TWO LECTURES
ON THE
PHENOMENA OF SPIRITUALISM
DELIVERED IN THE MASONIC HALL, DUNEDIN, ON THE
11th AND 18th MARCH, 1873,
BY THE
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FIRST LECTURE.—SPIRIT-RAPPING & GHOST SEEING

Before entering on the special subject of my lecture, I beg to make one or two explanations of a personal nature. It may be asked: Why come forward now to lecture, after remaining silent so long, when a public challenge was given to discuss the subject publicly? In answer, I have to state that, while admitting public discussion may, under certain circumstances, be valuable, it is in most cases eminently unsatisfactory. The course of argument and illustration is abruptly interrupted, and the attention of the audience is apt to be distracted from the main points by lively repartee, and jokes and witticisms. Such sallies often carry more weight with a mixed popular audience than solid reasoning, and there is a strong temptation presented to the disputants to frame their speeches so as to gain the applause of the audience at the moment rather than to inform and convince their understanding. Before a select audience, trained to weigh the force of logical arguments, this would not be the case, but such would scarcely be looked for in a popular audience that might assemble to hear a debate on this subject. Moreover, I frankly confess that I expected the general interest in Spiritualism, which appeared eight or ten months ago, and which seemed to have nearly passed away, would not now be revived, at least beyond the natural curiosity to see and hear any new comers of great pretensions, particularly when nothing new was advanced in support of Spiritualism or the doctrines which are usually associated with it. I have been given to understand, however, that a number of individuals in this city have recently been led to attach great importance to Spiritualism, and especially to the doctrines of a strongly negative character generally connected with it, such as the denial of the Trinity, of the Divinity of Christ, of original sin, and of the existence of the Devil and of Hell. I have come forward therefore with the view of assisting, if possible, any who may be in perplexity or darkness in respect to this subject, and have adopted this mode of reaching such, as, in my view, the most suitable. In this I have acted simply on my own responsibility, and I would wish it to be understood by all that none of my respected brethren in the ministry are in any degree parties to my action. Some of them, I believe, may not approve of this step; and I would not presume to censure any of them for holding a different opinion, or following a different course. I am sure of this, that whatever appeared to them to be duty they would boldly and readily follow out. I may state that the subject of Spiritualism has not engaged my attention now for the first time, as I have written articles upon it in the Press at home as far back as seventeen years ago. At the same time, I do not put myself forward as professing to offer a complete explanation of all the phenomena which have been presented in the name of Spiritualism. The evidence as to the existence of the alleged phenomena has in many cases not been furnished, and the state of scientific enquiry on all these points has not yet been so far advanced as to warrant me in professing myself able to furnish a complete solution of them. The real subject, however, which claims our attention is much more limited. It is to determine, if possible, what may be accepted as unquestionable facts established by sufficient evidence; then to consider whether science, as fairly established, furnishes any adequate explanation of them, and, if not, whether the theory of the Spiritualists can be received as giving the explanation required. This theory is simply that they are caused by
 spirits; not, however, spirits of any class, but by the spirits of departed human beings—ghosts. To discover what the facts of Spiritualism are is a task of no little difficulty. In trying to search them out one is strongly reminded of the saying, "There is nothing so deceitful as figures except facts," and of the other—no less true—"There are more false facts than false theories in the world." No doubt the well-known story of the problem submitted to the Royal Society of London may occur to your minds. King Charles sent to enquire how it came to pass that when a live fish was put into a globe of water the weight was not increased by the weight of the fish. Many learned and profound theories were readily started to explain this. At length one philosopher, evidently strong in common sense, proposed, amid loud cries for his presumption and disloyalty in calling in question the king's word, that the fish should be weighed by the scale. The result was that the weight was found to be the same, whether the fish was dead or alive. It is always the dictate of sound sense first to make sure of the facts, before troubling about the explanation. I have often felt that lecturers on Spiritualism directed far too little attention to these and the evidence on which they rested. A very short and simple method of disposing of this part of the subject has been followed by the Rev. Mr Watt in a letter recently published. Looking at the character of the alleged phenomena, and observing that they are for the most part of a silly and purposeless character, he declares this affords a strong presumption that the phenomena are really the work of some kind of spirits. He says "it is a very significant fact to me that the manifestations are sometimes intensely silly. We are generally told that as of no more efficiency than the offering of the blood of a sheep. Earnest Christians could find no amusement in hearing such blasphemy, and would refuse to countenance those who were guilty of it. And yet they have often shown how deep and strong were their convictions of the reality of Christ's divinity, by the sacrifices they have made in giving their testimony to this fact. It is, however, but justice to Mr Watt to state that although his philosophical Pegasus has persisted in their efforts to extend it through years of self-denying toil, then we might infer that their conviction of the reality of the phenomena was real and strong. I have never observed that earnest Christians could find any amusement in hearing the claims of their divine Saviour ridiculed; or his offering himself as a sacrifice for sin sneered at as of no more efficiency than the offering of the blood of a sheep. Earnest Christians could find no amusement in hearing such blasphemy, and would refuse to countenance those who were guilty of it. And yet they have often shown how deep and strong were their convictions of the reality of Christ's divinity, by the sacrifices they have made in giving their testimony to this fact. It is, however, but justice to Mr Watt to state that although his philosophical Pegasus has carried him through such vagaries, he declares that the argument which has weighed most in his mind in accepting the Spiritualistic phenomena has been the testimony of such men as Judge Edmonds and Robt. Dale Owen. The alleged phenomena, however, are far too numerous and multiform, and, in many cases, obscure, subtle, and evanescent, to be received in the mass on the testimony of any single witness, however sincere and honest he may be. They must be examined in detail, and the evidence presented in support of them must be carefully scrutinised. This has to a certain extent been done by the Dialectical Society of London. Members of that Society devoted months of
