible spiritual intelligences, acting through the agency of known or faintly shadowed forth natural laws, does satisfactorily account for the phenomena. This position I am prepared to defend ; *all* others, I believe, are untenable.

You will please to observe that I have not said anything whatever about the characters or individualities of the invisible agents, about the value of their teachings, or about the design or these latter-day wonders. These questions I reserve for some future occasion, desiring to feel the ground firm beneath our feet before venturing further into the investigation.

Nor am I so illogical as to attempt to *prove a negative*. I shall not therefore strive to prove that the natural hypothesis *does not* account for the phenomena, but simply assert that such is my belief.

The proper duty of my opponents, this evening, is to demonstrate that the natural hypothesis is the correct one ; and my province is to expose the unsoundness of their arguments, and the falsity of their positions. This, if accomplished, leaves the spiritual theory as the only occupant of the field.

### LECTURE III.—ON SPIRITUALISM AND THE MYSTERIOUS POWERS IN NATURE

Rarely, perhaps never, do the works of the sculptor, painter, poet, or orator, reach, or even closely approach, their ideal conceptions. The statues of Phidias, which grew under the stroke of the magician's chisel, almost glow with life. They are, however, probably poor representations of the living forms which moved in his own æsthetic soul.

The subject we have to consider this evening is one which would require the hand of a master to do it but scant justice. I, therefore, throw myself upon your indulgence and partiality, while I endeavour to lay before you a few remarks on the exalted matters that are to occupy our attention.

Your thoughts will be directed, *first*, to the occult and hidden, but stupendous powers of nature ; *second*, to the folly of dogmatism, in the face of our almost blank ignorance of primary forces ; *third*, assuming that invisible intelligences do perform the artistic and mechanical effects that in the first lecture of this course I described, I shall attempt to explain the *modus operandi*, and strive to answer the question, How do they do them ?

Those who open their eyes widely to the mysteries of the universe, see everywhere in nature primary forces, the existences of which are only known to us by the phenomena they produce. All the primary forces are invisible, intangible, and imponderable, they can neither be seen, weighed, nor measured.

The secondary forces in nature are gross and comparatively powerless, when compared with the more refined and invisible powers which universally prevail. Of these more refined powers, in their essence, we know absolutely nothing, and of the great laws of nature, except in their secondary effects, we also know nothing.

We are in the deep sea of ignorance, and those who *have a little knowledge* of secondary forces, and of the phenomenal characteristics of primary powers, feel like Newton, that they are indeed as children on the shores of the broad ocean of infinity, picking up pebbles here and there, but knowing little or nothing of the ocean of truth which stretches before them to infinitude. La Place who is much abused as the author of a sublime, even if untrue, cosmical theory, very properly says, "What we know is but little, what we know not is immense."

Let us look for a few minutes at some of the primary forces in nature.

I shall assume that the majority of my hearers have a general knowledge of natural and psychological philosophy, and shall therefore not detail the experiments by which certain conclusions have been arrived at, but simply state the conclusions that are recognised by the most competent



teachers of the age. I shall take, therefore, a few of the leading primary powers, and by reference to them, show to those who need to be shown, that our knowledge of their essential nature, and of the powers for the production of manifest phenomena that yet lie latent and undeveloped in them, is literally at zero.

Let us take for illustration *vital force and vital chemistry, actinism, heat, magnetism, electricity, inorganic chemistry, light, and gravitation.*

Vital force and vital chemistry, what are they? Who will answer the question? I see learned professors of medicine and physiology here, will they please to set our enquiries at rest, and not allow us to rack ourselves "With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls."

We were in our early embryo state merely double-coated cells, filled with fluid, and in size not so large as a swan shot. By a process of differentiation the two coats of the cells separated, and appropriated to themselves different portions of the surrounding nutriment, one becoming developed into the visceral, and the other into the neural part of man, eventually forming the neural and hæmal arches of Professor Owen. In our pre-earthly life we lived without breathing, and on the blood of our mothers. At birth an entire change took place, and, from being intra-uterine creatures, we became extra-uterine, and breathed the air of this world. Then set in a process of growth, and a constant process of decay, the former so overpowering the latter that, in course of time, we became developed from puny infants to full-grown men and women. What are those mysterious vital and chemical forces which produced those wonderful phenomena?

How are we supported? By what means do the inorganic elements of the earth and the air supply substance, beauty, and life to the living vegetable or plant? How is grass converted into beef? And how are beef and bread in their turn converted into the thinking, impulsive, and emotional human being? How does the blood, a comparatively simple fluid, generate in the living chambers of the body, from its own substance, the material which forms bone, muscle, nerve, and skin; in one region secreting pancreatic juice, in another gastric, and in another bile; here wax, there saliva; here lachrymal fluid, there lymph; and *all these substances and*

juices just where they are required, and in proper quantities? How is this? Echo answers, how; for no one knows.

Look again at the vital and chemical forces in the vegetable world.

Three seeds are sown in the same soil. Little is the difference between them in respect to their forms or sizes. They are planted in the same earth, covered by the same snow, watered by the same rain, vivified by the same sunshine, purified by the same breezes, supplied with material for growth by the same inorganic elements, yet one becomes developed into a lily of virgin and immaculate whiteness; another into a red and blushing rose; and the third into a violet of imperial purple. How is all this?

What is *Actinism*? How is it that the same solar chemical force, which browns and ripens our grain in the waving autumn fields, acts as an invisible and noiseless limner, and sketches in a second of time on the prepared iodized plate the lineaments of any sitter, not imperfectly, as through the hand of an embodied artist, but infallibly, if optical and chemical laws be observed?

What is heat? Heat is an invisible and imponderable agent, and yet produces marvellous results. "Cyanuric acid, which is a crystalline substance, *soluble in water* by the addition of a few degrees of *heat only*, is converted into hydrated cyanic acid, which is a volatile fluid, and *cannot be brought into contact with water* without instant decomposition, and yet the elements of which they are composed *are exactly the same*, while their effects upon the human organism are totally different."

What is magnetism? Why should disturbances on the sun's surface, such local circumstances as produce spots on his disc, cause magnetic storms on this earth?

What is electricity? What that mysterious force, sufficient of which is latent in a drop of water, which, if suddenly developed, would blow this house and all it contains into the air?

What are the occult forces in inorganic chemistry? We know that a large volume of oxygen and hydrogen mixed together, and exploded by the introduction of an electric spark, or ordinary flame, would suddenly collapse into a few drops of water by the activity of the chemical forces then set in motion. But who can understand the how of this?

What is light? That no distance tires, which flies with a fleetness compared with which the exploits of Shakspeare's Puck are child's play. It travels through the earth's atmosphere and the infinitudes of the interstellar spaces with equal celerity—a celerity that distance cannot baffle—and eventually reaches us, although it may take 20,000,000 of years in the journey, travelling at the rate of 200,000 miles per second, and now impresses the retina of the observer.

Why should light pass through transparent objects only? Heat passes through all substances; magnetism and electricity through some, transparency or opacity, solidity or fluidity have no relation to conducting or non-conducting power.

See that crystalline dew-drop, glittering in the morning sunshine; see yon rolling orb, compared with which this world of ours is insignificant; see those dazzling galaxies of suns, stretched in numbers that are numberless into the abysses of infinitude; the same solitary omnipresent law gives them their forms and holds them in their various positions.

Who can explain the philosophy of the five senses?

Thus we see, without going to our Maker, whom no finite being can understand; or to the spiritual world, which is to some extent, separated from us by this clothing of flesh; there are in nature mysteries that probably eternity will not completely unravel to us. I love mystery. It makes me feel my own utter insignificance, and gives me to know that there is something above me, something I cannot yet understand, and possibly may never fully understand. I know, therefore, it has not been produced by imperfect and limited beings like ourselves. Thankful am I that the universe is formed and controlled by a Being

"With power that knows no limit,  
And skill that knows no bound."

If the universe were no longer a mystery to me, I would spurn it from me as an empty shell, or sucked orange, not containing anything capable of stimulating the mental appetite. When after the greatest efforts of all our faculties we feel we know next to nothing; then, in that respect at least, we are wise.

There are, in the material universe, those laws and forces which present, to Him whose eye is everywhere, all scenes, in all ages, at the same instant of time.

In view of the foregoing facts and principles, where is the room for dogmatism? It can only arise from *two causes*. An organic defect of mind, which renders a person incapable of understanding facts and evidences, or a one-sided training, which warps the judgment of even the best constituted. Hence the necessity of broad, catholic, and eclectic culture. That is what will remove dogmatism, conceit, and prejudice, from the minds of men who are capable of appreciating truth and right.

The dogmatism of the feeble, imbecile, and uninquiring, is of little moment, inasmuch as no one cares for their conceits, and the only feeling they create is that of pity.

If we deliberately close our eyes to facts and phenomena, because they are beyond the range of, and contrary to, our previous conceptions, or because we cannot, at once, understand them, we may, without much loss either to ourselves or the world, go to sleep at once, and hybernate for the period of our natural lives.

Now, we come to that part of the subject which offers the greatest difficulty, I mean the laws and agencies by means of which disembodied spiritual intelligences perform the various physical acts which are described as having taken place at spiritual *séances*.

I shall not refer to trance or impressional speaking, nor to drawing by the hand of a medium, all of which, I think, may be accounted for, to a considerable extent, by merely mundane agencies.

I think, however, that the lifting of tables, the raps on a table, the intelligence displayed in the replies to questions, feeble though that intelligence sometimes is; the ringing of bells, knotting of handkerchiefs, independent writing on slates and paper, music on guitars, concertinas, and pianos; independent drawings, and the revelations of names, addresses, private histories, and minutiae respecting many things, entirely unknown to all but the enquirers, and often unknown even to them, *cannot* be satisfactorily accounted for by reference to known natural laws.

Commencing with the lower forms of manifestation, and rising to the higher, I assert—

I.—That there is no record of any person, in a *normal condition*, being able to produce knocks on tables, floors, or

walls, at pleasure, except by the use of ordinary mechanical means.

II. That there is no authentic record of any case where a person or persons, at pleasure, could, by a mere effort of the will, and without mechanical contrivance, lift ponderable bodies, such as tables.

III. If the former be true, then we have no right, without further evidence, to assert that the raps, liftings, responses to questions, ringing of bells, and other physical phenomena, are produced either voluntarily or involuntarily by any embodied person, either present at the *séance* or apart from it. If the lower forms cannot be proved capable of performance by embodied human beings, we are perfectly justified in asserting that neither can the higher.

Even supposing that all the physical manifestations which have been described as having occurred at spiritual *séances*, could be proved to have been the voluntary or involuntary work of media, still we have to account for the correct responses to questions unknown to the media, and often unknown to all in the room. Admitting clairvoyance and thought reading, the recognised facts do not touch the question, inasmuch as clairvoyants and thought readers are in a peculiar and abnormal condition, while the media are not.

Assuming, then, that the phenomena are effected by disembodied spiritual intelligences, how are they produced?

The following appears to me to be the most reasonable theory:—

All persons more or less emit a fluid, which by Reichenbach is termed *od* or *odyle*. To the influence of that emanation some individuals are very susceptible. It appears to be somewhat but not perfectly analogous to the mesmeric or magnetic fluid. It emanates from almost all substances in greater or less quantity, and has, like electricity, the property of polarity. The sun and stars are said to be positive, the moon and planets negative; man positive, woman negative. Be this inference true or false, this seems certain that *there is* an emanation.

Probably upon the quality and quantity of that emanation, in any given locality, depends the power of invisible intelligences to produce mechanical effects.

I think it more analogous to the mesmeric fluid than is generally imagined, at least I have generally, not always,

found good media very susceptible to magnetic influence, and have usually, when striking manifestations were taking place, felt a manifest and strong *aura* pass over my hands and sometimes across my face.

All these facts lead me to suppose that the invisible intelligences work by this, or, it may be, some other subtle fluid. It is very probable that this fluid is converted into, or used for the production of a force, by a means not at present known to us. Its invisibility is no proof of its impotency. We have seen that the most potent forces are perfectly invisible and altogether uncognisable, except by the phenomena they produce. Through this agent, then, the table may be lifted, and where it exists in sufficient quantities, a person may be lifted, and a house itself shaken. The independent raps are probably produced by a series of small explosions, or concussions, and hands are probably formed by intensifying this ethereal fluid, and moulding it into a proper shape. This theory may be all true, all false, or partly true and partly false. Be that as it may, it presents itself to me, at present, as the most feasible explanation of the *modus operandi*.

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#### LECTURE IV.—THE NATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL IN THEIR RELATION TO MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

The minds of men have, in all ages, been filled with "gorgons, hydras, and chimeras dire;" and each remarkable appearance in the heavens above, or the earth beneath, was, in the dark ages, and is now, in the minds of a large proportion of people, placed to the credit of some supernatural agency. Comets, earthquakes, storms, diseases, wars, have been instanced as forerunners or agents of the divine displeasure; not only to the heathen who crowded their temples and pantheons with gods—not only to the poor illiterate Roman Catholic, who looks up to his priest as the vice-gerent of God on earth, but to the Pope and his cardinals in solemn conclave; fiery-looking celestial visitors have struck awe; and, even now, some ministers of what are termed more enlightened

churches, disgrace their profession, by ascribing every trifling natural disorder to the direct visitation of the Almighty, or the interposition of some malignant spirit. Instance the potatoe disease, the cholera, the Indian mutiny, and the Maynooth grant. Caution, therefore, is exceedingly necessary, before we arrive at the conclusion that any mysterious phenomena are solely, or partially, the product of agents from the unseen world ; inasmuch, as the readiest, most superstitious, and most illogical course, is to clothe every remarkable occurrence with mystery, and link it with beings of another sphere.

This grand old earth, the scene of so much vice and such high virtue, is daily, nay hourly, shooting from its surface, like arrows from an exhaustless quiver, the souls of men and women, into the spiritual spheres, and is gathering into its own bosom, their decaying and decayed bodies.

Death is no respecter of persons—the prince and peasant must pass its narrow portals. Death is but a blessing in disguise—a poor and flimsy disguise to those who are prepared for the change, and whose spiritual eyes are opened to realise their future inheritance.

Earth is the huge mausoleum of the race ; in almost every part it is crowded with the bodies of the departed. The cocoon of each human being, being left here, the spirits are translated to the spirit world,

We all strive to pierce that dark veil which separates the present from the future, the spirito-natural from the spiritual, time from eternity.

Those who have gone before are looked wistfully after, and the faintest indications of spirit interest and sympathy would heal many a wounded, bleeding heart. If we look so earnestly after the loved ones who have preceded us, what good reason is there for supposing that they are not equally, nay more, mindful of us ? The Bible certainly seems to indicate as much, inasmuch as it makes the spiritual world to rejoice over every sinner that repenteth ; and intimates, in its gloomiest passages, that even the *lost* are anxious for the welfare of their earth friends.

Let us see if modern occurrences give us reasonable grounds for believing that we have not only the sympathy of, but direct intercourse with, those who have entered the stage of being in advance of us—the world of spirits.

Spiritual manifestations divide themselves into four kinds.

I.—Merely physical manifestations, in which there is no display of intelligence—such as knockings and movings of articles of furniture, &c.

II. Intelligent responses to questions, put orally or mentally, and unknown to the media ; by means of knockings ; either by bringing, without mechanical contrivance, material bodies sharply in contact, or by concussions on, or explosions near, material bodies.

III. By the performance of various artistic, mechanical, or oratorical effects, through the hands or tongues of media, the media during the time, being strictly automatic, and not exercising any voluntary power.

IV. The production of independent mechanical or artistic effects, such as knotting handkerchiefs, untying knots in cords, opening and shutting doors, removing articles of furniture, ringing bells, playing musical instruments, writing upon slates or paper, and producing elaborate drawings in pencil or colors, in a few seconds of time.

In order to decide, with any show of reason, whether these effects *are* or *are not* produced by disembodied invisible intelligences, we must inquire, in the first place, what has been, and therefore, may be done, by known material and psychological laws.

II. Is there any thing in those laws which seems to point to a further developement, so as to render it probable that they may produce *some* of, or *all*, the phenomena which are popularly described as spiritual manifestations ?

III. If these laws do not, and are not likely to produce, the mysterious phenomena to which I have been referring, is it probable that other natural laws may yet be discovered, that will satisfactorily account for them ?

IV. In the event of all the foregoing being answered in the negative, are we justified in saying that the phenomena are produced by invisible spiritual intelligences ? If not, what would be satisfactory evidence of intercourse with the spirit world ?

*Trick and deception* are the first theories that present themselves to the minds of enquirers, and are the first to flee before investigation.

For the purpose of producing *objective*, optical, auditory, and tactile illusions in the minds of persons in their *normal con-*



*dition, trick* must be resorted to. We have seen, however, that the media are generally illiterate and incompetent persons, without any knowledge of occult natural laws ; while the enquirers are among the best educated persons in the kingdom, in all natural sciences, and are not likely to be deceived by ignorant imposters. If the manifestations occurred in the presence of persons untrained in natural physical science, and media were skilful, there might be room for doubt. *To believe that all those intelligent enquirers have been deceived, would be a greater marvel than to believe the remarkable phenomena genuine.*

Let us look at the phenomena that can be produced by natural laws, by known mechanical, muscular, and psychological forces, commencing with the more elementary and least plausible, and ascending to the higher and more seemingly potent.

*Involuntary muscular pressure* was the theory propounded by Professor Faraday, by which to account for table turning. That is now generally considered impotent.

*Cracking of joints*, the favorite theory of very old opponents, may safely be laid aside as valueless.

*Electricity, galvanism, and magnetism* follow next. I admit that, by certain mechanical arrangements, by making and breaking contacts between conducting and non-conducting bodies, these powers can produce knockings and movings, but I deny that any human being has, or can, produce a piece of electrical or galvanic apparatus of such a character as to produce responses to any questions that may be asked, without the mechanical contrivance being easily discovered by any person who is thoroughly conversant with the various principles of physical science. And further, as no such discovery has been made, notwithstanding the hundreds of thousands of circles in which the phenomena have occurred, I am justified in rejecting that theory as totally absurd, and feel confident that no one here, who has any acquaintance with the sciences of electricity and magnetism, will for a moment suppose that either the lower or the higher phenomena are produced by their instrumentality.

*Automatic cerebral and spinal actions* next appear. The former are involuntary actions of the brain, said to produce near and distant intelligent mechanical results, results of

which we have no record, with which I am acquainted, in persons in their *normal condition*. The latter, or involuntary spinal actions, are those which are said to produce merely mechanical effects, both at small and great distances, such as those affected by Angelique Cottin and others, a few particulars of which I shall this evening give you. Neither of these, however, I think, we will agree, account for the phenomena I have previously described.

We have now arrived at that branch of the subject where natural theories most nearly account for the phenomena ; I mean *mesmerism* and its cognate sciences.

I shall in my future remarks use the terms *mesmerism*, *biology*, *pathetism*, *electrical psychology*, *animal magnetism*, *odylism*, and all their derivatives, as *synonymous terms*. Not because they are strictly, and scientifically synonymes, but because, to a popular audience, any attempt rigidly to define and separate them would be "definition without a difference," and for all practical purposes, they may be recognised as one force, or one aggregate of forces. This being understood, will simplify our explanation, which, before an audience not specially trained to the consideration of the subject, will prove very desirable. *Meamerism*, being the most familiar term, will generally be used.

It is amusing to witness the ardent attachment for the *old heresies* of *meemerism* and *clairvoyance*, which has recently sprung up in the breasts of those who, a few years ago, denounced them as the *personifications of absurdity*. Now, however, that the *new heresy* of *spiritualism* has to be put down, conservative opponents, who unenquiringly reject all new truths, must adopt as their own children those views which are most likely to accomplish the work. Hence the sudden and apparently unaccountable conversions to a belief in *mesmerism*.

Mesmeric phenomena may be divided into the following classes :—

- I. Mesmeric control of muscles.
- II. Optical, auditory, and tactile illusions.
- III. Sympathy of the senses.
- IV. Trance and impressional speaking.
- V. Personal control at great distances.

- VI. Animal polarity.
- VII. Independent mechanical motions by efforts of will.
- VIII. Thought reading.
- IX. Clairvoyance and clair-audience.
- X. Prevision of future events.
- XI. Trance travelling and doppel-ganger.

Mesmeric control of the voluntary and involuntary muscles will not, I am sure, be urged by any as a satisfactory explanation of modern mysterious phenomena. And I shall not consider that in trance or impressional speaking, nor even in automatic writing and drawing, we have any satisfactory evidence of interferences in mundane affairs, on the part of invisible intelligences. These concessions narrow the grounds of difference. I make these concessions because I know that persons in sleep, and in mesmeric trance, draw, write, compose prose, poetry, and music, and speak in languages which they cannot do awake or in their normal condition.

My opponents in this controversy have not taken the strongest positions that were open for them to occupy.

Allow me to introduce a few facts in illustration of this, some of which will be familiar to many of you.

I state the strongest that occur to me, having no desire to defend a position which I believe to be logically indefensible. I quote these because known illustrations prevent long explanations.

I refer you to the records of Angelique Cottin, Frederica Hauffe, Seeress of Prevorst; the Electric Girls of Smyrna, and Mrs. Golding and her servant, particulars respecting whom will be found in previous parts of this work.\* The following cases are also worthy the consideration of all who wish to form rational opinions in reference to modern mysterious phenomena:—

"Eighteen years since, in 1834, the *Newark Advertiser* published a curious narrative of a rapping-case, into the truth of which its agents had previously inquired. It appeared that, on a certain night, the family of Mr. Joseph Barron, living in the township of Woodbridge, about three miles from Rahway, Newark County, were alarmed, after they had retired, by a loud thumping against the house. Mr. B.'s first

\* Pages 66, 67, 68, 70.

impression was, that some person was *attempting to break in*, but further observation soon undeceived him. The thumping, however, continued at short intervals, until the family became so alarmed that Mr. B. called in some of his neighbours, who remained up with the family until daylight, when the thumping ceased.

"The next evening, after nightfall, the noise recommenced, when it was ascertained to be mysteriously connected with the movements of a servant girl in the family, a white girl, about fourteen years of age. When passing a window on the stairs, for example, a sudden jar, accompanied with an explosive sound, broke a pane of glass; the girl at the same moment being seized with a violent spasm. This, of course, very much alarmed her, and the physician (Dr. Drake) who was sent for, came, and bled her. The bleeding, however, produced no apparent effect; the noise still continued as before, at intervals, wherever the girl went, each sound producing more or less of a spasm; and the physician, with the family, remained up during the night. At daylight the thumping ceased again. On the third evening the same thing was repeated, commencing a little earlier than before, and so every evening."\*

"Stratford, Nov. 2, 1850.

"A copy of your paper, containing an article on the recent strange events at my house, came to hand yesterday.

"I have not hitherto noticed any anonymous publications on this painful subject, nor have I published anything except what is signed with my own name. In regard to your inquiries, I can assure you that *the whole affair still remains a profound mystery*. The troubles at my house continued for at least seven months. During that time, events which cannot be accounted for occurred, to the number of two or three thousand. Many of them to be sure, were of such a nature that they *might* have been done by human agency. But, in multitudes of instances, they have taken place in a way which rendered all trick or collusion utterly impossible. I have myself *seen* articles moved from one place to another; *not*, as your correspondent says, '*found them moved*.'

"I have *seen things in motion* more than a thousand times, and, in most cases, when no visible power existed by which the motion could have been produced. I can produce scores of

\* "Sights and Sounds," pages 43 and 44.

persons, whose characters for intelligence, piety, and competence to judge in this matter, no one who knows them will question, who will make solemn oath that they have witnessed the same things. As to *the reality of the facts*, they can be proved by testimony a hundred-fold greater than is ordinarily required in our courts of justice in cases of life and death.

"At the time these troubles commenced, my family consisted of my wife, two daughters, one sixteen and the other six years of age, and two sons, one eleven and the other three, and one domestic. The smallest child *did*, by accident, somewhere about that time, break a pane of glass, and the elder boy did once, it is said throw a poker on to the floor. But no one ever intimated or dreamed of there being anything mysterious in those things. There have been broken from my windows *seventy-one panes of glass*; more than thirty of which I have seen break with my own eyes. I have seen objects, such as brushes, tumblers, candlesticks, snuffers, &c., which, but a few moments before I knew to be at rest, fly against the glass, and dash it to pieces, when it was utterly impossible, from the direction in which they moved, that any visible power should have caused their motion.

"The statement of your correspondent, that the windows were never '*seen to break*,' nor the furniture '*seen to move*,' is wholly untrue; and the charge that these things were done by members of my own family, a cruel and wicked slander.

"If I seem to be unduly earnest on this subject, I trust that you and your readers will consider that I have feelings as keenly alive to the honour of my family as other men. I know them to be innocent in this matter. Within the range of your paper's circulation, I have friends, I have children, and grandchildren, and brothers, and sisters, and a circle, by no means limited, who are bound to me, and I to them, by other ties. They have feelings to be pained and lacerated by any aspersions affecting the honour either of myself or my family; and I ask what right has your correspondent, or any other man, thus wantonly to asperse the character and assail the reputation of an innocent family?

"I will not, and I need not, characterise the act or the man by the epithets they merit.

"ELIAKIM PHELPS."†

† "Sights and Sounds," pages 106 to 109.

"The next instance recalls an old acquaintance, worthy Mr. Mompesson, who, in 1661, at his residence at Tedworth, in return as was supposed, for some indignity practised upon a vagrant drummer, was for some time made the victim of a series of similar startling visitations. The Rev. Joseph Glanvil, chaplain to Charles II., in a work directed against the Sadduceism of the day, relates this history with considerable minuteness of detail.

"The Mompesson story affirms that, shortly after Mr. M. had dismissed the vagabond in question, and confiscated his drum, the family were much disturbed by noises—knocking and drumming in the night at the outside of the door. Mr. M. went about the house with a brace of pistols in his hand, but discovered nothing. When he got back to his bed, there was thumping and drumming on the top of the house, which continued a good space, and then went off into the air. This thumping and drumming was usually continued five successive nights, and then it would intermit three. After a month's disturbance without, it came into the room where the drum lay, and continued five nights in seven. It continued in this room for the space of three months. Its approach was indicated by a hurling in the air over the house, and its going off was like the beating of a drum at the breaking up of a guard."\*

I now refer you to the well-known ghost story connected with the family of the illustrious John Wesley. The apparition in the family was familiarly called "Old Jeffrey."

"Mr. John Wesley, relating the attempts of his sister Mary to unravel the mystery, writes that, on a certain night, she had requested her younger sister to allow her to assume her usual office of taking away her father's bed-room candle, avowing her determination to find out the trick. 'She accordingly took my sister Kitty's place, and had no sooner taken away the candle than she heard a noise below. She hastened down stairs to the hall where the noise was; but it was then in the kitchen. She ran into the kitchen, where it was drumming on the inside of the screen; when she went round it was drumming on the outside, and so always on the side opposite to her. Then she heard a knocking at the back kitchen door. She ran to it, unlocked it *softly*, and when the knocking was repeated, suddenly opened it; but nothing was

\* "Sights and Sounds, or the History of Spirit Rapping," pages 22 and 23.

to be seen. As soon as she had shut it, the knocking began again. She opened it again, but could see nothing. When she went to shut the door, it was violently thrust against her. She let it fly open, but nothing appeared. She went again to shut it, and it was again thrust against her; but she set her knee and her shoulder to the door, forced it to, and turned the key. Then the knocking began again; but she let it go on, and went up to bed. However, from that time, she was thoroughly convinced that there was no imposture in the affair.'

"Upon another occasion, Mr. Samuel Wesley, 'at six in the evening, had family prayers as usual. When he began the prayer for the king, a knocking began all round the room; and a thundering knock attended the *amen*. The same was heard from this time every morning and evening, while prayer for the king was repeated."\*

The following story is abridged from "Owen's Footfalls on the Boundary of another World," page 333 :—

In 1828, the captain, and Mr. Bruce the mate of a vessel, trading between Liverpool and New Brunswick, were sitting in their cabin, the ship having been six weeks at sea. The captain left the mate alone in the cabin, and after a short absence on deck, the mate rejoined him, informing him, with signs of alarm, that he had seen a stranger in the cabin, writing upon the slate which lay on the desk.

The captain entirely disbelieved the story, and went with the mate into the cabin. On examining the slate they found written upon it "STEER TO THE NOR' WEST." The captain, determined to find out who had done this, had all the men in the ship brought before him, and each man who could write; wrote on the slate "Steer to the Nor' West." None of the handwritings had the slightest resemblance to the original. The captain decided to steer in the direction indicated, and at three o'clock they came in sight of an iceberg with the wreck of a ship on it, containing a great number of human beings. Boats were sent to relieve the sufferers. The third boat contained the mate, who, on ascending the side of the ship, saw the face of the man whose spectre, or double, he had seen in the cabin. He started back in consternation. Captain and mate both went on board the wrecked vessel, the captain

\* "Sights and Sounds, or the History of Spirit Rapping," pages 27 and 28.

taking with him the slate on which the writing was found, and laying the clean side of the slate before the mysterious stranger, requested him to write on the slate "Steer to the Nor' West." The man did so, and the writing was a *perfect facsimile of that produced by the phantom.*

This narrative has the reputation of being well authenticated.

I now quote the case of the pious and learned Oberlin :—

"The valley of Ban-de-la-Roche, or Steinthal, in Alsace, the scene for more than fifty years of Oberlin's labours of love, surrounded by lofty mountains, is for more than half the year cut off from the rest of the world by snows obstructing the passes.

"There Oberlin found the peasantry with very peculiar opinions. He said to Mr. Smithson, that when he first came to reside among the inhabitants of Steinthal, they had, what he then considered "many superstitious notions respecting the proximity of the spiritual world, and of the appearance of various objects and phenomena in that world, which from time to time were seen by some of the people belonging to his flock. For instance, it was not unusual for a person who had died to appear to some individual in the valley.' . . . 'The report of every new occurrence of the kind was brought to Oberlin, who at length became so much annoyed that he was resolved to put down this species of superstition, as he called it, from the pulpit, and exerted himself for a considerable time to this end, but with little or no desirable effect. Cases became more numerous, and the circumstances so striking, as even to stagger the scepticism of Oberlin himself.'

"Ultimately the pastor came over to the opinions of his parishioners in this matter. And when Mr. Smithson asked him what had worked such conviction, he replied 'that he himself had had ocular and demonstrative experience respecting these important subjects.' He added that 'he had a large pile of papers which he had written on this kind of spiritual phenomena, containing the facts with his own reflections upon them.' He stated, further, to Mr. Smithson, that such apparitions were particularly frequent after that well-known and terrible accident which had buried several villages (the fall of the Rossburg, in 1806). Soon after, as Oberlin expressed it, a considerable number of the inhabitants of the valley 'had



their spiritual eyesight opened,' and perceived the apparitions of many of the sufferers.

"Stöer, the pupil and biographer of Oberlin, and throughout his life the intimate friend of the family, states that the good pastor was fully persuaded of the actual presence of his wife for several years after her decease. His unswerving conviction was that, like an attendant angel, she watched over him, held communion with him, and was visible to his sight; that she instructed him respecting the other world and guarded him from danger in this; that, when he contemplated any new plan of utility, in regard to the results of which he was uncertain, she either encouraged his efforts or checked him in his project. He considered his interviews with her not as a thing to be doubted, but as obvious and certain—as certain as any event that is witnessed with the bodily eyes. When asked how he distinguished her appearance and her communications from dreams, he replied, 'How do you distinguish one colour from another?' " \*

"Cases of revealed prevision are quite as common as those of organic, and have been known a much longer period. Socrates presented a remarkable instance of this kind. He informed his disciples that he possessed a genius, who told him future events and directed his conduct, and whom he never failed to obey. He often warned his friends (by the advice, he told them, of his genius,) against certain courses of action, and in every case where they refused to profit by his counsel disastrous results followed.

"He predicted all the events of any importance in his own life, and lastly, his death and its mode. After sentence was passed on him, his enemies waited but the return of a ship to put it into execution. The night before the vessel was expected in, his disciples were grieving bitterly to think that before another evening the philosopher would be taken from them; he informed the sorrowful group around him that the ship had been injured at sea, and would not return for three days; and the event happened as he predicted."

Cazotte's famous prediction is so well known as to render insertion here unnecessary.†

\* "*Vie de J. F. Oberlin*," par Stöer, p. 223.

† See Newman on Fascination, page 136.

"Joan of Arc's case will appropriately follow that of Socrates ; it is also a matter of history, and may be relied on without the slightest hesitation. Like Socrates, she openly professed herself under the guidance of a familiar genius, whom she called St. Michael. She at length fell under the power of the English, by whom she was (as might be expected from the ignorance of the age), regarded as a witch ; they tried her as a heretic and sorceress by an ecclesiastical tribunal, and after condemnation, burnt her at Rouen."

"There is another form of supersensuous vision, for the existence of which we can scarcely discover sufficient reason unless to intimate an undeveloped faculty, which, in another state, may be proper to man. The nature and character of this strange endowment will be best expressed in the language of one who believed himself to be possessed of it. Heinrich Zschokke, a man remarkable for the extent of his honourable labours as a statesman and an author, solemnly writes the following passage in his autobiography :—'It has happened to me sometimes, on my first meeting with strangers, as I silently listened to their discourse, that their former life, with many trifling circumstances therewith connected, or frequently some particular scene in that life, has passed quite involuntarily, and, as it were, dream-like, yet perfectly distinct, before me. During this time I usually feel so entirely absorbed in the contemplation of the stranger's life, that at last I no longer see clearly the face of the unknown wherein I undesignedly read, nor distinctly hear the voices of the speakers, which before served in some measure as a commentary on the text of their features. For a long time I held such visions as delusions of the fancy, and the more so as they showed me even the dress and emotions of the actors, rooms, furniture, and other accessories.' He was at length astonished to find his dream-pictures invariably confirmed as realities, and he relates this instance as an example of his visionary gift :—'One day, in the city of Waldshut, I entered an inn, (the Vine) in company with two young students. We supped with a numerous company at the table d'hôte, where the guests were making very merry with the peculiarities of the Swiss, with Mesmer's magnetism, Lavater's physiognomy, etc. One of my companions, whose national pride was wounded by their mockery, begged me to make some reply, particularly to a

handsome young man who sat opposite to us, and who had allowed himself extraordinary license. This man's life was at that moment presented to my mind. I turned to him, and asked whether he would answer me candidly if I related to him some of the most secret passages of his life, I knowing as little of him personally as he did of me. He promised, if I were correct, to admit it frankly. I then related what my vision had shown me, and the whole company were made acquainted with the private history of the young merchant—his school years, his youthful errors, and, lastly, with a fault committed in reference to the strong-box of his principal. I described the uninhabited room with whitened walls, where, to the right of the brown door, on a table, stood a black money-box, etc. A dead silence prevailed during the whole narrative, which I alone occasionally interrupted by inquiring whether I spoke the truth. The startled young man confirmed every particular, and even, what I had scarcely expected, the last mentioned. Touched by his candour, I shook hands with him, and said no more. He is, probably, still living.”\*

Admitting the phenomena of spiritualism to be genuine and not produced by trick; optical, auditory, and tactile illusions do not account for them, because only a few persons are subject to these influences, and that only after long submission to an operator's will. At spiritual *séances* all see the phenomena; besides the phenomena that do occur leave permanent impressions, and results that may be seen by anyone, at anytime. Again, persons who are under mesmeric illusions, in the generality of instances, know they are; but *all* who go to spiritual *séances* feel and know that they are not. Persons under mesmeric influence and illusion have often a double consciousness, the *mesmeric* and the *normal*; spiritualists have only the *normal*, at least that is the case in my experience, and Mr. Oliver, who is present, or any mesmerist, will allow that I would not be an easy subject to mesmerise.

Sympathy of the senses is very partial in its operation; and is only applicable to mesmeriser and patient, or those, with whom the mesmeriser places the patient in mesmeric *rappor*t; and this only can be done in a very limited number

\* “Mayo on Popular Superstitions,” page 66.

of cases. This, then, does not account for the production of impressions by or through the medium of media.

Personal control at great distances is valueless as an explanation, because that would require to be based upon a kind of omnipresence and omniscience possessed by some distant person or persons.

Animal polarity is impotent as an explanatory theory, it could only produce direct motions between the animal magnetic poles, circular motions, and explosions; and none of these touch the higher phenomena.

The same may be said of independent mechanical motions in inanimate objects by effort of will. Such motions, I have yet to find an illustration of, and shall not therefore assume their existence.

There yet remains, *thought-reading, clairvoyance, prevision, trance travelling, and doppel-ganger.*

Of *thought-reading*, I have to say, that no person, in a perfectly normal condition, is capable of it unless in the case of persons with whom they are normally *en-rapport*, and of the existence of such *normal rapport*, I am not quite satisfied. Perhaps those who speak to-night will give me a well authenticated case in point.

The next stage of *thought-reading* is when a person who has been frequently mesmerised, and being very susceptible of the mesmeric influence, is so under the control of the operator, even in *his then* normal condition, as to be able to read, and be controlled by his operator's thoughts. Such *rapport* I acknowledge.\*

Next when persons are in mesmeric sleep, and can, either near at hand or at great distances, read the thoughts of those with whom they are placed in mesmeric *rapport*. How then does this phenomenon of *thought-reading*, limited as it is in the manner described, account for the indiscriminate reading of the thoughts of any persons entering the circles, and informing them of their most secret impressions, including not only the impressions that are then active, but impressions that have been latent for years, and are only roused by the revelations of the communicating agent.