-enquiry and patient attending of sciences to find out the facts. A report stating the results was published. It should be mentioned, however, that this was not sanctioned by the Society as a whole, but only by a minority, yet it might be fairly taken as presenting, so far as it goes, evidence that may be accepted. The framers of the report declared to be established as true—1. That sounds of a very varied character, apparently proceeding from articles of furniture, the floor and walls of the room—the vibrations accompanying such sounds are often distinctly perceptible to the touch—occur without being produced by muscular action or mechanical contrivance. 2. That movements of heavy bodies take place without mechanical contrivance of any kind, or adequate exertion of muscular force by the persons present, and frequently without contact or connection with any person. 3. That these sounds and movements occur at the time, and in the manner asked for by persons present, and by means of a simple code of signals answer questions, and spell out coherent communications. 4. That the answers and the communications thus obtained are for the most part of a common-place character, but facts are sometimes correctly given which are only known to one of the persons present. 5. That the circumstances under which the phenomena take place are variable, the most prominent fact being that the presence of certain persons seems necessary to their occurrence, and that of others generally adverse; but this difference does not appear to depend on any belief or disbelief concerning the phenomena. 6. That, nevertheless, the occurrence of the phenomena is not insured by the presence or absence of such persons respectively. If, then, we accept these conclusions as true, we must consider whether science can explain them, or whether we must seek their explanation in the ghost theory. There are two elements here which require to be accounted for—the physical rappings and movements of bodies, and the intelligence which is shown in the answers to questions or movements of tables at request. Both, I think, can be amply explained, without the help of any ghost. It has been scientifically demonstrated that the human body is more or less charged with electricity—a fact which was observed before electricity was studied as a science. Cardan relates that the hair of a Carmelite monk emitted sparks whenever it was stroked backwards. From the hair of a young woman mentioned by Faber sparks of fire always fell when it was combed. Cassandra Buri, a Veronese lady, often terrified her maid-servants by brilliant sparks and a crackling noise, which were given forth whenever her body was rubbed or slightly touched by a linen cloth, and a bookseller at Pisa emitted sparks from his back and arms, with a crackling noise, whenever he pulled off a narrow shirt and a piece of cloth which he wore upon his breast. In the case of some individuals this electric power attains a much higher force. I quote the following examples which are well authenticated. In the summer of 1839 two Greek girls came from Smyrna to France, and began to exhibit their powers for a livelihood. On placing themselves at opposite ends of a large table, a cracking sound was emitted, like that of the electric fluid passing over gilt paper. The table thereafter began to shake, and gradually moved away from the elder to the younger. But when clad in silk, or if the atmosphere changed to be humid, they had no power to act either on the table or on each other. Speaking of a French medium, whose case was reported to the Paris Academy of Science in 1840, Arago says:—"The principal seat of her power seems to be in her left side. During her paroxysms it is warmer than her right side, and is affected with jerks, unusual movements, and a kind of trembling which communicates itself to anyone that touches the parts so affected. She presents, moreover, a peculiar sensibility to the action of the magnet. On approaching its north pole she receives a violent shock, while its south pole produces no effect on her whatever. A sheet of paper, a pen, or any light body is driven away as by a gust of wind, so soon as she extends her left hand towards it and before she has come near enough to touch it. The moment the table is touched by her hand—or even by a string which she may be holding—it is overturned. This action produces a strong commotion in her left side, by which she is forcibly drawn to the table. Should she, while in this condition, attempt to sit down, the seat is thrown from under her with prodigious force. One day a chest, on which three men were sitting, was moved in this manner; and on another occasion, a chair held by two strong men was broken in their hands." When a number of people were seated for a considerable time in a close room, it was very natural and probable that electricity should become so accumulated and intensified as to present a sufficient reason for the phenomena declared to have been witnessed by the Dialectical Society, not merely on the table with which their hands are in contact, but likewise on the walls or floor of the room. Such effects may be accounted for, as it has been scientifically demonstrated that electricity is conducted by the air as well as by solid bodies. There, then, is a sufficient cause for the physical part of the phenomena, and so far there is no need for a ghost. But how explain the manifestation of intelligence? If the knocking force proceeds from the highly charged human body or bodies that are present, it is reasonable to suppose that the direction in which it may be transmitted may be influenced to some extent by the movements of parts of their bodies under the.
control of their will—not necessarily the movements of their hands, nor yet movements of a violent or even noticeable kind, and possibly even without such movements—by the mere influence of will. The effects of electricity proceeding from the bodies of electrical eels—called Gymnotus electricus—in South America, may serve to illustrate this. Humboldt placed both his feet on a fresh Gymnotus, and experienced a more violent shock than he had ever felt from a Leyden jar. When he and another held their hands between them, one holding the head, or shoulders, and the other the tail, the one felt the shock and the other did not, and were led to the conclusion that it could direct its electric strokes where it chose. Further, they found that some Gymnotus which they kept alive killed some other fishes which they introduced into the same vessel of water, without coming in contact with them. The force with which this can be done was observed by Humboldt in America to stun horses which were driven into the water when they were swimming, so that the horses fell down completely overpowered, and were drowned. Regarding the probability of electrical effects proceeding from the human body, influenced to some extent by the will, I think there is here a clue to the intelligence displayed at the table knockings in answer to questions put. That intelligence, from all the reliable evidence I have been able to obtain, is sufficiently accounted for by the intelligence of one or several of those from whom the knocking force proceeds. The evidence of the Dialectical Society does not advance one step beyond this. The answers, the report states, are usually of a common place character, but sometimes known only to one of the persons present. We must, however, accept of other evidence besides theirs. Let us try then, if this explanation will apply to the well-known story of the Rochester knockings. Circumstances given by Mrs Harding and by Dale Owen, and many more, need not be questioned. They are briefly these:—The Fox family, residing at Hydesville, were disturbed by knockings about their house. After a time it was found they would respond to questions, and that they gave correct answers about the names and ages of the children when questioned by Mrs Fox. Questions were further put—Are you a man? are you a spirit? and, what is your name? and so on. Gradually, and after many questionings, and that by different people and on different occasions, a connected story was made out from the answers that this was the ghost of a pedlar named Charles B. Rossma, who had slept in the house four or five years before on a Tuesday night, and had been murdered at 12 o'clock by John C. Bell, a blacksmith, who occupied it, and was that night in the house alone. It was further stated that the body was buried in the cellar 10 feet deep. It appears from the evidence that the knockings had never been heard in the house previous to the time thus indicated, but by all who had since occupied it. It seems to be assumed by Mr Owen that none of the neighbours knew anything of the occurrences mentioned. But this, I think, is a very improbable supposition; for Mr Owen states that the daughter of a neighbour (Lucretia Pulver by name, 15 years of age), was servant at the house at the time when the pedlar came with his pack, and that she spoke to him. This young woman gave her deposition respecting the circumstances after the knockings attracted public attention. She stated that Mrs Bell told her she was acquainted with the pedlar before. Is it then not a very probable thing that she would mention his name to the girl? Lucretia was sent home that day, as Mrs Bell was going from home, and said she would not require her services longer. The pedlar