*Clairvoyance* and *clair-audience* are, if the foregoing statements be true, the characteristics of persons in a manifestly

\* See pages 64 and 65.

abnormal condition. The media in all circles in which I have been present, present no abnormal characteristics whatever, and do not profess to be, or to have ever been, clairvoyant. Indeed many of the answers given to enquirers are in direct opposition to the thoughts of the media, and are nevertheless quite correct. The media are mere automata through whom, or, by means of an emanation from whom, the physical and psychological effects are produced.

*Prevision.*—Cases of prevision doubtless have occurred, but they may arise from *two* or more causes; an unusual clearness of perception of cause and effect; an exaltation of the natural faculties, which enables a person to see, by something like intuition, future events; or by the inspiration of some finite or infinite spirit.

There is no case of modern prevision in respect to which it is not more safe to affirm that it was the result of influences from the spirit world, than merely innate, although unusually exalted mundane power.

Trance travelling and doppel-ganger probably will account for many spectral appearances, and also for noises, and motions of material objects, at a distance from the material bodies of the agents producing the phenomena; but they very imperfectly account for any of the phenomena described as of frequent occurrence in the presence of investigators into the mysteries of modern spiritualism.

Seeing, then, that these phenomena are not produced by the agencies to which I have been referring; believing that there are not any even probable indications of a natural power ever being discovered that will account for them; observing the wonderful effects produced upon organised *material* bodies by our own spirits; perceiving that our embodied spirits *can* come in contact with material bodies, and receive manifold impressions from the material world, mediately through certain organic arrangements, and probably directly through some refined form of matter, generated in, or infused through, our bodies; we are perfectly justified in asserting that, as no natural material laws appear likely to account for the wonderful phenomena described; that invisible spiritual beings, through a refined kind of matter, probably emanating specially from our own, and less plentifully from all other material bodies; *do* produce the phenomena de-

scribed. If the evidence we have, will not convince us of spirit interposition and agency, what will?

"Suppose the departed wife, sister, or friend, of any one present, desired to make herself manifest to him, how COULD SHE on the supposition that modern phenomena are produced by natural laws. Suppose a departed wife or sister wanted to converse. She speaks to you, moves your furniture, touches your dress, your person; all automatic action you say of some brain *en rapport* with the locality. She sings, plays the guitar or piano, takes a pencil and writes, and you see the pencil in free space, tracing you wife's or sister's autograph—automatic still. She shews a cloudy hand, nay a luminous form, and smiles and speaks as when in life—that is an optical illusion or hallucination, or subjective vision. She communicates facts, past, present, and future, beyond the scope of your knowledge—that might be clairvoyance. Alas! what could she do more? She must retire baffled and confounded, complaining that you had become so scientific that all communication with you was impossible.\* That is the slough of scepticism into which your natural theories lead you.

I have endeavoured briefly to bring before you the principal characteristics of modern spiritualism, and to show you that the facts are supported by overwhelming evidence, and that the natural hypotheses are untenable. I have also, briefly, and I fear, imperfectly, submitted to you my reasons for receiving the spiritual hypothesis, as the only one which, at present, can be satisfactory to any enquirer who is resolved to have a definite opinion on the subject. I trust that what I have said may be the means of directing your close attention to this mysterious and important question, and that however your enquiries may terminate, whether toward natural or supernatural theories, that eventually we shall all arrive at truth, and that the investigations may strengthen our own minds, improve our own moral and spiritual characters, and lead us successfully to examine into, and search after, truth, in all directions.

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#### LECTURE V.—THE UTILITY OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM OR *CUI BONO*.

In the lectures which I have already delivered in this Hall, I endeavoured, in the first, to point out the reality and genuine-

\* "Spiritualism," by Rev. Charles Beecher, page 37.

ness of the phenomena ; in the second, I gave the corroborative testimony of the Bible records, poets, philosophers, and general experience, to the reality of spiritual appearances ; and assuming the genuineness of modern phenomena, I threw the burden of proof, of the natural hypotheses, upon those who defended them ; in the third, I described some of the occult powers of nature, and showed the necessity of broad investigation ; and, in the fourth, I took up the natural hypotheses, explained and illustrated the principal known natural forces, dwelling specially on mesmerism and its phenomena, and attempted to prove that not only did mesmerism, combined with other occult known powers, *not account* for the phenomena designated spiritual manifestations, but that all the phenomena classified under the various known mysterious powers in nature *did not* even clearly point to a probable natural solution.

This evening I am to speak for a short time on the utility of modern spiritualism.

I have daily rung in my ears : " Well, but *Cui Bono.*" Suppose the phenomena, with a description of which you have astonished us, be genuine ; suppose they are not produced by any known natural laws ; suppose we never discover any natural laws that will account for them, and that there is in them reasonable evidence of intercourse with the inhabitants of the spirit world, of what utility is such knowledge and belief, when the agents producing them *gave us no information valuable in the affairs of this life* ; no very definite or exalted notions of the life that is to come ; and, *when in addition to these, many of their communications are manifestly untrue and self-contradictory* ?

No courageous man will ever, ostrich like, hide his head, and expect thus to avoid danger. All difficulties should be looked straight in the face, and fairly overcome or acknowledged.

We do not reach truth by shirking honest enquiry, but by boldly meeting, and investigating. Many a supposed ghost would degenerate into a very common-place object if the terror-stricken spectators, had fortitude enough to walk boldly up to and confront it. It will be seen that these popular objections to spirit intercourse are not *real*, but *seeming*, and are the result not of *extensive* but of *imperfect and limited* investigation.

Let us examine the objections *seriatim*.

The spirits do nothing valuable or useful in the affairs of this life. If they can draw in the manner described in the "Spiritual Magazine,"\* why do they not draw pictures in great numbers, and have them sold for the benefit of some benevolent institution?

This question might be disposed of by asking another, viz: Why are benevolent institutions at all necessary? But I decline that mode of reply, and take the question on its own merits. The probable object of the agents drawing the pictures referred to, is not to remove the necessity of personal exertion from those on earth who have the artistic faculty, but simply to convince parties whom they have an interest in convincing of the reality of the continued existence of the departed, of their possession of power to produce artistic effects, and specially of their ability to take cognizance of those in whose welfare they have a special interest.

Again, it is asked, if spirits can communicate information to distant places, and dispatch and receive messages in a few seconds of time, why do they not remove our doubts and anxieties about the American question, by giving us a copy of the despatch which is now on its way from the American Government, and for which we are so eagerly looking?

The reply I gave to this objection, at the time it was urged, was substantially this:—The object of spirit intercourse is, not to remove the necessity for the full exercise of the faculties and powers with which we are endowed here.

If I were an inhabitant of the spirit world, and were being conversed with by the inhabitants of the present, who were anxious to know the result of the pending American difficulty, I should say, "No, I shall not give you that information, you have the *means in your own hands* of instantaneous intercourse between England and America, nay, between England and all parts of the world, and you have no right to ask, nor any reason to expect, an answer from those who have moved into an advanced stage of being a few years before you, when you have within your own limited knowledge of natural laws the means of acquiring the information desired. Do not desire to have your own natural efforts superseded by help from the departed. Upon the right and full use of your faculties on

\* *Spiritual Magazine*, vol. 2, pages 433 and 439.



earth depend, in a great degree, your progress and happiness hereafter.

The next objection is, that we receive no definite or exalted notions of the life that is to come.

Many of our present imaginings respecting the life to come are very fanciful and unsatisfactory. Each man fills his future life with his predominant conceptions of the objects in which his happiness consists.

Some suppose we shall be occupied solely in praise and prayer, as if man were merely a worshipping and not an intellectual and emotional creature ; others crowd their imaginary heaven with the beautiful and extatic delights of music, as though any human being could relish music only, throughout eternity ; others conceive of heaven as a place of perfect rest and repose, as though work, constant work of some kind, were not one of the Almighty's greatest boons ; others suppose that profound discussions on various branches of philosophy, undisturbed by care respecting personal wants, will fill, happily, all our time, as if man were only a being of intellect, and had no affections. A reverential, natural, and christian philosopher, like the late Dr. Dick, makes man, in the future world, an amplification and refinement of man in the present, with greatly increased capacities and more extended facilities, entering into social enjoyment, engaged in acts of benevolence to those who are beneath him in intelligence, enjoying a learned leisure in the interminable acquirement of information respecting the works and ways of the Almighty, and crowning all, by reverential and loving worship of his great Creator and Lord.

We have, in this life, as many ideas of heaven as we have minds who think about it. Each making his heaven his highest ideal of all that is beautiful, true, lovely, and good.

The Bible teaching respecting Heaven is not so much as to what it is, as what it is *not*. There shall be no night there, no sorrow, no pain, no weeping, no separation ; and the few positive teachings are evidently symbolical and figurative.

In reference to the teachings of modern spiritualism, respecting a future state, there is much that is ambiguous and indefinite ; this may arise from the fact that few, if any, of us are in a position to understand spiritual things. How can the caterpillar understand the life of the chrysalis, and

the chrysalis that of the butterfly ! Many of the descriptions received indicate a future state which realises our highest conceptions of what such a life is likely to be, and intimate that there are scenes, labours, and pleasures, that to us, at present, are indescribable and inconceivable.

Objection 4.—Many of the communications are untrue and self-contradictory.

This no spiritualist who has *freely investigated the subject will deny*. The fact may be accounted for by the characters of the agents from whom the revelations come, some of whom are acknowledgedly bad and others good, and partly, perhaps principally, by the media through whom the communications are transmitted.

All communications partake more or less of the character of the media through whom they pass. Even the Scriptures are tinged, in most cases strongly tinged, with the characters and styles of composition of the writers ; and, any man learned in literature, could say from the style and nature of the compositions, this was written by John, this by Luke, and this by Paul.

Although the facts they communicate are essentially the same, their styles of composition are quite different.

Suppose a poet to have the power of inspiring an unlettered rustic with his conceptions, how poor and imperfect would be his utterances. Suppose the poet could, in addition to the conceptions, inspire him to utter the exact words ; how imperfect would be the representation, how terrible the accent, and how marred the beauty of the finest passages.

The objects of recent spiritual revelations may, in a *secondary aspect*, be designed to convey information respecting the affairs of this life, hints respecting the essential nature of the life that is to come, and more or less perfect communications in reference to sublunary and celestial things ; but, the *primary object* seems to me to be to demonstrate to a hyper-sceptical age the reality and actuality of a future state of existence, and that the future world is not an "undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns." Could this be made manifest to the generality of mankind much good would accrue.

Men now, in a general way, believe that God sees them, in noonday light and midnight darkness, that he knows their

thoughts, and sees their actions, yet so faint and vague is the impression, that many men do beneath the eye of the Almighty what they dare not, for shame, do in the presence of their friends.

If mankind believed and fully realised that which to many appears an undoubted fact, that the spirits of the departed hover round them, see their actions, and read their inmost thoughts, the very consciousness of such an assembly and invisible cloud of witnesses, would induce many to draw the reins of their vices, and turn their thoughts and actions to higher and holier purposes. There are numbers of sincere, moral, and intellectual sceptics, who are throwing out their strong Briarian arms in search of grounds on which to rest an unshakeable and rational belief in a future state.

I have no sympathy with those who think that all such persons are pre-eminently wicked, and "love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." All *normally constituted minds* desire to believe in a future world.

Even Mr. Geo. Jacob Holyoake, who is recognised as the chief priest of unbelief, in one of the finest passages in his whole writings, expresses a yearning desire for a future life, in which he may again meet his departed daughter.

" 'My dada's coming to see me,' Madeline exclaimed on the night of her death, with that full, pure, and thrilling tone which marked her when in health. 'I am sure he is coming to night, mamma,' and then remembering that that could not be, she said, 'write to him, mamma; he will come to see me;' and these were the last words she uttered, and all that remains now is the memory of that cheerless, fireless room, and the midnight reverberation of that voice which I would give a new world to hear again. Yes, though I neither hope—for that would be presumption—nor expect it, seeing no foundation, *I shall be pleased to find a life after this.* Not a life where those are punished who were unable to believe without evidence, and unwilling to act in spite of reason, for the prospect of annihilation is pleasanter and more profitable to contemplate; not a life where an easy faith is regarded as 'easy virtue' is regarded among some men, but a life where those we have loved and lost here are restored to us again; for there, in that hall, where those may meet who have been sacrificed in the cause of duty, where no gross, or blind, or

selfish, or cruel nature mingles, where none sit but those whom human service and endurance have purified and intitled to that high company, Madeline would be a Hebe. Yes, a future life, bringing with it the admission to such companionship would be a *noble joy to contemplate*.”\*

Many amiable, morally constituted, uninquiring people readily receive the Bible truths respecting another state of existence, and look with horror upon those who cannot with the same evidence realise the great truth. They think such persons must be immoral and dishonest, nevertheless it is *perfectly certain* that there are many moral, and even religious people, who worship God in all sincerity and reverence, who do not at all clearly recognise their own future existence.

Baden Powell, professor of geometry in the University of Oxford, said, in reply to a brother professor, who had seen and become converted to a belief in modern spiritual phenomena, if I could see and be satisfied of the reality of the phenomena you have described to me, the sceptical philosophy I now teach, and which is the result of the studies of my whole life, would be completely overthrown. A melancholy but honest confession. Many seeming truths, are like Baden Powell's philosophy, hollow shams.

Here is the answer to the *Cui Bono*.

The primary object is to convince us of, and enable us fully to realise, the to us most important fact in the universe—the certainty of another and future state of being; and that spirits from the invisible world, are interested in, and consciously, or unconsciously to us, take part in the proceedings of this mundane sphere.

This proved, there is an illimitable vista opened before every human being, into which we have already entered. Contemptable is that notion of life which limits it to the present sphere. Time is but the portal of eternity. We belong not to one world, but to two; the naturo-spiritual, and the spiritual. The former the embryotic, the latter the sphere of true manhood.

We begin our spiritual life, not in the future, but when, or it may be before, we are born visibly into the present.

Life now, and life to come, are not *two lives*, but two phases of the same life, two links in the same chain. The

\* "Last Trial by Jury for Atheism," page 76.

strength, beauty, and harmony of the second link, depend upon similar characteristics in the first. -

Miserably disappointed will be the man who expects to realise in the next world the joys for which he has not prepared in this ; and horrible is the prospect of him, who while on earth lives a life of shams and sensualities, when the flimsy and temporary covering of flesh has been torn off by man's *greatest friend*, or *greatest enemy*, DEATH, and he has been ushered into the world of realities and essentialities, from this world of old garments. Carlyle, in his excellent work "*Sartor Resartus*," makes the estimate in which man is held in this life not so much a question of virtue, integrity, intelligence and general moral worth, as a question of clothes. Men are judged by their dress, their rank, their show. There is more truth in Carlyle's theory than lies upon the surface. In this world the best men are more or less clothed ; a clothing which as much hides as reveals character, and that unavoidably.

First, because men cannot exhibit their characters as they absolutely are ; and secondly, because of the dullness of apprehension, nay the entire misapprehension of those by whom they are surrounded.

Both the Bible and modern spiritualism inform us that, in the future world, "we shall know even as we are known," that the thoughts and affections of our souls shall be photographed on every other soul, as our earthly forms are photographed on the retinas of our friends ; not with equal distinctness, but with a distinctness and truthfulness increasing with our increase of knowledge, and our receptivity of high spiritual impressions. Who but a fanatic ever dreams of all who enter the spirit world being placed upon the same level, and that our positions there will not be according to our intellectual, emotional, and spiritual conditions here. We shall find, according to the good Old Book, that "one star differeth from another star in glory," and, as we use our powers and opportunities here, so will be the brightness of our starry crown hereafter.

Some of you will perhaps say, "Well Mr. Barkas ; all that you have said may be very well in theory, but what are the facts ; what effect has spiritualism produced upon those who have received it ? The facts, then, are briefly these :—

I know many persons within my small circle of spiritualistic friends who, through spiritualism, have been convinced of a spiritual world, and a future state of existence ; and many others who previously believed, have had their convictions deepened ; and a calm and repose, nay, almost a radiant joy, thrown over the "dark valley and shadow of death," which they never before realised.

I know of no single case, within the sphere of my own acquaintance, in which a man's moral character has been injured by the investigation of modern spiritual phenomena ; such cases may have arisen ; some natures warp and distort everything.

The dangers and the evil effects of possible occurrence I leave until our next meeting.

## LECTURE VI.—THE DANGERS OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

It is a fact, no more remarkable than true, that the greatest blessings are capable of conversion into the greatest curses, and that the potency of the curse is in proportion to the richness and excellency of the blessing. All sins and wrong doings are a misdirection of normal and useful faculties and powers.

The province of man, so far as this earth is concerned, is to discover the nature of his own physical, mental, and spiritual idiosyncrasies, to ascertain the characteristics of the world in which he lives, the forces and circumstances by which he is surrounded, and to make his life coincide with divine laws.

Nature is direct from the hands of its Maker, and, *rightly understood*, will not deceive us. At present it is, and rightly so, an enigma and riddle, lying with open page for our investigation, courting our enquiries, and prepared to pour blessings into the hands of him who discovers its laws and moulds his life according to its requirements. Violation of natural law always inflicts penalties, more or less severe, in proportion to the power of resistance in the offender, and the nature of the law violated.

Everywhere, and always, are we surrounded by dangers, and subject to temptation.

Our province, therefore, is to examine our charts well, to note the sunken rocks that have been discovered, to sound for those that have not, and to steer our way cautiously and warily to our promised home.

Steam is a blessing, but use it cautiously, or be prepared for destructive explosions.

Electricity is a blessing, opening up intercourse between distant nations, and purifying the air; but regard its laws, and protect yourself from its deadly stroke.

Fire and water are our greatest earthly boons, but beware and use them as such; don't let them have the mastery

No evil is unmixed. Disease teaches the value of health, poverty of plenty, labour of rest, and even the terrible and unparalleled Hartley Colliery accident, that has filled the kingdom with gloom, will, if it result in legislative enactment, rendering the working of collieries without double shafts a penal offence, be a blessing.

The present stroke is heartrending in the extreme. Perhaps such a calamity was required in order at once to rouse the country to a sense of its duty, and preserve tens of thousands from the imminent danger in which, but for this, they would have continued to labour.

Love is the fairest gem saved from the tarnished treasures of Eden, but abused and dragged through the mire of pollution it has become our greatest foe. Intellect may be used on the side of villainy or virtue, and is good or bad according to its appropriation.

The faculty of reverence has led men to the perpetration of the most heinous crimes, and whilst it is man's divinest birthright and most glorious inheritance, linking him to divinity, and uniting him with the spiritual of all worlds, and the intelligences of all ages, it and conscience are perhaps the only faculties which render him capable of perdition. To say, therefore, that a thing is dangerous, and can be abused, is no reason why it should not be rightly used.

Spiritualism is no exception. Properly used, it is laden with blessings; improperly, superstitiously, and fanatically used, it may lead to the most pernicious errors.

There are two classes of persons who, in their investigations into the merits or demerits of spiritualism, are likely to travel in the wrong track.

The first are the hypersceptical, and the second, and much the more numerous and dangerous, are the credulous and superstitious. The former *do not give* sufficient value and force to the evidences for the spiritual that present themselves to their observation ; their sceptical prejudices and early habits of thought seal, or partially close, their eyes ; and the latter are *much too liable* to be easily led away to wild and pernicious extremes. The hypersceptical are the more reliable, when once convinced, but the tendency of their prevailing tone of thought, and of their fixed and dogmatic prepossessions, is to close their minds to the reception of positive, personally witnessed, or well attested facts, and to induce them to cling to the most absurd and untenable hypotheses rather than yield to the spiritual and *apparently most feasible* theory.

There motto is, we admit nothing to be spiritual, until it has been demonstrated, that it *cannot* be natural ; as though in all things we decided according to demonstration, and not as we do in almost all cases, according to the *balance of probabilities*.

The real danger in relation to modern spiritualism lies not on the side of the sceptical, but on that of the credulous. Here alone, as far as regards teaching, am I apprehensive of evil results ; here should the truths of spiritualism be hedged in and made secure. Hence the caution I exercise in the expression of my opinions on this subject. Hence the recommendation to avoid hasty conclusions, expressed in all the lectures I have delivered, and in almost all the letters I have written. Hence my desire to bring the matter before the *educated and the competent* ; to state *both sides* of the question, the arguments *con* as well as *pro*, and to seek to check the impulsiveness of the credulous by the caution and prudence of the philosophical and sceptical.

Let us see what the questions are which each person should ask himself, and have fairly answered, before he can reasonably become a believer in spiritualism ; and next let us look at the degree of influence which he ought to allow modern spiritual communications to have in the formation of his opinions and the direction of his conduct.



I had written thus far when Mr. Foster arrived in Newcastle, and have since then been so much engaged that I feel I shall consult both your feelings and my own, by avoiding lengthened details of the dangers of spiritualism. Giving you them in very broad outline, and entering more fully into a description of the phenomena which occurred in the presence and through the mediumship of Mr. C. H. Foster.

The first question which each person ought to ask, in his investigations into modern spiritual manifestations, is, Are they genuine ?

II.—Are they produced by known natural laws ?

III.—Are they produced by *embodied* human beings, acting through imperfectly recognised natural psychological laws ?

IV.—Are they produced by a mixed influence of embodied and disembodied spiritual beings ?

V.—Are they produced by disembodied spirits ?

We shall assume that, after long and careful investigation, we have decided that the phenomena are produced at intervals in accordance with both of the two last named spiritual theories ; viz.—The mixed and the independant. We then come to the question having relation to the value of the teachings.

The following propositions then follow :—

I.—Are they in any case reliable ?

II.—To what extent are they reliable ?

III.—Are really genuine communications from the inhabitants of the spiritual world worthy of implicit confidence ?

Many persons in their early enquiries into spiritualism, and especially if they are ignorant and impulsive, leap to the most hasty conclusions as to the reliability of the communications received ; acting upon them as though they were fiat from the Almighty. As their experiences extend, they find that they are not absolutely reliable, that there are many sources of error, and that the apostolic injunction, “try the spirits,” is imperatively necessary. This is the first danger to which young and credulous converts are liable.

The second query, to what extent are they reliable ? then presents itself for investigation. The reliability depends, to a large extent, upon the passivity and susceptibility of the medium ; and upon the communicating agent. The *approximate* degree of reliability is only to be ascertained by long, and sometimes painful, experiment.

The next question—are really genuine communications from the spiritual world, through perfectly passive media, worthy of implicit confidence?

If they come from *bad spirits*, it will be universally agreed that they are not. If, however, they come from *good spirits*, they will, with our present conceptions, be implicitly received by the majority of persons as true. This is, perhaps, one of the greatest and most plausible dangers to which honest, sincere, but somewhat credulous and narrow-minded enquirers are subject.

I fear our notions of spirit-life are sadly in error, and greatly require to be re-examined and placed upon a more philosophical basis.

What right have we to suppose that every *good spirit* must necessarily speak *absolute* truth? It may speak truth according to its conceptions and its means of ascertaining truth, but there must be *some limitations* in the spiritual world as there are limitations in the spirito-natural world, and no finite spirit can be expected fully to comprehend everything.

It becomes, therefore, the duty of every investigator to *test the opinions* received from extra-natural sources as he would test opinions received from natural; to act and believe according to the balance of probabilities, and not give himself up blindly to the guidance of any *finite* spirit. We are personally responsible for our opinions and conduct, we are created intelligent and responsible units, and are not bound to receive as unqualified truth the teaching of *any finite being*. Even the Almighty says, "Come let us reason together," and through Paul we are told to "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good."

Besides the dangers of the teachings there are the dangers of EXCESS.

Many, I fear too many, give themselves up to the prosecution of spiritualism to a degree which their nervous systems were never made to bear, and overthrowing their brain-balance, fall into strong delusions.

Others are so nervously constituted, and have either by natural organization or by educational influences become so sensitively alive to, and so fearful of the supernatural, as to render all supposed direct intercourse with the departed a

matter of great mental danger. To all such I say WAIT, let spiritualism gradually permeate society, let it be a recognized fact, let the presence of spiritual beings around us be as familiar to our minds as the presence of natural material beings; let it be felt that no physical or mental evils follow the *proper investigation* of the subject, and then, but not till then, will it be desirable for the nervous, the invalid, the lonely, and the timid, to enter fully into the investigation.

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### MR. C. H. FOSTER'S SÉANCES.

The following is an abstract of the phenomena which occurred in the presence of Mr. C. H. Foster, the American medium, in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, on Thursday and Friday, January 16th and 17th, 1862 :—

At the request of several gentlemen, I invited Mr. Foster to visit Newcastle, for the purpose of exhibiting his powers as a medium to those in the district who were desirous of seeing the manifestations produced through him. Mr. Foster at first declined to accept the invitation, but eventually agreed to come to Newcastle. The whole of the arrangements for the *séances* were in my hands, and I decided upon having forty ladies and gentlemen to sit in four *séances*, ten persons at each *séance*. The whole of the meetings were held in private houses, and, with one exception, all were in the residences of unbelievers. The first circle consisted of five ladies and five gentlemen, the remaining circles were composed exclusively of gentlemen. All the meetings were held in large drawing rooms, two being held at mid-day and two between six and nine o'clock in the evenings. *All the phenomena* occurred in *broad daylight* or *bright gas-light*, and *at no part of the proceedings* was there any attempt to darken the rooms. Mr. Foster was introduced to each of the circles by the writer, but special care was taken to avoid reciprocal introductions of all kinds, so that the majority of persons in the circles were unknown to each other. To prevent Mr. Foster knowing the names of any of the persons present, he was introduced by name, and by previous arrangements the names of visitors were carefully withheld. I never, either privately or publicly,

mentioned to Mr. Foster the names of any of these attending the circles.

Mr. Foster left London by mail Train on Wednesday evening, and arrived in Newcastle on Thursday morning, at five o'clock, at half-past ten he called upon me at my place of business, and at eleven we proceeded to Eldon Square, where the first circle was held. As I kept all the names of the persons engaged to attend the circles in a private book, we may fairly suppose that Mr. Foster could not have made himself acquainted with their private histories, before, or during the time of his visit to the town. It is desirable to make clear these preliminary matters, before entering into a description of the phenomena which took place through Mr. Foster's mediumship. Upon his being unacquainted with the names and private histories of the parties forming the circles depends, to a great extent, the remarkableness of the proceedings.

The mode of procedure adopted at each circle was, for either Mr. Foster, or the parties present, to tear up sheets of note paper, supplied by the occupants of the house, into slips about two inches by one inch. Three slips were given to each person in the circle, and they were requested to write upon each slip the name of some deceased friend. Each slip contained a different name. After the names were written, the slips of paper were converted into small pellets, by being folded up into several folds. All the pellets were uniformly folded, and the whole were laid by the various parties present in a promiscuous heap on the middle of the table, where they were well mixed together. At the end of the table Mr. Foster sat, and round the table were seated six or seven of the parties forming the circles, the remainder being placed at a little distance from the table, and all the party being in front of Mr. Foster; each person having a clear view of him, and of the table top. I made phonographic notes of the proceedings which took place at the various circles, and now give sketches of the more prominent occurrences. Except where permission has been granted, all full names of those who were present are withheld, the initials only being given.\*

\* The names and addresses of any of the parties forming the circles, will, if required, be given to any sincere enquirer who desires a confirmation of the statements about to be given.

In *almost every case* where Mr. Foster referred to deceased or living persons, he gave their *full christian and surnames*. I have the whole of these names in my possession, but out of deference to the feelings of the parties now living, initials only are given. In all cases *full names* were given when the contrary is *not expressed*. These particulars being understood, I proceed to detail the leading features of the first *séance*, held in Eldon Square.

Mr. Foster, sitting at the end of a large mahogany table, said, "Spirits, when you are here, please to communicate through raps on the table." Within one minute knockings occurred. Mr. Foster said, "One of the spirits I can see, standing at the back of this lady," (pointing to Miss A.) Mr. F. continued, "Can you give us your name? Three raps on the table indicated "Yea." "Will you give it?" "Yes." Miss A. then took the alphabet, and pointing to various letters, *two* initials were knocked out. The lady said she knew to whom the initials referred, and laying a *sealed letter* on the table, requested Mr. Foster to ask the spirit to answer the questions contained in the letter, which questions Mr. Foster had not seen. Since the meeting, I have received the questions from Miss A., the following is a verbatim copy:—

I. Is the condition of H. A. improved since the communication with his daughter?

II. Can she without wrong or danger assist his progress?

III. If so, how?

IV. Which is the readiest way for me to obtain true and useful information from the spirit world?

Mr. F. seemed under some peculiar influence, and seizing a pencil he wrote rapidly upon the paper which lay before him, "In answer to your question, I would say, that I am with you often, when I first came I was very unhappy, but since I last made myself manifest I have made much progress, and now I am very happy. You shall hear from me soon again." Miss A. said, "That is an appropriate reply to my written question contained in the sealed envelope."

At this stage, knockings occurred on the table, and Mr. Foster said, "ask who this spirit is. Let each person say, 'is it my friend.'" Several said in rotation, "is it my friend," and all the answers were "*no*," (that is one knock) until it came to Mr. J., therepy then was, "Yea." Mr. F. said, can you write through

my hand? "Yes" being replied, his hand moved apparently automatically over the paper, and there was written, "This is indeed a pleasure to come here and communicate this morning. It is what I have been longing for. I am standing by your side, and I wish to make known to you that you do right in your researches after truth. An angel band are ever attendant on you, and we will do all we can to guide you in the way of right and truth. This is from one who, when on earth, was C. J. J."

Mr. F. while writing continued to talk, and said my writing is entirely mechanical. From the heap of pellets lying on the table, several were lifted singly by Mr. D.; he asked does this contain the name, no was replied several times, at length *yes* was finally knocked, and on Mr. D. opening the paper the name of C. J. J. was found written upon it.

Miss A. asked for replies to her other questions, contained in the sealed envelope.

To the second question, the answer was, *yes*.

The medium said, a spirit giving her name D. D. is present. Miss A. said, "she is my aunt," and asked for a reply to her other sealed questions.

Mr. F. wrote, "I too join the angels that have assembled to greet you; we often come to your own house. In answer to your last questions, I would say, that if you meet with three gentlemen and three ladies at your own house, and form a circle, you will have manifestations in about two or three weeks. You must sit quietly.

T. H. would be of much advantage if he would join your circle. Sit not more than one hour at a time, at first the manifestations will be trifling, but if you continue you will arrive at satisfactory results.\*

Mr. F. now said, pointing to Mr. T. jun, "I see a spirit standing by you. She is an old woman, probably your grandmother," and, turning to Mrs. T., he said, "she is your mother." The first letter in her name was knocked out by rappings on the table, R. Mr. F. said she comes to my side, and says she will give her name on my arm. He was seized with a slight shivering, and drawing up the sleeve on his left arm, there was written in *bold, well defined, large red letters, extending from the elbow to the wrist, the word, RUTH.*

\* Since then circles have been formed at the residence of Miss A., and very singular phenomena have occurred.

Mr. F. said "you have written the name Ruth, can you write your other name through my hand? Knockings took place on the table, and Mr. F. hastily wrote D—— Mr. D. lifted several pellets from the table, and the pellet lifted when knockings occurred, contained the name of Ruth D.

Mr. F. said "who is John D.? Some spirit says he is John D." Mrs. T. replied, "It is my *brother*, or perhaps my *uncle*." Mr. F.'s hand was again placed upon the paper, and through him was written—

"My dear, dear daughter, this is indeed a pleasure for me to come and speak with you. You have been diligently seeking for interior truths, and the doors of your soul are open.

O dear child, know that I stand at Heaven's portals, ready to bid you enter to a home of harmony and love, and join mother. John is standing by you, Uncle John I refer to; *he was drowned*. We shall ever be near you in spirit.

"Your mother,

"Ruth D——"

Mr. F. then said, "there is a vase presented to my vision, and this vase appears to be filled with red and white moss rosebuds falling over the top of the vase, on the edge of the vase I see the words, "undying love;" on the bottom part, in letters of gold, the name "Adelaide P. ; she presents you with this gift."

After picking up several pellets, knockings took place, when the pellet containing the name of Adelaide P., was lifted.

Mr. F. said "I see a spirit just entering the room. This is a male spirit, but does not give his name." Mr. F. then placed a sheet of note paper, enclosing a pencil, in the hand of Mrs. John T., and desired her to hold it under the edge of the table, almost immediately knockings took place, and the paper being looked at, contained written on it "Thomas N." "That," said a lady in the room, "is my father's name, and this is very like his handwriting."

Mr. Foster wrote, apparently unconsciously, "My dear, dear child, words cannot express to you how happy I am at meeting you this morning, years have passed since I left earth, but I have never forgotten you. You have me to guard and protect you at all times, I will lead you onward and upward, only listen to the angel voices, you have nothing to fear for you will always be happy. Your own father,

"Thomas N."

Other communications were received, after which Mr. Foster observed, "the spirits tell me this meeting will be of much spiritual advantage to Mrs. T." He said he saw a spirit, and, asked it to place itself near the person to whom it is related, it went to Mrs. T. Mr. F. said, "This spirit presents me with a fountain of water, which appears to be very clear, and takes a goblet and goes and fills it. She gives the meaning as drinking of the waters of living truth. I appear to see written on the bottom of the goblet, the words H—N—. She takes a string of pearls and hangs them about your neck. She says,

"This string of pearls to you is given,  
To lead your soul in truth to heaven."

A pellet of paper was taken up, it contained the name of H. N. "This spirit," said Mr. F., "*has light brown hair, and blue eyes.*" Mr. F. then wrote, "You have not longed in vain, for I am here, there can be no desire of the soul that is not answered; every desire you have, that is spiritual, shall be responded to. You shall often be made aware of the presence of your angel child, H. N."

Mr. F. said, "There is a spirit standing behind you," pointing to Mr. T., jun. "I hear the spirit calling the name of Mrs. D." Mr. F. fell into a kind of trance, and rising from his chair he walked across the room to Mrs. D., took her hand in his, and laying his other hand upon it, said, "We are glad this morning to be able to give you a glimpse into Heaven's truths and mysteries, we know you have long desired to see something, some manifestations which would convince you beyond doubt of the truth that the so-called dead have power to come and communicate with the living. Know, at this time, that I am by you, and even can shake hands with earth. This voice comes from one that loves you, and is near you at all times.—C.N." Walking back to the table, and picking up a pellet from the promiscuous heap before him, he said, "See who that is." It contained the name of C. N.

Mr. F. shortly said, "I see another spirit; see if he will give his name." His hand moved nervously, and wrote upon a slip of paper lying before him. He looked at the writing and said, "I cannot make out the name." It was like the writing of a feeble man, and was N. T. A pellet was taken up and knockings occurred; it *did not* contain the name.



The next pellet *did*. This appeared to me, at the time, to arise from carelessness in attending to the knocks.

Mr. F. then said, apparently addressing the apparition, "Have you anything to communicate?" He remarked, "Some one tries to entrance me again, I don't know who it is." He was at length apparently entranced, and speaking, said, "There are many angel ones assembled here this morning, and are anxious to hold communion with you, but we fear there will not be an opportunity, from the fact that we perceive in coming into the sphere of the medium that he is exhausted. We wish each circle to be as satisfactory as this we give you, as there are other minds anxious to receive a glimpse into heaven, and to receive communications from their angel friends. We don't feel it is right to hold him longer at the present time, because he will become so much exhausted that those persons who succeed you would not receive manifestations. So we leave you now for the present, but it will not be our last meeting; we shall all meet again, shall all come and communicate with you. Persevere, dear friends, for we perceive medium power. There are those among you, if you sit in your own quiet homes, you will hear these sounds. The angel voices will come and communicate. The doors of your reason, your understanding—open these doors, and let in these messengers of love and wisdom. We come from the spirit world. In love have we come to add another link to the chain of immortality, to make it more perfect. We give these external manifestations in your presence, that you may know and realise that spirits come from the spirit world, and that the feelings of the one are conveyed to the feelings of the other. I am requested to close the circle. Good morning. This comes to you from A. A."

Mr. Foster at the end of this speech apparently sank into a deeper trance. Suddenly he said, "They appear to leave me, I don't feel anything now."

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The second *séance*, was held in the residence of Dr. P. Northumberland Street. The party consisted of ten gentlemen, who were divided by Mr. Foster into two groups of five, each party sitting with him about an hour and a half. Several remarkable manifestations occurred, but on the whole these

two circles were the least satisfactory of those held in Newcastle. A considerable amount of discussion and disorder took place, in consequence of a display of hyper-criticism, and hyper-scepticism on the part of some of the gentlemen, who were present. The most sceptical of the party, admitted that the phenomena were very remarkable, and could not be accounted for by natural laws, except by the supposition that Mr. Foster was perfectly clairvoyant, and capable of reading the thoughts of the persons present, and also the contents of the pellets that lay upon the table. The rappings they supposed were produced by trick. An M. D. one of the leading members of the medical profession in Newcastle who was present, admitted that the phenomena were very wonderful, and that he could not satisfactorily account for them by known natural and psychological laws.