remained in the house with Mr Bell, but next day he never came, according to expectation, to the house of Lucretia, who had promised to buy a new dress from him. Lucretia was sent for again on Mrs Bell's return 3 days afterwards, and came and resided there. Then she heard knockings and sounds of footsteps about the house at night, then sounds as if coming from the cellar. A week after this Lucretia having gone into the cellar, was alarmed by sinkings in the soft soil. She asked Mrs Bell what Mr Bell had been doing in the cellar. Mrs Bell said that it might be rat holes, and her husband was occupied a few days afterwards taking down earth to fill them up. The tenants who succeeded Mr and Mrs Bell, who had evidently considered it prudent to leave that part of the country, resided in the house a year before they heard knockings, and thereafter they had no peace for them, and shortly afterwards left. How are we to account for the knockings after the pedlar's visit, heard by Lucretia and Mrs Bell, and then for the absence of them during a year after their successors came to the house, and further, for the resumption of the knockings at that time? The most reasonable explanation is that the knockings, in so far as they were real (although no doubt their excited imaginations would exaggerate them, and assign them to their several localities), proceeded from the excited persons who were terrified and haunted by the strong suspicion of foul murder having been committed. The absence of the knockings for a year after their successors entered was probably due to their ignorance of this dark deed. But as they had become better acquainted with their neighbours the secret had evidently been drawn out from Lucretia, and the natural result followed. They became terrified, and through their excited state knockings were produced, which no doubt would be exaggerated in the stillness of night. They did not bear this long, but sought another dwelling where they would find peace. The Fox family next took
The usual results followed, and most probably in an intensified degree. From Mr. Owen's account, the Fox family were hereditarily gifted, or, as I should rather say, afflicted, with what was called second-sight, and such excitable natures as theirs would manifest the full effects of such a history as pertained to their new dwelling. But Mr. Owen brings forward what he no doubt thinks clear proof that the neighbours never did entertain such suspicions of the pedlar's murder. He says that Mr. Bell, hearing of the reports that were spread, came to the district and obtained signatures from persons residing there to the number of 44, stating that they never knew anything against his character, and that when he lived among them, they thought him, and still think him, a man of honest and upright character incapable of committing crime. Now what does this prove? It is intended to establish the fact that none of the neighbours had ever heard a rumour or entertained a suspicion that this Mr. Bell had committed murder on the pedlar. He does not tell us if Lucretia signed, or if the successors of Mr. Bell in the house signed it, or if the Fox family signed it. Most probably some of them did. As for others, who at the very worst could only know of a dark suspicion attaching to the unfortunate pedlar's visit, very little weight can be attached to their signing such a vague testimonial if they thought it would be of any service. As an evidence of Mr. Bell's innocence, it strongly reminds one of the plea set up by an Irishman. When two witnesses swore they saw him steal a horse, he said he could bring fifty who didn't see him do so, and who would swear it. It is of little importance to us in the present case whether Mr. Bell was innocent or guilty. It is sufficient to shew there is strong evidence for believing that a rumour of such guilt had reached the ears of Bell's successors after they had lived in the house a year, and also had come to the knowledge of the Fox family. The whole connected story, as we stated it, was given gradually at separate times, and no doubt corresponded to the various beliefs which were entertained by the questioners. Mrs. Harding says, evidence of the crime was discovered in the cellar, when it was dug into. Mr. Owen does not seem clear about this. To us, however, it is of no consequence. The evidence regarding Lucretia, who lived in the neighbourhood apparently during the whole time, affords sufficient reason to believe that the suspicion of the murder was connected with the house. Where then, I ask, is there any room or need for a ghost? One adequate reason will satisfy every philosophical mind. The Dutch Burgomaster, who omitted to receive his royal master with the customary salute of cannon, was prepared to lay before His Highness nineteen good and sufficient reasons in vindication of his conduct. His master, however, was wisely satisfied when he heard the first—that he had no powder. It is surprising that Mr. Owen (the narrator of the story) did not clearly see that the responses came in accordance with the minds of the questioners; for in the very same chapter in which he describes this case, he mentioned that a report was circulated that a pedlar who had suddenly disappeared, was murdered. This report was proved to be utterly false. Yet before the truth was found out by the return of the pedlar, specific information had been obtained by means of raps that the pedlar's dead body would be found at a particular point of a canal. In all cases that have been adduced, it would be found that where there were any means of obtaining full particulars regarding them, the rapping table, like Dame Waddell's teapot, would only give out what had been put in. To give a clear and just judgment, however, of what may be in the mind of any questioner, is an easy matter, and on this point there is great misapprehension. The amount of knowledge which the mind possessed, many supposed, was just what they were able to recall at the moment, yet on reflection everyone must be convinced that his knowledge was far more extensive; and it was a well-established fact that every thought or expression which the mind had ever received was retained by it, and might be recalled. Only a very small part is reproduced under ordinary circumstances, but in times of special excitement, or concentration of thought, the hidden stores of memory are brought forth in such abundance, and so distinctly, that the person is amazed. Dr. Abercrombie tells of a naval officer who was submerged for a few moments in the water, and was rescued, and that during this brief time he declares he had seen the whole events of his life pass vividly before his mind. Another instance he gives as follows:—"A lady in the last stage of chronic disease was taken from London to a lodging in the country. Her infant daughter was taken to see her, and shortly afterwards the lady died. The child grew up, without any recollection of her mother, to mature age. She happened to be taken into the room where her mother died without being told anything about it. She started on entering it, and when the friend who was with her enquired the reason, she replied, "I have a distinct impression of having been in this room before, and that a lady who lay in that corner, and seemed very ill, leaned over me and wept." These examples will show how memory retains many things which may slumber for years, and suddenly be revived through even the slightest circumstance connected with what was forgotten. Sometimes also what has thus suddenly started into consciousness as suddenly disappears, so that we are at a loss
to know why it arose in the mind at all—until perhaps by careful searching we discover that it is correct. Of the reality of this every one who attends much to the working of his own mind will have frequent proof. The reproduction of thoughts in the mind takes place, according to what philosophers call the laws of association. Nothing in memory will start up into consciousness without being influenced by some thing else which connects it with our present thought. The intermediate thoughts, however, by which it is held in association with that presently before us, may not rise into consciousness, although they have been operative, and have led to the starting up of some long forgotten thought. This furnishes an illustration of one peculiarity of the mind’s working, which has been designated by the term Latent Mental Modifications, or more recently by Dr Carpenter’s Conscius Resolution.