I must not neglect to say, that for the purpose of testing the extent and accuracy of the replies, a gentleman present, a banker, retired to the mantle-piece, and wrote two numbers, each number containing four figures, and that the *two first figures in each number were by rappings correctly indicated, but the two last incorrectly.* The gentleman ascribes this to the fact, that on each occasion he *changed the last two figures in his mind*, and that the numbers rapped out were those which *agreed with the numbers of which he then thought, but had not written.*

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The third *séance* was held in the residence of Dr. F., Eldon Square.

After a little preliminary conversation respecting the mode of conducting the *séance*, and the character of the phenomena to be expected, Mr. Foster left the room with Dr. F. In the *absence* of Mr. Foster, each gentleman present wrote upon separate pieces of paper, the names of four deceased relatives and friends. Having folded the slips into pellets of uniform size, they were deposited in a hat, shaken together, and, when Mr. Foster returned, they were upset on the middle of the table.

Mr. Foster said, "a spirit impresses me to say she will write her name under the table." Mr. F. held a paper and pencil under the table, several gentlemen looking under at the

same time, and *Ruth* was found written when the paper was brought up. Mr. F. said to Mr. Morgan, "She was your grandmother." Mr. Morgan said, "we used to call her grandmother, but she was my first wife's mother."

Mr. F. then wrote, "my dear son, I am here with you this morning: words cannot express how happy I am at this meeting, there are many spirits anxious to communicate; I will not intrude, but I will come to your own house, and you shall have evidence of my presence there. From your mother, *Ruth Johnston*."

Mr. L. picked up several pellets, and knocks took place at that containing *Ruth Johnston*.

The medium said, "what; do I hear you speak; some spirit entrances me." He rose from his seat, apparently in a trance, and walking with his eyes closed to the opposite end of the room, took Dr. McLeod by both hands and said, solemnly, "To-day you come to investigate an important truth. To-day you come to behold the veil uplifted, and an angel spirit come to speak with you. Investigate this truth, for it is indeed a truth that the so-called dead can return and communicate with the living. I am often with you in spirit, often by, when you are not aware of my presence, and will do all I can to guide and direct you in light and truth. This is from the spirit of *Mary Lees*—God bless you."

Dr. McLeod was so surprised and impressed by this address that he burst into tears.

Mr. Foster said to Mr. L. "is your father dead?" Mr. L. replied, "yes." Mr. Foster's hand was violently shaken, and he wrote, *William*, and immediately afterwards "My dear, dear son, I am indeed here with you, and I am your guardian spirit, *William*." A gentleman asked Mr. F. how he got these messages. He replied, "I give just what I see and hear, and nothing else." Mr. L. said, addressing the communicating agent, "did you ever appear to me in spirit form." Yes, being replied, several names were written on slips of paper, and *Sandgate* was indicated as the place of visitation. This Mr. L. said was correct.

Knockings occurred at the table, and Mr. F. said a spirit wishes to communicate.

Dr. F., who sat on the opposite side of the room from Mr. F., took the alphabet, and pointing to it in the *most irregular*

and promiscuous manner, for the express purpose of testing the correctness of the communications, had knocked out, without the slightest error, Joseph Thompson. Mr. M. picked up several pellets, and that at which knockings occurred contained the name, Joseph Thompson.

Dr. F. was anxious to get the name of a personal friend, and was told to think strongly of some one, and point to the alphabet. The Dr. did so, but no knockings took place.

Captain B. P. picked up a pellet, and put it in his pocket. He then pointed to the alphabet, and *William Ward* was knocked out. The pellet, being opened, contained *William Ward*. Mr. Ward, editor of the *Advertiser*, asked the relationship of Mr. Ward to him, and Mr. Foster wrote "Son." Mr. Ward said that is not correct.

Capt. B. P. asked several questions, and expressed anxiety to have some communication to himself. Mr. F. said, "I can promise nothing," and pointing to Captain B. P., said, "I see a spirit near you, he says 'Yes, I am here, I come to add my testimony with the others that have come with me, that spirits have power to return to earth, and hold communion with their friends, Charles E——.'" Several pellets being lifted as usual, the name of Charles E—— was indicated. Capt. B. hastily said "I know him, when, where, and how did he die?" Mr. F. replied, "I get nothing; I get no impression." The company then separated.

Last séance, Friday evening, January 17th, 1862, at the residence of Mr. E., Westmoreland Terrace, Newcastle. Pellets being distributed as usual, knockings occurred on the table.

Mr. F. said, "There is a beautiful vision that is presented to Mr. H., which is now presented to my mind, of a rose tree. It appears to be a small tree and full of bloom and buds of roses, and coming out of the stem there is a THORN, inside of that thorn there is written the word MARY on the bottom of the bush I see, *affection undying*."

Mr. F. said, pointing to the opposite end of the table, "There is a spirit standing over there—this spirit presents a book symbolical of the Book of Life. She opens this book, and on it I read these words, 'I have long tried

to commune with you, but never before had an opportunity. I shall come to your own house to night, and *rap on your bed* to make you aware of the presence of one who loves you dearly.' I see on the bottom of the book, the words Margaret M." Pellets being picked up, the name Margaret M. was knocked out. Mr. George Dodds said he knew a person of that name and asked the relationship. Mr F. said, "I get another vision of a velvet mantle, trimmed with a golden fringe, it is thrown over your head and on it I read a MOTHER'S LOVE." Mr. Foster said, she will manifest her interest in you by rapping three times on your bed-head to-night. (Mr. Dodds acknowledged the correctness of the relationship, and on the following week, at a public meeting, stated that on the night after leaving the *séance* and retiring to bed he said, mentally, "If the spirit of M. M. be present will she please to rap three times on my bed-head," and *three distinct knocks were given.*)

Mr. F. said, "A vision is now presented to my mind—I shall draw this vision as it appears to me." He then drew an ornamental HEART, with the word ANN in the centre.

At this stage of the proceedings Mr. John H. entered the room, and immediately Mr. Foster pointed to him and said, "A spirit stands near you." Mr. H. pointed to the alphabet, but as he was a stranger to the proceedings and did not understand how to proceed, Mr. F. said, "I get the name by impression." He then wrote "George," and said he was Mr. John H.'s brother. Mr. H. admitted the relationship, and said the writing was peculiar and very like his brother's.

Mr. F., dropping over into an apparent trance, said, "This spirit presents these lights to you. She says, 'dear friends, these lights you see above your heads are but emblems of the light shining on you from the spiritual world. To-night you are receiving evidence of the nearness of the spirit world. Know it is near—and I have power to communicate with you.'" This, said Mr. F., is a spirit very advanced, and probably died of consumption, she is a very bright and happy spirit, and presents a string of illuminated pearls, on which I see the letters, and they spell out Jane Peddie."

The paper picked up contained the name of Jane Peddie. Mr. Dodds said "I have only once seen this woman, but

meeting her husband to-day, I resolved, if possible, to have an interview with his late wife in the spirit world."

Mr. F. shook hands with Mr. T., and said, "It is I come to commune with you, it is I that come and entrance this medium, and speak to you to give you something to come home to your own mind, something to make you realize my presence. I have long desired to communicate with you, to have you know that spirits communicate with mortals. We know how long you have thought on the subject, you desire to believe it if true, your mind searches after and investigates all things thoroughly before you receive them. We say to you, investigate spiritualism, it will give you peace of mind that the world cannot give. This voice comes from beyond the portals of the tomb, it is the voice of Joseph T." Mr. F. continued, "*This person was drowned,*" on being asked how long ago, he said, "*Upwards of thirty years.*" Mr. T., who is one of the most eminent teachers in the North of England, and not a resident in Newcastle, admitted the entire truth of these statements.

Mr. F. said, "There is a beautiful spirit stands over there, she presents to me a beautiful wreath of roses, and there appear to be evergreens mixed together in the wreath; on it I see the words Elizabeth E." Mr. T. said, "She is a very near friend of mine," and asked where the spirit died. Mr. Foster requested him to write several names on slips of paper. He did so—and the place selected was the correct one, H. in the county of D.

I received the following communication from a gentleman who attended the *séance*, held in Westmoreland Terrace:—

*(Extract from R. J.'s notes of the occurrences at Mr. Foster's séance on the Evening of the 17th January, 1862.)*

"For about half an hour after we had taken our seats nothing occurred of a *personal* nature to myself, but suddenly Mr. Foster turned his head slightly to one side, as if listening to some one, which is his habit I believe when receiving such communications, and said aloud, 'What; what; grandmother and B. M.' My attention was of course at once arrested, as both these were names of near relatives in the spirit land, and names that had been written by me in the early part of the evening. Mr. Foster then said, 'There are two spirits

standing at the table, and one says her name is R. E., and that B. M. has come with her.' Mr. Foster seemed to think they were connected with the gentleman next to me, and having said so, his hand suddenly seized a piece of paper and rapidly wrote, 'I have not come to the one next you, but I come to you, I am B. M.,' this was immediately handed to me by Mr. Foster. After this the names were spelt out to me by raps through the alphabet correctly, the medium's hand, as in other cases, taking and presenting to me, from the little heap of pellets, both names written by me. When we first sat down Mr. Foster described the appearance of R. E. as being most beautiful, and as he described it radiant with spiritual purity and excellence, he mentioned her as standing near me with her hands upon my shoulder, and wearing a crown of bright pearls, and on her forehead written R. E., he also stated that it was the spirit of a person who had lived such a stainless life that she had progressed much since her entry into the spirit world. Later in the evening he again mentioned her name, and said, 'A spirit presents a beautiful vision of a box of pearls, diamonds, rubies, amethysts, and different coloured stones, and puts the box on the table and opens it to our view. This signifies the opening or unfolding of interior truths; the precious stones are the truths, and the opening of the box represents that they are from the interior or hidden life, her name is R. E.' I then enquired if the spirit of B. M. would inform me of the place of her death, and at Mr. Foster's request, I wrote on a slip of paper, unseen by him, six different places and handed them to him when he tore them all off but one, which he returned to me, it being the correct name of the place where she died. I then enquired if the spirit of B. M. would send by me any message of love to a near relation of hers? when a great number of raps took place in different parts of the room, on the furniture, and walls, which I understand is significant of pleasure. It was, however, ruled by the party that more time should not be taken up with my personal matters, and therefore, at that time, I received no further communications.

Not long after this the medium said, turning to me, 'There is a beautiful child standing near you, and she says she is your sister.' It at once occurred to me that it must be the spirit of a little sister passed into the spirit land some twenty

years ago, and of whom I had certainly not thought for a long time, the child being only about three years old at the time of its death. The name was correctly spelt out by the alphabet, and the medium's hand, taking a sheet of paper, wrote out and handed to me the following message:—

“ ‘Dear Brother,—It is I that the medium saw. I am with you; to-night I am with you. Continue your investigations, and you will receive much from us.—Priscilla, your sister.’ ”

“Soon after this Mr. Foster said aloud, ‘What, what, died of disease of the head,’ and handed me out of the heap of names on the table that of a lady very recently passed away, which I had written; and who had, as the medium described, died in this manner; to me a surprising and convincing proof of the desire, on the part of this person to make known her presence, by the statement of a fact, certainly, known only to myself among those assembled that evening. I may also mention that I had written the names of four or five other departed relations, but none of them were responded to.—R.J.”

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After leaving this *séance*, I drove, with Mr. Foster, to the residence of a friend, in Eldon Square. After supper we sat down to a large drawing-room table. The party consisted of Mr. and Mrs. D., the occupiers of the house, with whom I was well acquainted, the medium, and myself. The table was about 6 feet long by 3½ broad. Mr. Foster sat at one end, Mr. and Mrs. D. at one side, and I sat on the other, at a distance of four feet from Mr. Foster. Several manifestations took place, and eventually the medium took a common sheet of note paper, and placing a pencil between the pages, held it in one hand under the table, the other hand resting on the table. At the expiration of about twenty seconds knockings occurred, and on examining the paper the name of Margaret C. was found written upon it. I thought I observed Mr. Foster's hand with the pencil in it, placed inside of the sheet of note paper, before it was put under the table, and in order to remove my doubts, I said to Mr. Foster, “Could you produce a similar phenomenon when the paper and pencil are under my control.” He said he would endeavour. I then took a clean half sheet of note paper, and a pencil, and laid them upon the floor, between my feet, at a distance of four



feet from Mr. Foster. The party sitting round the table then formed a circle by taking hold of each others hands. All hands being thus engaged above the table, it began to move, and knockings took place. At the end of thirty seconds I picked up the paper and pencil, and on the paper was written in legible characters, the word GEORGE. I then said to Mr. Foster, "I have two children in the spirit world, they are both boys, can you give me their names?" He replied "Point to the alphabet." I did so, but no knockings took place. I said "The agents don't appear to be able to see through me; try to get the names by impression." He said, "Very well I shall try." Immediately he said in a dreamy, listening sort of mood, as though he were attending to voices that appeared in the air, "*What, what, what's that you say, two of you speaking, one into each ear, and both of you saying THOMAS.*" He then turned to me and said enquiringly, "*Were they both THOMAS.*" I answered, "Yes, they were both Thomas."

The proportion of errors which occurred in the communications received through Mr. Foster at the *séances* I attended, *did not exceed three per cent.*, and these usually happened during some trifling confusion or controversy.

#### OPINIONS RESPECTING MR. FOSTER'S MEDIUMSHIP.

The diversity of opinion which exists respecting the mediumship of Mr. Foster, is not at all surprising to those who have extensively investigated modern mysterious psychological, and physical phenomena. The phenomena produced through his mediumship are of so remarkable a character, that any explanation is more acceptable to casual and sceptical investigators, than that which the medium usually claims, viz. :—That of their being produced by spiritual agency.

We see, in the history of all great discoveries, and all great moral, social, and religious reforms, the strong antagonism which is always presented to innovations upon preconceived notions. That even educated persons should, when witnessing for the first time the phenomena which occur in the presence of Mr. Foster, place them to the credit of jugglery, is not astonishing; that others who have seen or who believe in clairvoyance and thought-reading, should ascribe them to some

exalted display of these powers, mixed and heightened by trick, should not surprise us? and that some, who are impulsive and credulous, hastily attribute the wonderful manifestations to superhuman interference, is a circumstance that might fairly be anticipated.

I have not yet seen any full and candid criticism of Mr. Foster's mediumship, and the phenomena that occur through it.

Writers in the *Spiritual Magazine* very much differ in opinion. The writer in *The Critic* has not been favoured with a very satisfactory display of phenomena, and did not fully describe what he did see, as I have reason to know by information received from the "Gentleman from the Country," who is a personal friend, and happened to be present at the *séance*. Those sporting gentlemen who write to *The Field*, evidently went to the investigation with strong prejudices, and have adopted the most summary mode of disposing of the difficulties. The correspondent of *The Times* of March 12th has manifestly seen phenomena that surprised him, and his notice of the occurrences which took place in the presence of Mr. Foster are characterised by wonder and incredulity. The author of the article in the *Saturday Review* of March 15th goes in for ridicule and banter, as the most appropriate mode of settling the spiritualistic enigma. And, lastly, a leader in *The Times* of March 15th after learnedly beating about the bush, candidly asks for a full, free, and impartial enquiry; an exposure of the sham, if it be one; and a recognition of the truth, if truth be in it. Except by the latter proposal, no serious enquirers will be much influenced by these modes of criticism; they must either see Mr. Foster, and judge for themselves, or they must have a plain and unvarnished statement of facts, vouched for by credible witnesses; and a criticism of these facts, based upon a fair interpretation and application of the occult physical, and psychological phenomena, which are now recognised by those who have freely entered into their investigation.

"The phenomena occurring through the mediumship of Mr. Foster divide themselves into the following heads:—

I. Raps on tables, chairs, floors, and walls, without any apparent mechanical contrivance for their production.

II. Ascertaining names, written on slips of paper, folded up into pellets of uniform size, and apparently beyond the power

of Mr. Foster's manipulation, so as to enable him to read their contents in the ordinary manner ; namely, by opening them.

III. The production of full names and initial letters on his arm and hand when there are no perceptible means within his possession for the production of the phenomena.

IV. Automatic writing through Mr. Foster's hand, the product being the names of persons present to whom he has not been introduced ; the names of deceased relatives and friends, of whom he may fairly be supposed to be without any knowledge ; counsels and messages of sympathy, purporting to proceed from departed friends, addressed to persons in the room, and containing not only general information which any clever performer might invent, but particulars respecting *private family occurrences*, which took place *many years ago* ; and of which Mr. Foster could not by ordinary power obtain knowledge.

V. Writing under the table, when paper and pencil are held in the hand of the medium, or in the hand of *any person* in the circle.

VI. Independent writing, when pencil and paper are laid upon the floor, and are out of the reach of the medium's feet or hands.

VII. Knockings to indicate letters of the alphabet, which correctly spell out names well known to some of the parties present, when the alphabet is quite out of the sight of the medium, and when the person pointing to the letters, does not follow them in consecutive order, but mixes them together and dodges them in the most miscellaneous manner for the *express purpose of deceiving*.

VIII. Giving the names of persons who are in the spirit-world when their names have not been written, and where mere guessing would, in 999 cases in a 1000, result in error.

IX. The indication of numbers not written, but existing only in the mind of the questioner.

X. Professing to see the spirits of the departed and describing their personal appearances with a minuteness even extending to the colour of their eyes and hair.

XI. A professed entrancement by invisible agents present, and, apparently in a state of trance, delivering long addresses.

XII. A professed hearing of spirit-voices, uttering the names of the departed, and specifying the relationship between them and the parties forming the circle.\*

These and many other equally extraordinary phenomena are of constant occurrence in the presence and through the mediumship of Mr. Foster, and the question for solution is, how are they to be accounted for?

A *small proportion* of those who saw Mr. Foster in my presence believe the phenomena to be the result of trick and legerdemain. When they are asked, did you observe any trick? Did you distinctly see anything which indicated trick? *The answer is no*, but still we believe he has not the aid he professes to have, and that the whole of the manifestations are the result of conjuring. Here we have bare assertion and no proof whatever.

Many who attended the circles and believe in clairvoyance, suppose that the psychological phenomena are produced by clairvoyance. They give Mr. Foster credit for being able to read the contents of the folded papers on the table and the thoughts of the majority of those who attended the *séances*. I have, in previous parts of this work, quoted illustrations of the most advanced clairvoyance, and thought-reading, which have come within the range of my reading and personal experience; and in none of those cases do the powers said to have been possessed by a few persons, at all approach those which are ascribed to Mr. Foster. *If all the clairvoyant power, that has ever been recorded as possessed by all the clairvoyants who ever lived, were concentrated into one person, that power, in my opinion, would not account for the psychological phenomena, which transpire through his mediumship.* When we reflect that there are not only psychological, but physical phenomena, produced through him, for which no known physical laws have yet accounted, I think we are justified in ascribing them to an independent spiritual agency, somewhat analogous to that from which he professes to receive them.

If we admit that Mr. Foster has super-mundane aid, the next question which arises is, what is the character of, and who are the agents by whom he is assisted?

\* For illustrations of the whole of these phases readers are referred to the descriptions of the *séances*.

I do not think we have any satisfactory proof that the invisible intelligences who are *said* to be present, are *really* so.

All the phenomena which occur in his presence, are explicable on the supposition that he is attended by a *familiar*, or, by *familiar spirits*, who aid him in uttering the remarkable revelations, and producing the astonishing physical phenomena which are exhibited. It is tolerably clear, that if persons in a condition of trance, can read the thoughts of others, or if persons, in a waking state, can read the thoughts of those with whom they are in *mesmeric rapport*; \* that spirits from the invisible spheres, who are not trammelled by a body of flesh may be, probably are, in psychological rapport with the persons forming the circles; and as Mr. Foster has a receptive temperament, and a peculiarly sensitive organization, those invisibles may transfer to his mind, the thoughts which they gather from the minds of those present at the *séances*. By this hypothesis, I think, nearly the whole of the *genuine* phenomena which take place in circles presided over by Mr. Foster, may be accounted for.

It does not follow, that because they *may be accounted* for in that way, *that they are, therefore, all produced* in that manner. There are often several modes of doing the same thing, and these curious displays of apparently miraculous power, which we have just recorded, may be produced by familiars; by the agents who profess to be present; or, the agency may be of a mixed character, and the phenomena be partly the product of invisible spiritual deceivers, and of the identical persons who profess to communicate, and the whole may be heightened by trick. I confess that the evidence, through Mr. Foster's mediumship, is not sufficiently strong to convince me, that those who profess to communicate, do in all, or even in *any* case, do so.

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### THE PRESS AND MR. FOSTER.

Various sections of the British Press are now in full cry against Mr. Foster and his mediumship; they are pouring upon him torrents of vituperation and invective, but make little progress towards an exposure of what the writers believe

\* See pages 64 and 65.

are his tricks and deceptions. Abuse is a very cheap article, and insinuation can be commanded to any extent ; but, when feelings run high, cool perception and reflection are generally at a discount, hence a fair exposure of the weak points in Mr. Foster's proceedings has never even been attempted, and the only arguments adopted are those of violence and detraction, and the only means of removing the supposed imposition the whip and the treadmill.

This is not because there are not really vulnerable spots in Mr. Foster's programme of wonders, but because his critics are too enraged and prejudiced to devote themselves to calm observation and reflection.

The following, are some of the circumstantial evidences, which press somewhat strongly against the genuineness of portions of the manifestations.

I. At the *séances* I attended there appeared upon Mr. Foster's arm and hand, at different times, about twenty-four full names and initials. All of these names and initials were produced upon his *left arm*. Why was this, if he did not write them ? Can spirits not write upon his right arm, as well as upon his left !

II. The red marks which form the letters and words on the arm and hand of the medium can be *exactly imitated* by any one who has a sensitive skin, if he form letters on it by means of a blunt, smooth-pointed piece of wood.

III. The writing, which was professedly produced under the table, when in the hand of the medium, or in that of any other person, presented indications of having been written in the ordinary manner, inasmuch as the pressure of the pencil produced indentations on the paper ; and as the pencil was held motionless when under the table such indentations could not then have been produced by it.

IV. The rapid entrancement, and sudden relief of Mr. Foster, are, according to our present knowledge of trance, more likely to be apparent than real, and that the more so, when the medium afterwards distinctly remembers what he has said during his periods of apparent trance.

V. The excessive similarity of the communications seems to indicate that they are the product of his own brain, or of his own brain in *psychological rapport* with a familiar, or familiars, by whom he is attended.

VI. There is a general resemblance between all the writings produced through Mr. Foster's mediumship, whether they are written through his own hand, or the hand of a visitor holding a pencil and paper under the table, or when pencil and paper are lying on the floor.

VII. Mr. Foster's handwriting in his normal condition is very similar to that which is produced when he professes to have his hand moved automatically by spirits.

VIII. The names which Mr. Foster gives, as those of departed spirits, are *generally* those which are on the pellets lying on the table. In some instances the names on the pellets are wrong, arising from the writers of them not being perfectly acquainted with the *spelling*; and, the medium generally writes the names of the supposed spirits, according to the spelling on the pellets. If the identical spirit were present and communicating, would that be the case?

These are valid difficulties, which ought to render all investigators cautious in the formation of their opinions. They do not, however, absolutely prove that the phenomena referred to were all produced by legerdemain, but they do render them valueless as evidence, unless the medium be so watched and guarded as to render their production by trick impossible.

My own impression of Mr. Foster's mediumship is this, that he has the aid of invisible spiritual intelligences, and is a genuine medium, but that he occasionally, *perhaps frequently*, heightens the effects produced by the introduction of trick and deception.

This, if true, is the more to be regretted, because it casts a doubt over his whole proceedings, and not only creates a prejudice against him, but also involves many honest, truthful media, in a vortex of difficulty and of unreasoning and, *undiscriminating* prejudice.

The objects aimed at in the preceding parts of this work have been to establish the facts upon which the hypothesis of modern spiritualism is based; to show that they are not accounted for by reference to natural mundane laws as they are at present understood; that from the nature of the occur-

rences, they are, in the majority of instances, quite beyond the region of trick and legerdemain ; and that the only theory by which they can be fairly explained is that which acknowledges aid from the invisible spiritual world.

It is difficult, in the present day, to obtain from thoughtful and philosophical men any recognition of intercourse between the natural and spiritual worlds ; and even those who acknowledge the Bible as the repertory of natural and divine truth, receive its records of spiritual interposition producing material phenomena, as extraordinary, and not in any degree to be expected in the nineteenth century.

On the other hand, we have the human heart earnestly desiring to know something of the loved ones who have gone before, and affectionate men and women yearn "for the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is gone." This class, if they once come within the sphere of modern spiritual society, are liable to become easy and enthusiastic believers ; and the former are too prejudiced to give the matter a fair consideration.

The phenomena, through the warm controversy which 'is now raging, imperatively call for a thorough and scientific investigation, and it is to be hoped that competent persons, laying aside the tone of supercilious contempt which has too long prevailed, may now turn their attention to the subject, and, after separating the chaff from the wheat, let the public know how much valuable and sterling grain remains.

The first thing that strikes a calm observer on entering upon an enquiry into the phenomena of modern spiritualism is the readiness with which many persons believe in the genuineness of the communications, in the personal identity of the communicating agents, and in the truthfulness of the revelations.

The point which is the most difficult to prove, viz., the identity, is that which is generally most readily received.

It will be seen, by reference to the foregoing pages, that the identity of the communicating agents is the most difficult to establish, and that, in this respect, the communications are liable to lead to the most erroneous views.

I have to confess that, so far as my own observations have gone, I have never had thoroughly satisfactory evidence of the presence of the agents who were said to be communicating,



as the phenomena were equally explicable on other theories. In many instances the communications purporting to come from the same person, in the same circle, were entirely contradictory, and the communications received in one circle often were directly opposed to those received in another, when both professedly came from the same agent or agents. The testimony of media as to the personalities of the spiritual beings with whom they believe themselves in connection are, in the majority of cases, valueless, as many persons who profess to be media are manifestly under delusions, and many more are illiterate and credulous. I could give innumerable illustrations, but limit myself to one. It is the case of a retired and uneducated soldier, at present residing in one of our Midland Counties, who sincerely believes himself to be inspired by the Angel Gabriel, and who is incessantly publishing admonitory tracts, which he believes he receives by inspiration from the Angel, the contents of which tracts are unworthy the literary genius of a first year's pupil in a reformatory school.

These, being facts, to establish identity, is manifestly a difficulty; and even the most advanced spiritualists confess that many of those cases, which seem most closely to approach proof, are nevertheless open to grave suspicion and doubt.

After the question of identity, that of most importance is the teachings, and they are almost as various as the minds of the enquirers. There are nearly as many schools in spiritualism as there are sects in religion. Each of the following leaders have numerous disciples:—Andrew Jackson Davis, Dr. Hare, Judge Edmonds, Hudson Tuttle, Thos. L. Harris, and scores of others of lesser note, all of whom profess to have received their revelations from the spiritual spheres, and none of whom hold precisely the same views. Their theological teachings range from blank atheism to hyper-orthodoxy.\*

Swedenborg in his writings, teaches the existence of spheres in the spiritual world into which men are ushered after their departure from earth, and the majority of the revelations received by modern spiritualists acknowledge the existence of seven spiritual spheres in which men who have entered

\* Numerous illustrations of the whole of these facts may be found in *Adin Ballou's Modern Spiritualism*, price 1s.; the *Spiritual Magazine*, published monthly, price 6d.; and in the writings of Judge Edmonds, Dr. Hare, and other leading spiritualists.

the future life are said to reside; they are, by Dr. Hare, located round the earth, the nearest being within sixty miles of the earth's surface, and the sixth sphere considerably within the area of the moon's orbit. The Doctor was also taught that the belts which cover the tropical regions of Jupiter, are the spiritual spheres belonging to that planet. \*

Other spiritualistic teachers place the spheres, to which man is removed after the death of the body, to beyond the distance of Sirius. Between these two views spiritual geography is taught in every degree of modification.

Mr. Harris in his "Celestial Arcana," divides the spiritual world into many spheres and societies, and, like Swedenborg, he describes minutely, not only those who have left this earth, but those who are living on other planets of the solar system, and also the inhabitants of some of the more remote fixed stars; and relates the conversations he has held with them. He further, peoples space with aroinal worlds, which are located throughout the regions of infinity, and are generally associated with some material worlds, or suns, but do not form any part of them. So widely diverse are the teachings of spiritualist leaders, and so essentially human and mundane are many of their communications, respecting the appearances and habits of the inhabitants of worlds almost infinitely removed from our own, that any cautious reader will be led to suspect that *these revelations, at least*, proceed from the poetic brains of the writers, and are not the product of any disembodied spiritual intelligences.

Making full allowance for all these anomalies and contrarieties, there still remains a sufficient body of evidence to convince the majority of candid and careful enquirers that, in the present day, there is direct and palpable intercourse with citizens of the world of spirits, and also sufficient evidence in the estimation of the writer to induce such enquirers not to receive as truth any communications through spiritual media, except so far as those communications accord with what they conceive to be the true teachings of the Bible, and so far as they commend themselves to their own rational and moral sense.

No modern mediumistic teaching is at all to be compared with the teachings of the DIVINE MASTER. He who "spake as never man spake," and who has laid down general and some-

\* Dr. Hare's *Spirit Manifestations*, page 119.

times specific rules for our guidance in this life, which will fit us for the highest enjoyments here, and for the endless pleasures which are laid up in the "many mansions" hereafter.

The Bible gives no very definite description of the future world, and the teachings of modern spiritualism are too contradictory to be reliable. To that world all good men look earnestly forward, and strive to anticipate the knowledge, the full revelation of which is probably reserved for eternity. Perhaps the best poetic description of the future Home of the Good, and that which harmonizes most closely with our warmest affections is the following :—

To thee, O dear, dear country,  
 Mine eyes their vigils keep;  
 For very love, beholding  
 Thy happy name, they weep.  
 The mention of thy glory  
 Is unction to the breast,  
 And medicine in sickness,  
 And love and life and rest.

O one, O only mansion,  
 O paradise of joy,  
 Where tears are ever banished,  
 And joys have no alloy!  
 Thy ageless walls are radiant  
 With precious stones unpriced;  
 The saints build up its fabric;  
 The corner-stone is Christ.

I know not—O, I know not  
 What social joys are there,  
 What radiancy of glory,  
 What light beyond compare!  
 And when I fain would sing them,  
 My spirit fails and faints,  
 And vainly tries to image  
 The assembly of the saints.

Midst power that knows no limit,  
 And wisdom without bound,  
 The beatific vision  
 Shall gladden saints around:  
 There God, my King and Portion,  
 In fulness of His grace,  
 Shall we behold for ever,  
 And worship face to face.

They stand, those halls of Zion,  
 All jubilant with song;  
 And bright with many an angel,  
 And many a martyr throng.  
 The Prince is ever in them,  
 The light is aye serene;  
 The pastures of the blessed  
 Are decked in glorious sheen.

There is the throne of David ;  
 And there, from toil released,  
 The shout of them that triumph,  
 The song of them that feast :  
 And they, beneath their Leader,  
 Who conquered in the fight,  
 For ever and for ever  
 Are clad in robes of white.

Jerusalem, the glorious,  
 The joy of the elect,  
 O ! dear and future vision  
 That eager hearts expect.  
 E'en now by faith I see thee  
 E'en now thy walls discern  
 To thee my thoughts are kindled,  
 And strive and pant and yearn.

And, now, we fight the battle,  
 And, then, we wear the crown  
 Of full, and everlasting,  
 And passionless renown.  
 O land that seest no sorrow !  
 O state that know'st no strife !  
 O princely bowers ! O land of flowers !  
 O realm and home of life !

I have endeavoured to place before my readers, in the plainest possible manner, an outline of the modern mysterious phenomena which have come within the sphere of my own observation, and have quoted other remarkable illustrations of manifestations which are generally considered well authenticated, in order that a satisfactory basis might be laid on which to form a decided opinion respecting the phenomena of modern spiritualism.

It is always difficult to make clear, by description to others, fact and phenomena, as they were presented to ourselves. There are so many minutiae that cannot be recorded which cause all descriptions to fall far short of original observations. Hence the frequency of the remark, even after listening to the recitals of the most competent and careful observers, "I must see those things for myself before I can believe." As the phenomena connected with modern spiritualism are so diametrically opposed to all preconceptions respecting natural and spiritual laws, they have been met with the utmost scepticism, and even now almost all the writers in the London and provincial papers ascribe the whole of the phenomena to trick and deception.

Intelligent believers in the reality of the phenomena consist almost exclusively of those who have made extensive personal investigations.

I trust the illustrations I have given in the foregoing pages, and in the appendix, may be the means of inducing many intelligent persons to investigate the phenomena, and that the conclusions to which I have arrived may lead earnest but over-credulous believers either to withdraw from the investigation altogether, or, in the light of what has here been stated, to re-examine the conclusions to which they have arrived.

I may be in error, but my conviction is that a liberal and catholic study of the Bible, and of nature, will lead to more accurate conclusions respecting both natural and spiritual things, than any yielding up of ourselves to the direction of the agents connected with the manifestations of modern spiritualism.

The only phase in connection with the modern mysteries that seems to me to be specially adapted to our present wants is this, that they prove the existence of a spiritual world, contiguous to but invisible to the inhabitants of this, when they are in their normal condition.

The broad question of Bible witchcraft and demonology, versus modern spiritualism, I leave open for the consideration of those who feel themselves competent to enter upon its discussion. I do not; and shall, therefore, manifest my discretion, by avoiding the expression of any opinions on the subject.

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The following communication from a gentleman who was present at Mr. Foster's last *séance*, and a letter from Mr. R. in acknowledgment of a description of the second *séance*, sent to him by Mr. S. who was present, will be read with interest.

"A detailed account of manifestations to John Hare, through the mediumship of Mr. Foster, who said, 'There is a female spirit, who exhibits to me a beautiful rose-bush, covered with flowers and buds, but there is a very peculiar appearance on the stem near the ground. A large thorn branches out, and, in the centre of the thorn, I read the word MARY, and, underneath, the words AFFECTION UNDYING.' I stated that I had written the name on a pellet, which was indicated by raps, and handed to me. At this stage a very intelligent gentleman, sitting opposite the medium, remarked

'that what he had seen communicated to others, had quite convinced him of the reality of the phenomena ; but, it would be an additional satisfaction if anything direct were given to him.' The medium put on a dreamy look, and said, 'There is a spirit here claiming to have been drowned. Is any one here who had the misfortune to lose a relative in this way?' There was no response. The influence then appeared to leave, but shortly returned, and the medium's eyes closed for a few seconds, then re-opened, and he addressed the intelligent gentleman alluded to as his brother, grasping his hand, and giving his name in full, at the close. The communication affected the gentleman to tears. \*

"It is remarkable that this name had not been written on the pellets.

"The medium then spoke of the presence of a friend of mine, who brought the female spirit to communicate with me, and who impressed him to write as follows:—

"'I come with the others that have assembled to meet you. I am often with *my* friends, and I, too, concur with what has just been said. Words cannot express to you how delighted I am to make you know I am happy, and one of your guardians.—Theophilus.'

"I said you have not given the surname, the medium requested me to take the alphabet, but, before I had pointed to the third letter, he hastily caught away the writing paper from me, and added, "Savill," which was one of the names I had written, and it was immediately selected from the heap of pellets, and handed to me.—J. H."

"Manchester, February 9th, 1862.

"My dear John,—Herewith I return your description of the *séance*, with best thanks for the perusal. I judge it to be a well written and faithful account, and I do not say much when I say that it has very much interested and pleased me. I am thinking it cost you some labour, and, I fear, the sacrifice of some valuable time ; but you are not without your reward. Lord Bacon says 'writing makes an exact man ;' and I have no doubt you will have verified the truth of his remark, in finding that you understand the occurrences described better than if you had not described them.

\* See page 122.

"The phenomena which you witnessed at this *séance* are pretty much of the character I expected, as also are their results. The manifestations, though externally a little different to some others, are, as to their quality and nature, very similar to all I have heard of previously. They strike me as being remarkable, therefore, only when compared with common every-day phenomena, and not at all so when viewed from the plane to which they belong. It is quite natural, however, that they should appear quite extraordinary to you, both because you witnessed them, and that for the first time. What I mean is, that if they were published in a book, with innumerable others which occur every day, they would not form an extraordinary feature in that book. And, if my notion of the proper use of these manifestations be correct, I see no need for any such peculiarity. As you know, I believe their *specific* function to consist in convincing the low atheistic mind of a life after that of the body—of a spiritual life—and not at all to gratify the curiosity of those who believe. Subordinately they may confirm a wavering faith, and incidentally reveal very gratifying spiritual relationship. Now, I apprehend that the kind of phenomena which you saw is generally sufficient for this end, in fact, it has proved itself sufficient, and is hourly proving itself sufficient for this—this great ground work of a better state of popular belief. The whole thing appeals, not to the reason, but to the sense. The same doctrine has been rejected on the rational ground, and men have become atheists; but, appealing direct to the sense, the atheist is defenceless, and is convinced in spite of his reason. You perceive, therefore, I regard the phenomena as indicating a bad or irreligious state, for only a very low condition of morals could render such manifestations needful. When are we obliged to feed the body artificially, and to charge it with stimulants, except when its life flickers in the socket? It is a good thing in its way, but we are in a bad way when we need it.