It will serve to explain such a case as the following given by Owen, which he entitles “Sister Elizabeth.” Dr H. saw an apparition while attending Dr Bellow’s Church in New York of three female figures. One appeared as his wife, the other as his mother; the third, a young girl between them, he did not recognise. He had a sister Anne, who had died 38 years before, but he settled that the young girl did not resemble her. Next day he called on one of the Foxes. He wrote out a number of female names. Anne was passed by, and the table rapped out the name of Elizabeth, his sister. He declared he never had a sister Elizabeth. He asked if the figure he saw was his sister Elizabeth, and the raps at once answered yes. He afterwards consulted the family register, and found that a sister named Elizabeth had died a few weeks after birth. This had happened during a five years’ absence from home, and on being questioned, Dr H. thought it likely that his father would mention the circumstance in one of his letters at the time, but he had forgotten it. This had been most probably suddenly recalled to his mind at the moment when he was intently seeking information—possibly with so much dimness and uncertainty, that he had been unable to assure himself of its correctness until the family register revealed what had been long ago made known to him. The answer I regard as simply a response influenced by his own will, although he had a feeling of doubt as to its correctness. He had already settled that the figure in question could not be his sister Elizabeth. Being between his mother and wife, he would most probably think that she must be another sister, although he forgot that there really was another. The name had no doubt flashed up suddenly, but dimly, when expecting the response. The vastness of the storehouse of memory in every soul is far beyond our conceptions, and as wonderful is the subtlety and apparent caprice which characterise the mode in which it yields up its treasures. It is in sleep, in the somnambulic state, and in various abnormal conditions, that the extraordinary powers of the memory are most vividly displayed. Instances of this I cannot here take time to present, but they go far to prove that all we have once known is ever retained, and may be at any moment recalled, and probably no circumstances are more favourable for recalling what has been long forgotten than when a susceptible person, eagerly expectant, is making enquiries about it at his wooden oracle. It may, perhaps, be asked by some, Have you not admitted the reality of ghosts in the last-mentioned instance, in which Dr H. saw distinctly three figures, which he recognised as those of his departed relatives? Nothing, surely, can be stronger evidence than seeing them. If seeing is believing, then, surely, nobody can deny. This leads me to the subject of spectral illusions or apparitions which in all ages have been seen, and have ministered most powerfully to the love of the marvellous. Mr Owen admits—and I agree with him,—that some of the spectral illusions are truly accounted for on well-understood optical principles. For example, the visitor to the top of the Brocken, which is the principal summit of the Hartz Mountains, in the North of Germany, may see about sunrise, when the atmospheric conditions are favourable, the appearance of a giant in the clouds perhaps five or six hundred feet in height. Not, however, equal to the conception of the great Highland giant, Gog Magog MacFinn MacCoul, whose mouth was 11 miles wide, his teeth 10 miles square.

He would upon his toes upstand,
And take the stars down in his hand.
And set them in a gold garland,
To deck his wife’s hair.

This wonderful spectre, which I was not fortunate enough to see when I was there, is simply explained when it is known to be merely the shadow of the traveller standing in light clouds with the sun shining brightly upon him, which is reflected from the distant clouds, and of course magnified to enormous proportions. Similar principles explain the Fata Morgana of the Mediterranean, the mirage of the Desert, and occasional figures of ships or cities, or other distant objects, sometimes seen in the clouds. These are illusions, considered as to the reality of what is represented, but not illusions as to the objective reality of the images or reflections themselves. With regard to illusions as to images which have no outward existence, but which simply exist in the imagination of the beholder, he is inclined to deny that there are such, unless in the case of persons labouring under disease or persistent hallucinations bordering on insanity. He lays down something like a principle to distinguish those hallucinations which he will admit to be
such from what he regards as being in no sense an illusion or hallucination, but the veritable appearance of a real ghost. He says there is no authentic instance of hallucination in which several witnesses agreed about it, and that an illusion or hallucination only deceives the one unhappy individual who is the subject of it. Now, if he and his admirers would adhere to this principle I think it would cut away the ground from the vast majority of the reputed ghosts with which we are favoured. And certainly it would leave not even the space of a needle's point for Dr H.'s three ghosts to stand upon in Dr Bellow's church. I may safely say that no one else saw them but himself. In most cases this distinction will be practically correct. Yet it is by no means followed out by Mr Owen, nor by those who put so much faith in his narratives. In fact, one of his own stories supplies a very strong illustration that the principle is not correct. He tells of two ladies, mother and daughter, walking in broad daylight, who observed a figure moving toward them. One said to the other, "That is Mr Thomson." They both looked, and recognised the person named. When they came home they mentioned to the husband, who was a medical man, that they had just seen Mr Thomson. He replied "That is impossible, for he has been ill in bed all day, and I have just been visiting him." An ordinary reasoner would conclude that here was the clearest evidence of one of two things. Either a remarkable case of mistaken identity, or a decided example of spectral illusion. The sharp eyes of the ladies seeing close at hand in the daylight a well-known friend, so that they were both certain of his identity, militate against the former alternative; and Mr Owen's acute mind probably never entertained such a thought. The other alternative, however, appears to him no less objectionable. It is clear it was not the man himself, but the spectre which had occupied the organs of imagination—that they may be under its control, and exercise their several functions under its influence. On this point hear what Sir David Brewster says—who, I have observed, has been claimed by Spiritists as one of their supporters. He remarks that "when the eye is not exposed to the impressions of external objects, or when it is insensible to these objects in consequence of being engrossed with its own operations, any object of mental contemplation which has either been called up by the memory or created by the imagination will be seen as distinctly as if it had been formed from the vision of a real object. In examining these mental impressions, he adds, I have found that they follow the motions of the eyeball, exactly like the spectral impressions of luminous objects, and that they resemble them also in the property of insensibility when the eye is displaced by an internal force. If this result shall be found generally true by others, it will follow that the objects of mental contemplation may be seen as distinctly as external objects, and will occupy the same local position in the axis of vision as if they had been formed by the agency of light." The truth of this, I think, everyone will understand, and admit in regard to the state of sleep. You have the impression of visible objects as distinctly as in the waking state. Moreover, you see them always in such position with regard to yourselves as you would do if you were awake, and in their presence. You never dream that you see objects behind you, or in any position relative to yourselves on which it would be impossible for your eyes to see them, if it were a reality instead of a dream. I have no doubt that the eyes really adjust themselves to the positions of the various objects which imagination has presented to the mind. A fur-
ther proof in support of this view is derived from the fact that those who have been born blind or deprived of sight in infancy are unable to imagine such objects as require sight to perceive them in reality. So it is with all the other organs of sense. The hearing is as much under the control of the imagination as the sight, and those who have been born deaf are unable to imagine or dream about sounds; or, if they do, they will represent them to their minds under the form of objects that are cognizable by the other senses—representing, perhaps, a loud sound under the form of a great cloud, or a sour apple, or a very solid piece of rock. The muscles of expression, as is well known, readily obey the impulses of imagination, so that the mother who is watching her child, and sees at times the beaming smile light up its countenance, says very truly her babe is dreaming. So the organs of speech are frequently found obedient to the imagination during sleep, and have sometimes revealed the secret of the murderer when he little knew of it. And various members of the body of some individuals show, on many occasions—sometimes to the loss and damage of their bedfellows—that they are ready at the call of imagination to follow Hamlet's advice to the players, and 'suit the word to the action and the action to the word.' But it will be said all this may be true in regard to sleep, but it is quite different when a person is awake. Then he can distinguish at once between any impression or influence of his imagination and an equally strong impression or influence from something which is a reality. This is not in all cases so easy as you think. The reason why we can in most cases distinguish between what is an impression of the imagination and what is a reality, is that the impressions of the imagination are usually inconsistent with, and contradicted by the whole circumstances around us. We have on the one side a single impression derived from the imagination, and on the other a vast number of impressions all consistent with each other, and all opposed to this single impression derived from the imagination, and so we readily distinguish between the one and the other. But when the impression furnished by the imagination is not inconsistent with our surroundings—which sometimes, although rarely, happens—then we may be left in uncertainty. I remember a case of this which, although trivial in itself, furnishes a clear illustration. One day I suddenly called to remembrance an impression that I had made an engagement to meet a friend on a particular evening at his house. On trying to recall the circumstances connected with making the appointment, I could not do it. The impression was then distinct enough, but all the attendant circumstances had gone from me. I considered with myself, could this be an impression received in a dream?