"Such being my notion of the main object of these manifestations, I am not surprised if some of the party did not arrive at a satisfactory conclusion, for I take it that all present were believers in a future life, and that, therefore, they did not go there to seek what the phenomena professed to bestow. From all I know, and from the nature of the means employed, I am impressed that the desire was to prove or disprove the avowed

*intercourse* with the spirit world, and not the *existence* of it. Yea, further, that more pains seem to have been taken to *detect an imposture than to discover facts*. I know not how this may strike you, but to me it looks absurd. It assumes that the man Foster is an impostor, or, if not, that he withholds something which might be wormed out of him by cross-examination. Now, if this assumption is without data, it is unjust to Foster, while it will effectually hinder the free and fair action of the enquirer's mind. (Prejudicial blindness will never discover the thing it wishes to disprove.) If such really was the case, the result is only natural. Foster comes forward to prove the *fact* of the spirit world, and that by certain evidences within his command. But he does not profess to be able to give any and every kind of evidence which the caprice or ignorance, or even the intelligence, of his audience may demand. Like all other phenomena, those of spiritualism are backed up by their own proper evidences, and if those are not sufficient, the fault is in us, not in them. But, some of his audience want not the evidence of the *fact* of the spirit world, for they believe in it, but something else, namely, that of *his intercourse with it*. Now this is all right enough in its place, but it is secondary, not primary. He proposes one thing, the primary one; they propose another, the secondary one. What can ensue but confusion and disappointment, and instead of cross-examination we get nought but cross purposes. Truly one is implied in the other; but truly, too, one is not the other; and truly, in the third place, you cannot enquire into them *specifically* at the same time.

"To predicate imposture of the man without data is immoral—to base *any* conclusion on evidence drawn from cross purposes is irrational. And after all, suppose Foster had been proved an impostor, what then? Would any one of you have the less belief in the fact of the spirit world? or would his delinquency have, in the least degree, invalidated the abundant testimony of spirit communications? No; no more than a counterfeit shilling disproves the existence of a good one, or its real medium of currency. On the contrary, who ever heard of a counterfeit where there was nothing sterling? Who ever shammed a pain or a pleasure which was never felt? Who can create even a lie out of nothing? The idea exists, and must be *founded* in fact.



"Contrarywise—allowing, only hypothetically, all that is involved in Foster's claim, that there is not only a spirit world, but that he is a spirit medium. How then? How will our doubters have him prove his pretensions? Seeing they reject what he offers, will they propose any kind of evidence, consistent with the recognized nature of spirits, which shall stand as proof? If they will, it were well to say what it is, and that the experiment should be tried. To refuse this, and simply say this and the other is not a proof, is very like saying they do not quite know what they do require. Anyhow, it were very difficult indeed to anticipate their demands. If such a demand as I here propose, be considered too strong and out of place, and it be pleaded that we ought not to receive anything without sufficient evidence, I at once admit it; but then, I say, it is incomparably worse to positively deny a thing because it is not proven to us individually, or even at all. For if it is not disproven may it not be true? I do not plead for taking things on insufficient evidence, but I do plead against calling a thing jugglery on insufficient evidence. The man may be a juggler for all I know, and he may be a bona fide spirit medium for all I know; but without proper proof I have no reasonable right to say he is either.

"Again, allowing Foster's claims, were the tests which were employed infallible? Would the reading of any number of names, or the discovery of any number of relationships, serve as proof? If so, something at least was done. The man was oftener right than wrong; and the fact that he was sometimes wrong does much to disprove him a juggler—for this class of men never undertake what they cannot do. Both his feats and his failures testify to some veracity, for the man seems to rest upon the preponderance of evidence over non-evidence, and and thus on our broad rationality.

"But besides being a juggler, he is an extraordinary clairvoyant and mind-reader. This admits much. What is a clairvoyant? Is it not one who sees with the eyes of the spirit other than through the bodily eyes? and if so, where is the irrationality of supposing that the spiritual eyes behold spiritual beings as objects? And, what is a mind-reader? Is it not a human being who is, by some power equally mysterious with that needful to make a spirit medium, capable of seeing our thoughts other than by our words and actions, and

of telling us of them in our own tongue? What more than this is needful to make a spirit medium? If such an one can see what is in our mind, must he not see our mind? and must he not see it with his spiritual eyes? And where is the sense of trying to puzzle a man with questions which we admit he can see and must know before we ask him? and what evidence is there that these very apparently contradictory states are possible at the same time?

"Furthermore, if the tests offered were not infallible, that was not the fault of the medium but of the critic; and the unsatisfactory results arising thence should go with the fault, and not be heaped as evidence upon the head of the medium. Did any one ask for a test compatible with the case, which was not forthcoming? or which, being incorrect, was sufficiently powerful to shake the validity of the rest?

"It is in vain we plead that we can produce similar signs and sounds with this or that instrument; it only shows man's power of imitation, but does not show that Mr. F. produced his that way. It were just as reasonable to argue that because, by certain mechanical contrivances, I can throw my voice up the chimney or down in the cellar, that therefore, Mr McMillan or any other ventriloquist performs through the same medium. But there is no force in these objections, and it is like fighting with a shadow to contend with them. I am glad you take a different position. If you do not implicitly believe, you do not dogmatically denounce. You wisely take what evidence there is, and wait for more. I think your method of writing several names of persons and places when enquiring for one, was ingenious—almost too ingenious for the spirits and the juggler together. But I feel sure that the affair, on the whole, was satisfactory to you, and that it will bear your reflections. I am not surprised that you are not prepossessed with Foster—he has a queer function to perform, and needs to be a queer fellow to do it. Every man to his job. I can conceive of a state of the human mind here below which would place man in natural and direct intercourse with the Angels of Heaven; but, I think, the opposite state prevails at present.

"In our day the intellect is placed in sovereign sway over the moral sense, hence men refuse what they cannot reason out. I have a notion though that the truer and the sublimer understanding has its seat in the moral senses, and that the reason

should serve, not rule. Were this the case, I have a notion that we should not be much troubled with false doctrines ; for if you observe, the heart will now and then show us to be wise fools, by rising freely and grandly to the God of Heaven.—I am, most truly yours—J. R.”

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## APPENDIX.

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The excessive incredulity which has, during the past few weeks, been exhibited in nearly the whole of the periodical press in the kingdom, as to the *genuineness* of modern spiritual phenomena, renders it desirable to give additional testimonies in confirmation of manifestations that have occurred in the presence of thousands of intelligent and critical witnesses.

If *all* the phenomena, called spiritual, are the result of trick, the non-discovery of deception in the phenomena, produced through the vast majority of media, is a remarkable feature in the investigation. The media are without visible confederates, without visible apparatus, in private drawing rooms, in the heart of London, and are criticised by the quickest eyes and shrewdest intellects in the kingdom ; and yet, according to the reports with which the papers teem, the detection of trick has not been clearly established, and even in the case of Mr. Foster, whom the spiritualists acknowledge is an occasional trickster, no clear instance of trick has been pointed out by anti-spiritualistic writers.

The following letter is taken from the *Morning Star*.—

“Sir,—In Mr Coleman's letter of the 11th inst., he gives his opinion that the gentlemen who were present at the meetings recorded in the ‘Cornhill Magazine,’ under the head of ‘Stranger than Fiction,’ should confirm or confute the statements made in that article. I was one of the persons present at the evening meeting. The other gentlemen were, a solicitor in extensive practice, and two well-known writers of

solid, instructive works—not writers of fiction—who, by-the-by, appear to be so used to inventing that they cannot believe that any one can possibly be employed in stating facts. It will be seen that the joke about ‘fools of fashion’ does not apply to the gentlemen alluded to, but that we were all workers in callings, in which matters of fact, and not of fancy, especially come under observation. Further, it may be useful to some persons to know that we were neither asleep, nor intoxicated, nor even excited. We were complete masters of our senses; and I submit that their evidence is worth a thousand conjectures and explanations made by those who were not present. Scores of times I have been much more agitated and excited in investigating a patient’s case, than I was in observing what occurred at the evening meeting in question.

“With this state of senses at the time, and revolving the occurrences in my mind again and again since that time, I can state with the greatest positiveness that the record made in the article, ‘Stranger than Fiction,’ is, in every particular, correct; that the phenomena therein related actually took place in the evening meeting; and, moreover, that no trick, machinery, sleight-of-hand, or other artistic contrivance produced what we heard and beheld. I am quite as convinced of this last as I am of the facts themselves.

“Only consider that here is a man, between ten and eleven stones in weight, floating about the room for many minutes,—in the tomb-like silence which prevailed, broken only by his voice coming from different quarters of the room, according to his then position,—is it probable, is it possible, that any machinery could be devised—not to speak of its being set up and previously made ready in a room, which was fixed upon as the place of meeting only five minutes before we entered it—capable of carrying such a weight about without the slightest sound of any description? Or suppose, as has been suggested, that he bestrode an inflated balloon, could a balloon have been introduced inflated large enough to hold in mid-air such a weight? Or could it have been inflated with hydrogen gas without being detected by ears, eyes, or nose?

It seems to me a much stronger sign of credulity to believe either of these suggestions, with our present knowledge, than to adopt the wildest statements or dreams of what is called

**Spiritualism.** Let it be remembered, moreover, that the room was, for a good part of the evening, in a blaze of light, in which no balloon, or other machine, sufficient for the supposed purpose could be introduced ; or, if already introduced, could remain unobserved ; and that, even when the room was comparatively darkened, light streamed through the window from a distant gas-lamp outside, between which gas-lamp and our eyes Mr. Home's form passed, so that we distinctly perceived his trunk and limbs ; and most assuredly there was no balloon near him, nor any machinery attached to him. His foot once touched my head when he was floating above.

" I have thus borne testimony to the truthfulness of the facts related by the writer in the ' Cornhill Magazine,' whom I recognise as having been my neighbour during the meeting. And I have endeavoured to shew that, as regards the principal and most wonderful phenomena, there could have been no contrivance by trick or machinery, adequate to produce or account for their existence. How, then, were they produced ? I know not ; and I believe that we are very, very far from having accumulated facts enough upon which to frame any laws, or build any theory regarding the agent at work in their production. Intelligent phenomena, such as the music played at request, point to intelligent agents ; and spiritual bodies that have quitted fleshly bodies may be at work. I, for one, wish that it were proved to be so ; for a more solemn discovery than that of a means of communication between embodied and disembodied sentient beings cannot be imagined. It giddies the brain to think of the possible result of such a discovery. But, whilst I obstinately stand up for the integrity of my senses during my observation of the wonders above related, my inner senses cannot but observe many gaps that must be filled up before the bridge between the spiritual body's life here in the flesh, and its life elsewhere out of the flesh, can be finished. Meantime the facts must be patiently and honestly accumulated, and enthusiasm must be banished from the minds of the enquirers. And, as regards the denials, and abuses, and jests of the non-enquirers, let it be remembered that scurrility and laughter never discovered or disproved anything whatever in the world's history.

" Respecting the purely physical phenomena, such as the raising of weights whether of human bodies or tables, it may

be that we are on the verge of discovering some physical force hitherto undreamed of : who shall say that we know all the powers of nature ? Here, too, dispassionate enquiry must go on, regardless of the noise outside ; regardless, too, of the ignorant and malicious prejudice which would blast the reputation of those who would enquire in a direction opposite to that prejudice.

" *Enquirers, unlike routine people, must be prepared to rough it among their fellow creatures.* And I suppose that I, for having asserted that I have five senses as yet unimpaired, and for having testified to what the majority disbelieve, shall come in for my share of pity or abuse. Let it be so, if it helps on a truthful search.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

" J. M. GULLY, M.D.

" *Malvern, Oct. 14.*"

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I extract from the *Spiritual Magazine*, a monthly publication devoted to the spread of spiritualism, the following communication:—

" We have been favoured with the following statement, made by James Hutchinson, Esq., who, as many of our readers no doubt know, is a gentleman of the highest standing in the commercial world, and for many years the respected Chairman of the London Stock Exchange. Mr. Hutchinson says:—

" ' I have for some time past felt an interest in the subject of Spiritual Manifestations. Like most persons I had great difficulty in realizing the statements made to me of the wonders which were daily witnessed by others, but the evidence of friends satisfied me that there must be something worthy of serious investigation, and I therefore determined to take every opportunity of looking into it for myself. I have now done so, and I feel it a duty to openly bear my testimony to the facts, leaving others to theorize on the causes and tendency of these remarkable phenomena.

" ' Recently introduced by a friend to Mr. D. D. Home, I found him a most kind and affable person, whose simplicity and candour at once disarm suspicion. A *séance* was arranged for the 23rd instant, and together with Mr. and Mrs. Coleman, Mr. G. S. Clarke, Mr. T. Clarke, Mr. Gilbert Davidson, and another lady and gentleman unknown to me, we formed a party of nine. Shortly after sitting down, we all

felt a tremulous motion in our chairs, and in the table, which was a very heavy circular drawing-room table. This movement of the table increased in power, and at the suggestion of Mr. Coleman, it imitated the exact action and sound of a stroke of a powerful marine engine acting on and vibrating the timbers of a weak-framed vessel.

"The rapping sounds on the table and floor were constant; the heavy table was raised up repeatedly; and these manifestations were continued whilst my friend, Mr. Clarke, and another were seated, at the request of Mr. Home, *under the table*.

"Two hand-bells, one weighing at least a pound and a half, were passed from one to another of the party by the unseen agencies. All of us in turn felt the touch and pressure of a soft and fleshy life-like hand. I saw the full-formed hand as it rested on my knee. The accordion, whilst held by Mr. Home in one hand, discoursed most eloquent music, and then, to our great astonishment, it was taken from him, and whilst both his hands and all of the party were visibly imposed on the surface of the table—the accordion, suspended from the centre of the table, gave out an exquisite air, no human hand touching it.

"These and many other incidents of a seriously impressive but private character, of which I do not hesitate to speak among my friends, occupied about four hours of what I must admit to be one of the most interesting evenings I have ever spent. I place the facts as we witnessed them at your disposal for publicity, if you please, merely adding, that *contrary to the assertions so constantly made that the manifestations are always in the dark*, the whole of the phenomena of which I have spoken were manifested in a room *lighted with gas*, and a bright fire burning.—Yours, &c.,

"JAS. HUTCHINSON,

"Angel Court, Throgmorton Street.

"January 26th, 1861."

Benjamin Coleman Esq., in a letter addressed to the Rev. G. H. Forbes, the author of an excellent work entitled "No Antecedent Impossibility in Miracles," the argument in which is based upon the reality of modern mysterious phenomena, says :—

"You ask me to give you some facts for publicity, and although I am most willing to do so, I have not the time at this moment to write out any formal account, but I may say in a word that I have seen in the presence of various media, all the phenomena spoken of in the article 'Stranger than Fiction,' to which you allude in your published letter, and I have seen many of them under more favourable conditions than the writer of that article. I have, for instance, seen *in the light* an accordion playing without any human hand touching it. I have heard a piano played upon when no person was within several feet of the instrument. I have had *in the light* an accordion brought from the end of the room by no visible agency, and placed in my right hand, and whilst held by me apart from any one, the air I asked for, 'Angels ever bright,' was played with all its variations in the most perfect manner.

"I have seen *in the light* a large drawing-room circular table rise gradually from the floor up to the ceiling, and descend again with no more noise than if it had been a snow flake. I have seen *in broad day-light* a large table move about without *any one touching it*, and by the aid of the alphabet it has answered questions intelligently. These phenomena, with many others *still more curious*, I have seen at different times here in London. Those which I recently witnessed in America I propose to give to the editor of the "Spiritual Magazine,"\* a publication which I recommend to you and any of your friends who are interested in enquiring into the Spiritualistic philosophy and phenomena."

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The Rev. G. H. Forbes, in the same work, inserts the following valuable letter from William Howitt, Esq. :—

West Hill Lodge, Highgate, May 9, 1861.

"Dear Sir,—You ask me to give you a few facts witnessed by myself which support the position in your essay, 'No Antecedent Impossibility in Miracles,' as directed against the reasonings of the late Rev. Baden Powell, in his article in the 'Essays and Reviews.' In your note you suggested that we may differ as to the nature of the power which is called spiritual. You have adopted the theory of the Rev. A. Mahan of

*Spiritual Magazine*, vol. 2, and also in *Spiritualism in America*, by Benjamin Coleman, price 2s. 6d.



America, that this power, or agent, is the Odylic Force, and not spirits, to which you say 'those ignorant of the real cause' ascribe this agency. Now I am one of those,—one of many millions,—who ascribe the phenomena called Spiritual, to spirits ; whether in ignorance of the real cause remains to be seen.

"Under these circumstances, namely, that you entertain this, in my opinion, erroneous notion, and that you wish me to give my name, I willingly comply, on the condition that you give my statement complete, and also that you put your name to the edition in which this statement appears. I think this is only fair : he who asks others to give their names should give his own. I, for my part, have resolved to fight the battles of the truth under no mask. If there be one prominent mark of the decadence of the Christian Church, it is the utter absence of that spirit of martyrdom which distinguished every age of it, except this. Amongst the early Christians ; at the Reformation ; in every revival, whether of Quakerism or Methodism, men stood boldly and to the death for their faith. We, in the words of Lord Byron, are now merely,—

‘Minions of splendour shrinking from distress.

The Christian Church is become dead, the heritage of cowards. The sect of Nicodemians has become universal ; men who would fain come to Christ, but only—by night. If all those who know the Truth would speak out for her with open face and name, it would be a cheering proof that there is life in the iron-bound stump in the earth, and Truth would wipe away her tears, and joyously renew God's mission.

"I am glad to see Mr. Hughes—'Tom Brown'—in a 'Tract for Priests and People,' speak brave words for the Bible. He admits the frightful growth of infidelity amongst our youth, and he thinks that he can charm them back to belief without a faith in the historic evidences of Christianity. I admire his enthusiasm, but I prophesy his failure. I, too, have mixed a great deal with the young, both in this country and abroad ; I have gone, too, much amongst the working classes, and found at home and abroad the same deadly infidelity. A Church spiritually dead has brought forth dead children, and I never yet found the magic word,—that music of Amphion,—which could rebuild the temple of faith when

its historic foundations were torn up. Men of this age are not trouts to be tickled, or to be caught with *artificial* flies. They demand not logic, but facts. They are true Baconians; they care nothing for the postulates of any Aristotle; they demand nature, that they may draw their own inferences. As I stated in the 'Critic' long ago,—'Sceptic materialists always turn round with this pertinent remark, 'It is all very well to tell us of miracles and a history occurring nearly 2000 years ago, but if God then condescended to convince souls of the reality of a spirit-world, by unquestionable physico-spiritual manifestations, why should He not now? Is God grown old? Is He less regardful of humanity? Don't *preach* to us, but give us *proofs*.' And men not being able to produce those proofs, never did convince the sceptic; and till they do produce them, never will.