own excited imagination. The sense of touch is also subject to the magic spell of imagination. There are, however, illusions to which it is subject that may be accounted for on strictly physiological principles which physicians well understand. If you were visiting a friend whose leg had been amputated a week before, and in the course of your conversation on other topics, you casually ask him how he felt his leg; you must be startled by hearing him reply that he was much annoyed by a constant pain in his big toe. You must start at this, knowing probably that his amputated limb was already buried, or receiving special attention in the dissecting room; and yet his sensations must be easily accounted for on well-known physiological principles. But where there is no such physiological reason, innumerable instances occur daily of false perceptions of touch, which can only be explained by the influence of imagination. Without referring to such extraordinary cases as those in which a person believes that his head is turned the wrong way and dresses himself accordingly, or where he is convinced that some important part of his person is made of glass, which necessitates on his part very extraordinary caution, and fills him with many groundless fears—the sensations of touch, and especially in all parts of the body—except the points of the fingers, and the tip of the tongue, are in many many cases utterly deceptive." Keeping in view those well established principles that show the influence of the imagination to be much more powerful than was generally understood, we might find in them a sufficient explanation of the great mass of cases in which it is alleged ghosts had been seen. When the imagination is strongly excited or very susceptible, it might cause one to see, even in the daylight, objects of its own creation. The simple reason why they did not usually see such so vividly during their waking hours was that the attention was generally distracted by impressions from external objects. If, however, they should sit down in a darkened room, in perfect silence, and with the strong desire and expectation of seeing a ghost, it would not be at all surprising if they should, like so many Spiritists, succeed. I have already said that Owen mentions a test for distinguishing between an illusion and a reality, namely—that the reality may be seen by any who are present, while the illusion cannot. If he adopted this principle, he should cast aside as unreliable all the cases of all ged ghosts seen only by one person. But, probably from what he may allege to be corroborative evidence, he accepts visions, though seen only by one, as being actual ghosts. Now there is sufficient evidence to prove that the mere fact of two or more spectators receiving the same impression at the same time, is not proof that the thing seen is an outward reality. Owen gives the case of the two girls being seen by the rest of the family clearly and distinctly at a little distance from their house. The father went towards them to see, but before he reached the place they disappeared. The family also standing outside the house lost sight of the figures about the same time. They found the two girls in the house upstairs, alone, and in their usual state of health. This circumstance might convince anyone that the figures seen outside could not be their ghosts. The girls, Owen says, saw and recognised their own figures as well as the others. What explanation then, does he offer? He maintains they were realities, though he does not profess to give the full explanation. He suggests, however, as a probable solution, that the purpose was to forbode the death of both of the girls, which took place within a year. The purpose of the figures appearing is not the question of main importance: What were these outward realities, as he maintains them to be? Either they were ghosts, according to his view, or they were not. If they were, we have the extraordinary result of persons who had two ghosts—one to serve them in the body, and another for ornament; one to be like Punch's useful poker, and the other to remain always polished and bright. Really to overtake such a reason as Mr. Owen, and bring him to convictions in accordance with common sense, seems as hopeless as to catch a ghost. To his mind it is not sufficient to find ghosts for the dead, but he claims them for those who are asleep or in a trance, and even for such as are looking with amazement upon what he declares to be themselves. Surely if they believed that this was their own ghost at which they were so amazed, we might well say—

Fool, fool! look at thy brother.
Why shouldn't one fool look at another.

The explanation of this phenomena, so far as the evidence supplied affords indication, is a very simple one. It was a case of optical illusion arising from the peculiar state of the atmosphere. It was the month of October, after a heavy rain, and when the sun was shining brightly. In such a case there would most likely be a good deal of vapour rising from the soil causing light clouds to form near the ground. The two girls were in the upper part of the house, in some part where the sun shone upon them from the one side of the house, and from which their shadows would be thrown out of the opposite side upon the light vapoury clouds near the ground. The reflection of these shadows would sufficiently explain the whole phenomena, without either ghost or foreboding of any kind. There is a story given by Owen in his "Footfalls", of a totally different kind, which Spiritists, I believe, hold to be a most clear and convincing demonstration of the correctness of their theory. The wife of an officer who had gone to India saw his spectre one night...
in a faint-like attitude, with his hands crossed upon his breast. She at once settled in her mind that he must have died that very day, and waited with the utmost anxiety the arrival of the mail. Tidings came that her husband was killed in action that very day on which she saw the spectre the 14th November. The War Office intimation dated it the 15th November. A friend in London mentioned the circumstance to a lady, who along with her husband had got power in seeing apparitions. She replied, addressing her husband, “That must be the very person I saw the evening when we were talking of India, and you drawing an elephant with a howdah on his back. Mr Wilkinson (the friend),” she said, “has described his exact position and appearance—the uniform of a British soldier; his hands pressed across his breast; his form bent forward as if in pain. The figure appeared just behind my husband, and seemed looking over his left shoulder.” Through the medium of her husband, they procured communication from him—I suppose by table-rapping—and to the effect that he had been killed in India by a wound in the breast—where else would a lady wound a soldier? This was found to have taken place on the very same evening on which the spectres appeared, and all the demons immediately vanished, and all at once recognised the identity of the spectre. As to the officer’s wife seeing a spectre of her husband at night, this does not by itself appear extraordinary; but it does not carry such weight as Mr Owen attaches to it. As to the official intimation first sent from the War Office to the officer's wife, she at once settled the matter. Their astonishment and curiosity, left their water operations and drew attention of the rest to an extraordinary spectacle on the mountain side at some distance from them, crying, “Oh, there’s Old Fogie!” This being the familiar sobriquet by which they designated a marine storekeeper in the port from which they hailed, with whom they were all well acquainted. They all at once recognised the identity of the person named, and, eager to satisfy their curiosity, left their water operations and hurried one after the other to see what was the matter. Their astonishment and horror can be easily described, when they saw not only Fogie, but a number of active followers, whom they at once set down in their minds as demons. Up the mountain sides the spectres ran, and as quickly the wondering sailors followed. They continued the pursuit until they observed Old Fogie with his spectral train had reached the crater at the top, when down into its dark depths he quickly disappeared, and all the demons immediately followed. The whole circumstances were narrated when they went on board, and a correct account of them was inserted in the log book, and signed by all the witnesses. When they returned to their own port, they made known the strange apparition they had witnessed at the crater, and they discovered that Old Fogie had died on that same day on which the spectres had appeared. The surviving relatives of this respected storekeeper felt much annoyed by the circulation of such a story regarding him, believing it to be a malicious fabrication. They accordingly brought an action against the captain of the vessel for circulating the story. The log book, however, was produced in Court; the witnesses could also testify to the accuracy of the facts. Judge and jury seemed to be confounded, and dismissed the case as something which no fellow could understand. This story, Professor Aytoun (who was a lawyer as well as a poet) said, was recorded fully in the records of one of
the County Courts, I think, of England. If it does not already figure in any of the Spiritistic books, some Spiritistic lawyer (if such a person can be discovered out of America) will perhaps hunt it out. It represents two important elements, authenticity and a striking coincidence. There is, however, as far as I can discover, no proof of a ghost. The most probable explanation is that it was an optical illusion due to the state of the atmosphere. The figure of Old Fogie was probably the reflection of the shadow of the mate, whose form may have presented some resemblance to the party named. The demons following were probably the half-naked sailors hurrying after the mate in wild glee to see the spectacle. The story was such as sailors would readily form from such materials. The only circumstance in the least noticeable is that this happened on the day old Fogie died, and that seems to me of very little importance. With respect to ghosts appearing in dark rooms belonging to professional mediums, and presenting themselves before individuals whose faculty for being imposed upon had already been tested to the highest degree, little need be said. The records of such performances showed the degree to which of most gifted persons with an ordinary share of intelligence might allow themselves to sink, while they cherished the delusion that they were advancing truth. A ghost under such circumstances gives proof of its reality by carrying a rose, or by appearing in woollen clothing and inviting his dupe to cut a piece of it off, and so make sure that it is a ghost! If the etiquette of ghost-hunting allowed it, such dupes might easily satisfy themselves that the wearers of woollen clothing, the bearers of roses, and the owners of soft arms and bony fingers were ghosts of a very worldly character. Such should be seized and held fast till a light could be obtained. The intense simplicity of many spiritists appeared strikingly in Mr. Owen's recording—as an interesting fact in science—that a certain investigating committee discovered phosphorus on the tips of the fingers of a professional medium. This was gravely noted with the tacit understanding that the phosphorus had been deposited there by natural exudation from the medium. The more probable explanation of its presence there would occur to all but blinded spiritists—that it was placed in readiness to produce those illuminated arms and faces, which appeared to have carried conviction to the minds of many. It was not necessary that he should be able to explain in detail how every varied effect was produced in dark rooms for the satisfaction of confirmed spiritists. This much was patent to all, namely, that the whole appearance and surroundings of ghost mediums in their dark rooms were such as most favourable to any kind of imposture they chose to practise. Their childish performances were only relieved from utter insignificance by the dark suspicion, which they naturally prompted, of vile imposture.

SECOND LECTURE.—LEVITATION; SPIRIT WRITING; SPIRIT DIAGNOSING AND HEALING OF DISEASES.