"I rejoice, Sir, that *you and other clergymen* are now disposed to approach these proofs in any degree. It is not for me to say how long; or how carefully, or with what opportunities you have examined these phenomena, but I have examined them steadily, cautiously, perseveringly, and with ample opportunities, for more than six years; and I am prepared to say and to prove that the so-called spiritual phenomena are produced by direct spirit agency, and that the odylic force is totally inadequate to elicit them. Whilst, therefore, prepared to support your proposition that there is a power proceeding from the world of mind which does control the action of matter, and completely knocks on the head all the reasonings of the Rationalists, I am equally prepared to shew that the ignorance does not lie on the side of the Spiritualists, but on that of those who, yet bound in the fetters of materialistic education, tremble to advance beyond the precincts of physical law.

"Amongst the facts which I have to give you, let us first determine this. The odyle force, then, is a mere physical, unreasoning force, and consequently cannot adduce or refute arguments. They who ascribe the powers exercised by spiritual agency to odyle force, betray an equal ignorance of the real properties of that force, and of the present status and facts of spiritualism. Search through Reichenbach's essay on this force, and you will find no trace of a reasoning power in it. He ascribes no such properties to it. He says it throws a flame in the dark,

visible to sensitive persons, such as the Spiritualists call mediums ; that this flame is thrown from magnets of great power, from crystals, from the light of the sun, &c. That by passes made with magnets, or crystals, or by water impregnated with the sun's rays, certain sensations, agreeable or disagreeable, as the power is applied, are induced, but not a trace of any reasoning in this power, of any revelation of facts, of any pictorial vision, of any faculty of prognostication. It cannot tell you what will take place to-morrow, much less at the Antipodes, or in the spiritual world. But spirits do all this, and more. It does not attract iron, or other physical substances, which, as far as iron goes, its cognate, magnetism, does. But spirits lift iron or any other body of very great weight, and not in one direction only, but carry them about from place to place. Spirits lift heavy tables ;—I have seen dining-tables, capable of accommodating more than a dozen people, lifted quite from the ground. Spirits play on all musical instruments ; they can carry about hand-bells, and ring them in the air ; as I have seen them. The music which they produce is often exquisite. Spirits will draw or write directly upon paper laid for them in the middle of the floor, or indirectly, through the hands of people who never took a lesson, and never could draw. I am one of them. These are things which are not only going on in England, and amongst my own friends every day, but have been going on for these forty years ; ten years in America, and thirty before that in Germany. But in America the wide diffusion and constant repetition of these phenomena have convinced some millions of people, and some of them the first men of scientific and legal ability in the country. Those persons have not believed on mere hearsay, or mere hocus-pocus and delusion, but upon the familiar evidence of facts ; and, as I have observed, for thirty years before that in Germany, there existed a considerable body of the most eminent philosophers, poets, and scientific men, familiar with most of these things. Amongst these no less a man than Emmanuel Kant ; and also Görres, Ennemoser, Eschenmayer, Werner, Schubert, Jung Stilling, Kerner ; and pre-eminent amongst women, Madame Hauffe, the Seeress of Prevorst, whose history Kerner has written. The Seeress of Prevorst is a sort of antitype of everything which has occurred in Spiritualism since ; and after intimate observation of the

laws and phenomena of this power, now again, through ten years, every Spiritualist recognises the truthfulness of her statements. She always professed, not merely to have spiritual communications, but to see and converse daily with spirits, and she gave continual proofs of it, as any one may see who reads her story.

"Now it is useless to tell us that the odyle force, acting somehow mysteriously on the brain, can produce these results. It cannot enable people to draw, and write, and play exquisite music, who have no such power or knowledge in their brains; for on the old principle *ex nihilo nihil fit*, no such things being in, no such things can come out. It cannot come from other brains, for often there are no other brains present. If it could do such things it would be *spirit*, endowed with volition, skill, and knowledge, and there would be an end of the dispute. The condition, therefore, of those who ascribe these powers to odyle force, is that of one ascribing the telegraphic message to the wire, and not to the man at the end of it. Odyle force may be the wire,—for spiritual communications are, and ever have been, made through and under certain laws, as all God's works always are,—but it certainly is not the intelligence at the end of it: as I shall soon shew. They who believe in the odyle force, and not in spirit operating upon or through some such force, believe in the staircase, but not in the room for which it was erected.

"I should have said that not in Germany alone, fifty and more years ago, were there great spiritualists, but in many countries of Europe. In Switzerland, Lavater and Schokke were Spiritualists. In France, the pious and learned Oberlin; when he went to his living in the Ban de la Roche, his parishioners used to talk of spirits and ghosts, and he told them it was all nonsense and superstition; but after his wife died she re-appeared to him, and he used to sit an hour with her nearly every evening for, I think, nine years. Then the tables were turned upon him, and his friends told him it was a delusion. 'You are welcome to think so,' said Oberlin quietly; 'I know that it is as real as any other part of my life.' In fact, is not the world full of Spiritualists? Is there a man who does not from education ridicule the belief in ghosts? Is there a family that has not its authentic story of one? Scholastically they disbelieve; in their inner hearts they believe

and tremble. Thus the world goes on living in a laughable see-saw betwixt the influence of a false education and the omnipotent power of nature in the human heart; blowing hot and cold; believing and disbelieving; without courage, from the bugbear of superstition, to come out of this fool's labyrinth, and admit that God's eternal laws are for ever in the ascendant above all school theories.

"And, in fact, are you not all Spiritualists? Does not your Church and creed call upon you to believe in the direct influence of the Holy Spirit, and in the communion of saints? If you do believe that God—a Spirit—influences your hearts; that He hears your prayers, and turns events in accordance, as He has promised; that by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit you are actually born again; that by the vitalizing and detergent essence of this Spirit you are made 'new creatures,' or have no hope of entrance into heaven; then, you are essentially Spiritualists, every one of you. If you do not believe in this constant living influence and celestial metamorphosis, then you are no Christians. Your religion is a dead religion, not a vital principle; not a transforming renewing, divinely creative principle, but a mere dry husk, a mere hopeless and worthless tradition. Do you believe that all God's angels are 'ministering spirits, sent to minister to all those who are heirs of salvation?' Then where is the difference betwixt you and those at whom you say your friend will 'smile,'—betwixt you and avowed Spiritualists? The only difference is that Spiritualists are consistent with themselves and their professions, and whilst you take these broad and substantial declarations in a vague metaphysical sense, they believe and know that they have tangible evidences of the fact; and have not all good men and women in all ages been, more or less, believers in these open evidences of the fact? What say the works and lives of the Reformers,—of Luther and Melancthon? Of your own bishops and clergy, many of them educationally denying present miracles in their works, but recording them as special providences in their lives. What of a Bishop of Gloucester, who records an apparition? What of Bishop Seale of Norwich, with his 'Invisible World?' What of John Wesley's father, and the occurrences in his parsonage at Epworth? What of Wesley himself, and all the records of his 'Arminian Magazine?' What of Fletcher of Madeley? What of the

avowed doctrine of continued miraculous power in God's Church, in Hooker's 'Ecclesiastical Polity?' Are not all these full-length Spiritualists, admitting and shewing evidences of these things? New modes of evidences may have been added to meet the stern necessities of the times, but the principle is absolutely the same. And let me ask you, do you think that the three millions of Spiritualists in America, and the many millions in Europe and elsewhere, including the whole population of the East, the native region of revelation, who have been always, and are, confirmed, unshakable Spiritualists, —are likely to be all 'ignorant;' so ignorant as not to be able to distinguish between the operations of a magnetic fluid, and those of living and intelligent souls?

"You say that many religious persons think that the devil is seen in these phenomena, but that 'it is God and not Satan who rules in this world.' But these religious persons are nearer the truth than you suspect, for undoubtedly the devil takes care to have a finger in this matter, as he does in everything on earth. God rules indeed, but the devil rules too; and such is the marvellous patience of God till His own good time shall come, that many think that the devil rules in this world more than the Almighty. Look at all the wars in which the *soi disant* disciples of the Prince of Peace are engaged all over the world. Does God or the devil rule in them? Spiritualism, therefore, claims no exemption from the inroads of the devil. It is an open general influx from the spiritual world, as universal, as inevitable as the influx of light from the sun; but like the world, it has its two sides, its day and night; and the dark side is the devil and his sorcery, the light one is the power of God teaching Spiritualists by prayer and faith in the Cross to trample Satan under foot.

"Whilst the odylists and automatists speculate about an action on the brain, we cut the matter short, and say, there stand the spirits themselves, seen, heard, felt, and conversed with. As to Mr. Mahan's theory, Professor Hare, the great American electrician, has completely demolished it. Using almost the words of the celebrated treatise of Andrew Baxter on 'The Nature of the Human Soul,' he first demonstrated odyle to be matter, and then, as a consequence, 'that no inanimate imponderable principle can be, *per se*, a moving power; that inanimate matter does not move itself.'

To satisfy himself whether he was dealing with odyle force, or a spirit, Hare took this course ; being at Cape May, nearly a hundred miles from Philadelphia, and a deceased sister having repeatedly announced herself to him, he asked her to go to Philadelphia, and request Mrs. Gourlay, a medium, to get her husband, Dr. Gourlay, to go to a certain bank and enquire whether a certain bill had regularly passed through it. The spirit promised to do so, and in half an hour came back, and said that it was done. On Dr. Hare's return to Philadelphia, some weeks afterwards, he asked Mrs. Gourlay whether she received any message from him during his absence ? She said ' Yes, and under very extraordinary circumstances ; ' that she was holding a *séance*, and receiving a communication from a spirit, when it suddenly stopped, saying that another spirit was anxious to deliver a special message ; that his sister announced herself, and gave the message about the bank, to which Dr. Gourlay attended. Dr. Hare then went to the bank, and found this quite correct. This quite satisfied him that he had been dealing with a spirit, and not with a fluid and lying force.

" Having now shown you why I reject odyle as the agent in these transactions, I will proceed to the facts from my own experience. More than six years ago I began to examine the phenomena of Spiritualism. I did not go to paid, nor even to public mediums. I sat down at my own table with members of my own family, or with friends, persons of high character, and serious as myself in the inquiry. I saw tables moved, rocked to and fro, and raised repeatedly in the air. I saw a small round table, whenever touched by a medium, lay itself down, and crawl, as self-moved, all round the room ; and this was continued daily for a fortnight, the table refusing to perform any other motion. The absurd spirit which was supposed to be moving it, was then solemnly exorcised in the name of God, and the table was immediately all right. A most sensible and obedient odyle, you must think. I heard the raps ; sometimes a hundred at once, in every imaginable part of the table, in all keys, and in various degrees of loudness. I examined the phenomena thoroughly, though I knew every person present treated the inquiry, not only with a serious but sacred feeling. Silly, but playful spirits, came frequently, and drew the most laughable life-scenes on paper,



and told the most rhodomontading stories. I heard accordions play wonderful music as they were held in one hand, often by a person who could not play at all. I heard and saw hand-bells carried about the room in the air : put first into one person's hand, and then into another's ; taken away again by a strong pull, though you could not see the hand touching them. I saw dining and drawing-room tables of great weight, not only raised into the air, but when placed in a particular direction, perseveringly remove themselves, and place themselves quite differently. I saw other tables answer questions as they stood in the air, by moving up and down with a marvellous softness. I heard sometimes blows, apparently enough to split the table, when no one could have struck them without observation ; and breathed perfumes the most delicate. I saw light stream from the fingers of persons on the table, or while mesmerizing some one. As for communications professedly from spirits, they were of daily occurrence, and often wonderful. As I have said in my note to you, our previous theological opinions were resisted and condemned, when I and my wife were alone. This, therefore, could be no automatic action of our own brains, far less of the brains of others, for they were not there. We held philosophical Unitarian opinions, but, when thus alone, the communications condemned them, and asserted the Divinity and Godhead of our Saviour. When we put questions of a religious nature to the spirits, they directed us to put all such questions to the Divine Spirit alone. They recommended us, in opening our *séances*, to read a portion of the New Testament, and promised to select passages, and they did it through the means of the alphabet, naming the book, the chapter, and the particular verses, and the selections were most *à propos* to the communications which followed. They exhorted us not only to constant reading of the Scriptures, but to constant and earnest prayer. Many persons that we know, draw, paint, or write under spiritual agency, and without any effort or action of their own minds whatever, some of them having never learned to draw. Several of my family drew and wrote. I wrote a whole volume without any action of my own mind, the process being purely mechanical on my part. A series of drawings in circles, filled up with patterns, every one different from the other, were given through my hand, one each even-



ing ; the circles were struck off as correctly as Giotto or a pair of compasses could have done them : yet they were made simply with a pencil. Artists who saw them were astonished, and, as is generally the case in such matters, suggested that some new faculty was developed in me ; when, lo ! the power was entirely taken away, as if to shew that it did not belong to *me*. The drawings however remain, but I could not copy one of them in the same way if my life depended on it. A member of my family drew very extraordinary and beautiful things, often with written explanations, but exactly in the same mechanical, involuntary manner. In fact, most of these drawings are accompanied by explanations spiritually given, shewing that every line is full of meaning. I may add that I have never visited paid mediums, but I have seen most of the phenomena exhibited through Mr. Home, Mr. Squire, and others. I have seen spirit-hands moving about ; I have felt them again and again. I have seen writing done by spirits by laying a pencil and paper in the middle of the floor, and very good sense written too. I have heard things announced as about to come to pass, and they have come to pass, though appearing very improbable at the moment. I have seen persons very often, in clairvoyant trances, entering into communication with the dead, of whom they have known nothing, and giving those who had known them the most living description of them, as well as messages from them. And to put the matter at rest, whether they are actual spirits who make these communications, though not clairvoyant myself, I have tested two ladies who, from childhood, have professed, in their normal state, to see spirits, and have always found that they could prove what they asserted beyond doubt.

"One of these, the first time that she was in our house, said that she saw the spirit of a young man, and described his dress and person, which corresponded so exactly with the gentleman who had occupied the house before us, that we all instantly recognized it. On another occasion we shewed her several portraits,—amongst them that of the young man whose spirit, according to her description, she seemed to have seen,—but without making any remark. The moment she saw this portrait she said, 'That is the young man that I saw when here before.' In a dozen other ways I have seen her prove

the reality of her assertions, besides that she is a person of a most truthful character. She is the same lady who saw the apparition of Captain W—— the day he was killed at Lucknow, and was told by him that he was just killed there, though she never knew him before. On the same day Capt. W——'s wife, in a distant town, saw the same apparition, these ladies being unacquainted with each other. The fact, well known to us and all her circle of friends, is related by Mr. Dale Owen in his '*Footfalls on the Boundary of another World.*'

"The other lady, a very extraordinary medium, saw the spirits at the old house at Ramhurst, mentioned also by Mr. Owen, and that when no one in the place knew that such person had lived *there*, for they had lived there only in the reign of Queen Anne or George I. Now it is idle talking of odyle force in the face of facts like these, which are occurring all over America, and in various parts of Europe, and which accord with the attestations of men of the highest character in all ages and nations. In Greece, Plato, Socrates, Pythagoras, and numbers of others asserted this spirit action. In Rome, India, Egypt, Scandinavia, and aboriginal America, as well as in Judea and amongst the most eminent Fathers of the Church, the leading minds of every age but this have but one voice on the subject. It is the last, vain clutching at shadows to avoid coming to the substance, which makes those educated in the anti-spiritual theories of the century past, seize so eagerly on the odyle as their forlorn hope. It will be torn by advancing truth from their grasp. The cry that all is imagination, is gone already; odyle is the present stage, and it must go too.

"And here I could give you a whole volume of the remarkable and even startling revelations made by our own departed friends at our own evening table, those friends coming at wholly unexpected times, and bringing messages of the most vital importance,—carrying them on from period to period, sometimes at intervals of years, into a perfect history. But these things are too sacred for the public eye. All Spiritualists have them, and they are hoarded amongst the treasures which are the wealth of the affections, and the links of assurance with the world of the hereafter.

"Now I ask, what right have we, or has any one to reject the perpetual, uniform, and voluntary assertions of the spirits; to tell them that they lie, and are not spirits, but merely

odyle, or some such blind and incompetent force? Nothing but the hardness and deadness of that anti-spiritual education which has been growing harder and more unspiritual ever since the Reformation could lead men to such absurdity. As I said to you in my private note, Protestantism, to destroy faith in Popish miracles, went, as is always the case, too far in its reaction, and not content with levelling the abuses, proceeded to annihilate faith in the supernatural altogether. Now it is a striking fact that Protestantism, is the only faith, Christian or Pagan, that has systematically combated and rejected the miraculous. The Old and New Testaments are built altogether on the miraculous,—they are that or nothing. Christ appealed to the miraculous of 4000 years as true. If that were not true, then He is not true. If He be not true, then our faith is vain, and, as the Apostle says, we are of all men the most miserable. The early Fathers appealed to the miraculous of Christ and His Apostles as true, and to the miraculous still existing amongst themselves. The Greek and Roman Churches, the Waldenses, the Vaudois, the Cevennois, have to this day maintained the existence of the miraculous in the Church of Christ. What mean then these 'Essayists and Reviewers' thus limping up half a century after Paulus and his disciple Strauss, and clad in their worn-out rags, talking of 'the course of nature?' If the Bible be true,—and surely the Jews must have been rather more competent judges on this point than Strauss or Mr. Baden Powell,—the course of nature for 4,000 years was regularly miraculous. This was clearly perceived by Bishop Butler, who, in his 'Analogy,' (Part ii. chap. 2,) says that 'it might be part of the original plan of things that there should be miraculous interposition.' That there is an *ordinary* and an *extraordinary* course of nature, to the latter of which miracles belong, as comets and the imponderables do, being so contrary to the properties of other bodies.

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"But why ask the question? Here stand the phenomena of the higher course of nature ready to put their stamp of verity on all the past,—to grind to dust all this sophistry. The angel of God stands in the way against it. The Balaam of imagined sagacity does not see it yet, but his ass does. Common sense swerves aside, and seeks 'a more excellent way.'

Spinoza declares that if he could have been persuaded that Lazarus had been raised from the dead, after lying four days in the grave, he would have broken his system to pieces, and have embraced christianity. The late Baden Powell, it has been said, made a similar remark in regard to the present spiritual phenomena. But whether he said so or not is not of the slightest consequence, for these phenomena do break the systems of Spinoza and Mr. Baden Powell to atoms. Their conviction would, after all, have been but that of two individuals ; these phenomena have convinced millions, and, therefore, stand broadly independent of any isolated cases of belief or unbelief in them.

"Instead of your philosophy, that there is a law which does control matter, being broken, I trust you will find it greatly invigorated ; that a deeper insight into Spiritualism will show you that you have in it a more efficient weapon against scepticism than you imagined.—Yours faithfully,

"The Rev. G. H. Forbes.

"WILLIAM HOWITT."