Before I enter on the subject of the present lecture, I will refer to some letters in the public Press regarding the former one. It is not difficult to perceive in the letter signed "Perplexity and Darkness," appearing in the Daily Times, that the purpose the writer had in view was to lead his readers into perplexity and darkness on the subject which it is my purpose to make plain. He avows his agreement with me in attributing the phenomena of Spiritism to influences proceeding from the individuals who assemble to question the spirits rather than from external sources. So far, it might be thought there was no occasion for his writing at all unless to inform the public, who might be interested to know, that he agreed with the views which I set forth. But for some purpose he wishes to present himself as an antagonist, and as one of a dubious sort. He roars like a lion, but stalks forth in the skin of the sheep. Now I would respect an honest, even if he were a mountaineer, who appeared in his own character, boldly challenging combat on his own footing, which, in this case, is evidently that of an opponent of the truths set forth in the Scriptures, but this intellectual hippogriff only excites contempt. My purpose is to deal with Spiritists, and the alleged phenomena on which they rest their system, and to show that these, in so far as they appear supernatural, are unsupported by solid facts; but the conduct of this double-faced adversary resembles that of the convict who tried the other day to escape from gaol by throwing pepper in the eyes of his keeper. He, however, was caught, and returned to his cell, and so long as my opponent wears the prison garb of Spiritism, I must deal with him on his Spiritualistic merits, until, by footing it for a sufficient time on the treadmill of this dark and dreary ghost house, he satisfies himself that the noise and dust with which he is surrounded are not indications of progress on the highway of intelligence and religion, but merely the illusions and impostures to which renegades from true religion have by their own folly been subjected. Another newspaper correspondent asks, "what force or law there is in nature which anybody knows of, that will account for the appearance of materialized spirits or ghosts?" I answer it is fully explained by the well-known law of the reciprocal influence of trickery and credulity. The difficulty mentioned, regarding a piece—which could not be matched in London—cut out of a ghost’s garment, is one which probably drapers can explain. It may have been
an ordinary fabric so manipulated that it could not be recognised, or, possibly, something unusual, such as a piece of asbestos—a substance of mineral origin, which is fibrous and incombustible, and has been manufactured into a soft flexible cloth, formerly used as a shroud for dead bodies, and which has also done service, I believe, in assisting conjurers and impostors in passing unseen through the doors of public rooms. As to the appearance of such materialised forms in lighted rooms, this has only occurred when the parties concerned were well assured that the self-restraint and good behaviour of their dupes, and under circumstances in which it was easy to carry out their trick. To most individuals the materiality of the garments of the ghosts, and the solidity of their arms, fingers, and hair, as recorded, would afford the strongest presumption that they were ghosts in ordinary human bodies. If the precaution were taken to seize them suddenly, and hold them with a firm grip—which Owen, like an honest simpleton would not venture to do—it would certainly not require a surgeon's skill to prove the mode of their materialising. The ghosts' bodies and limbs were made of the normal constituents of bone and muscle. With respect to the assumed anxiety of this correspondent regarding the fate of the miraculous doings recorded in the Scriptures if Spiritistic miracles he held as not established by sufficient evidence, I am at a loss to say what to think of such articles that these men are in no danger of falling through the want of sufficient evidence, and do not need the spurious help of Spiritistic tricks to buttress them. The sentiment of the ancient Trojan, "I fear the Greeks delight to bring into every city, contains within it such a horde of enemies to the Christian faith that their assumed desire to add to the evidence of Christianity can only meet with ridicule and contempt. Another critic has appeared—Mr E. C. Dunn, now styling himself M.D. He states in the Spiritist Magazine of May, 1871, his theory that he possesses the degree usually indicated by these initials. I presume, therefore, he must simply mean by M.D. after his name, "making himself doctor." It appears that my method of dealing with the subject does not meet with his approval. He objects to personalities, and has a wholesome horror of ridicule. Now, Solomon, who must be admitted as an authority on this point, has laid down two directions. One is "Answer a fool according to his folly;" and the other, "Answer not a fool according to his folly." As I understand these, there is no real contradiction between them, but simply an indication that some cases require the one mode, and some the other. In this case it/ seems to mo the most appropriate course to answer the reported case by the case of Mr Dunn. I readily see that the application of such a statement was to alleged Spiritistic facts, and, with regard to them, I have already shown in part, and to-night will show still further, that these, when scrutinised, are not facts, but "like the baseless fabric of a vision, leave not a neck behind." My critic admitted that the medium for producing raps was electricity, but said that this did not explain the fortuitous display of spirit in the raps. It was made, I think, sufficiently clear that the intelligence proceeded from the voluntary and intelligent persons from whom the electricity proceeded, and by whose will it was controlled. The statement that information received through raps was not previously possessed by any person present, I showed was not correct in the cases which I had time to examine, and presented as test cases by Owen. All the information received in them was just what was previously lodged in the minds of those asking the questions. Mr Dunn, relative to my explanation that the alleged ghost appearances were due to hallucination, insects, optical illusions, etc., denied this, but said that this could not apply to the visions recorded in the Bible. My critic, however, overlooks a most important difference. In the Bible we have to deal with a record Divinely attested, the validity of which neither avowed infidels nor Spiritists have been able to destroy. In Mr Owen's book, on the contrary, we have to deal with a record of the frauds of self-styled Spiritists. The evidence which, though often making a great show, is found to be, when examined, utterly deficient in those points where there was room and opportunity for illusion or imposture. Let Spiritists prove their own position. Bible miracles do not need their help. He brings forward a charge against me misrepresenting the report of the Dialectical Society, and says that I read, not from the report of the Committee, but from the report of a Sub-Committee. Now that is a most unfounded and unwarrantable assertion, for which there is no possible excuse, if he meant or wished to speak the truth. I have here the report of the Committee as published in the Daily Times, and I adduce the following sentence from the conclusion which the Committee arrived at from their own investigations are given there verbatim. The conclusion is as follows: "The evidence appended to that report. This evidence consisted of statements made to the Committee, some oral and some in writing, by witnesses. Some of these were members of the Committee, but others in this case, the case of the medium, seemed to me the most appropriate course to adopt was the former. Mr Dunn may not like it; but my soul shall not spare for his crying—He read the 23rd Chapter of Matthew, as illustrating Christ's method of plain speaking, and that is an example which he will no doubt be pleased that I should follow. I should do him the justice to remark that he correctly enough described my sentiments regarding Spiritualism, when he stated, in his own vernacular, that it was all humbug. He might just have added, "and something worse." He said that my first effort in logic was an assertion that facts were not facts. Anyone
The Dialectical Society proved that the phenomena of table-rapping and such like were performed by the agency of electricity. If this is true, there is no possible justification, if he is able to understand a plain statement in print, or has the honesty to present it as he reads it. My statement on this point, which is often referred to by critics, is that it is only just to the Society or its Committee—does not advance one step beyond declaring that the information conveyed was true to the persons present, but sometimes only to one of them. I have referred to this matter at greater length than it intrinsically merits, but do so simply to show how great is either the obtuseness or the recklessness of this individual, and how little weight can be attached to the charges which, for want of better statements, he has made against his opponents. With reference to an assertion I made, he asks: Would martyrdom make a cause more true? I never asserted that it would, but that it would afford an indication that the convictions of those who made such sacrifices were real and strong. Now, with regard to Mr Dunn's convictions of the truth of certain statements made relative to him by his teacher, Mr J. M. Peebles, and which he has not, so far as I am aware, denied, I would suggest a method by which he might easily convince multitudes in this city, whom he appears so anxious to convert to his views. Whether by following it he would make himself more heard than he is at present, or convinced of his own pretensions is true, he should have no fear in making the trial, and if he did so, we should then know that he himself, at least, believed in the claims set up for him. Mr J. M. Peebles, in a lecture in Melbourne, entitled, "Spiritualism Defined and Defended," stated, "I have seen Dr E. C. Dunn and other mediums float in the air by spirit power." Here is an opportunity then for this individual demonstrating both his own convictions of the reality of this Spirit power, and bringing conviction to the multitudes of this city. Let Mr Dunn float through the air in daylight from the end of the Stuart street jetty to the old jetty. This will test the worth of Spirit power than all empty talk. If he says that he can only float, but not fly, let him take the help which a clown once used who gathered a great crowd to see him float in a tub in Leith Harbour: let him harness a team of geese, and attach himself to them, and if he can perform this journey, then he may as well believe in his own power. Let the apparent floating in prepared rooms, and with concealed apparatus, is merely a conjurer's trick, which is frequently shown; and that Mr E. C. Dunn has often performed that, I should not be surprised to learn. But until he gives us a fair test of his powers, he need not suppose that the public will be duped by either his own or his teacher's assertions. With regard to diagnosing diseases on the surface of the body, it does not at all tend to convince this observer. Also, this is not a test of his powers, he need not suppose that the world of Spirit power turns all empty talk. If Mr Dunn has often performed that, I should not be surprised to learn. What's in a name? To explain what is meant by this fine sounding term, it means riding through the air (either with or without a broomstick), and, I should add, not merely through the air, but through roofs and brick walls without leaving a hole. It is worthy of note that the Spiritualists seem to repudiate Shakespeare's sentiment, "What's in a name?" To explain what is meant by this fine sounding term, it means riding through the air (either with or without a broomstick), and, I should add, not merely through the air, but through roofs and brick walls without leaving a hole. One of the best marked cases I have met with is the celebrated one of Mrs Guppy, who lived in Highbury Park, in the north of London. From the account in the Spiritual Magazine of July, 1871, it appears that a séance was held on the 3rd of June, in the rooms of two professional mediums, as usual, in the dark. A conversation was heard between a male and a female spirit that frequently appeared in these rooms, discussing whether they could bring Mrs Guppy, who was an unusually portly lady. One of the company urged them to try, to which they consented. Three minutes thereafter, Mrs Guppy dropped on the centre of the table. A light was struck, and she was recognized by the company, standing on the table round which they sat, trembling all over, and in a somewhat stupified frame of mind. She held a pen in which the ink was still wet, and an account-book in her hand, but did not speak. Three of the company immediately went to see if the door was shut, and found it locked. One of the company was persuaded that by no natural means could she have come in. Mrs Guppy said the last thing she remembered before finding herself on the table was being in her own room entering accounts in her book. She complained that she was not in visiting costume, having taken off her shoes before the sitting. Just before she stated this a pair of shoes dropped from the roof upon the floor. Afterwards, in the dark, four flower-pots with flowers, which belonged to Mrs Guppy, were placed on the table, the room of course being all the time closed. Still later in the same evening, while sitting in the dark, some one cried for a light. Four of the company saw Mr Herne, one of the professors...
sional mediums, falling back into his chair, and
handles of clothing belonging to Mrs Guppy and
her husband, and a Miss Neyland, who lived with
them, on the table. Herne declared he had just
seen Miss Neyland, who had pushed the clothes
into his arms. The lamp was again put out,
and on being lighted, Mr Williams, the other
professional medium, was missing from the room.
He was found in the next room, lying in an insen-
sible state on some clothes belonging to Mrs
Guppy. He said he had been at Mrs Guppy’s house
and saw Miss Neyland, who was sitting at a
table, and who seemed to be praying. A num-
ber of those present went in cold the same even­
ting along with Mrs Guppy to her house, and as-
certained that she had been at home some time
during that evening. She had not been in the room
when the seance was held, and a trap door in the roof of the n|Kirtmcnt, at once
light was out, evidently receiving articles through
a trap-door already referred to. The whole occurrence simply presents the results
of a set of impostors practising on their dupes.
While Spiritists may concede this, I will no
doubt be referred to the much-talked-of case of
Home’s levitation, described by Lord Lindsay,
and which must be admitted to have been very
extraordinary, if true. A very slight examina-
tion of the narrative, however, excites the
gravest suspicion of its correctness. By this I
mean to insinuate that Lord Lindsay
conscious misrepresents everything which he
stated, but on the face of it the evidence offered
is singularly incomplete, if not self-contradictory.
Like many of Mr Owen’s narratives, given, no
doctrine is so purely, so unbounded as the
faith displayed in the honesty and power of the
mediums, who have to be tested in regard to
these very qualities, that precautions against
imposture and illusion have not been taken on
these points on which precaution was most neces­sary.
Lord Lindsay describes Home’s levitation
as if it were a most ordinary occurrence, and
with as little care to satisfy the curiosity of his
readers as if he believed they had all as much
faith in Home as he had. This narrative also
appears in the Spiritual Magazine of August,
1871, as follows:— “I may mention that on
the occasion I was sitting with Mr Home and
Lord Adare and a cousin of his. During the
sitting, Mr. Home went into a trance, and in
that state was carried out of the room next to where we were, and was brought in
at our window. The distance between the win-
dows was about 7 ft. 6 in., and there was not
the slightest foothold below them, nor was there
more than a 12-inch projection to each window,
which served as a ledge to put flowers on. We
heard the window in the next room list, and
almost immediately after we saw Home
floating in the air outside our window. The
moon was shining full into the room ; my back
was to the light, and I saw the shadow on the
wall of the window sill and Home’s feet about
6 in. above it. He remained in this position for
a few seconds, then raised his head and
entered the room, feet foremost, and sat down.
Lord Adare than went into the next room to
look at the window from which he had been
carried. It was opened about 13 in., and he
expressed his wonder how Mr Home had been
taken through so narrow an aperture. Home
said (still in trance) “ I will show you,” and
then with his back to the window he leaned back
and was shot out of the aperture, head first, with
the body rigid, and then returned quite quietly.
The window is about 70 feet from the ground. I
very much doubt whether any skilful tight-robe
dancer would like to attempt a feat of this
description, where the only means of crossing
the aperture would be by a perilous leap or being borne
across in such a manner as I have described,
placing the question of the light aside.”
Now it must occur to every one who reflects
on this narrative, that we should require to know
a great deal more about the circumstances than
is here given, before we can believe that Home
levitated from one window to the other.
The account is given in the most slipshod and un-
satisfactory manner. Home went into a trance, while in the room along with other three persons. We next hear of his passing through the window of the next room. We have no evidence regarding the mode by which he went from the one to the other; nor yet how he went from the one window to the other. Whether he had any other possible mode of opening the window nothing is said, because nothing was seen. Lord Lindsay was sitting with his back towards it. It will surely require stronger evidence than this to make us believe the inference which this credulous nobleman presents. His cousin, Lord Adare, who went to the window of the room and submitted to the table being raised, was greatly puzzled to understand how a man could pass through such a narrow aperture; but how he could float from one window to the other, a space of 7 feet, and that situated 70 feet above the ground, appears to have caused no difficulty to his comprehensive mind. Until we obtain better evidence, Crooks proceeds to have obtained in the medium Home brought out considerably greater evidence than this to make us believe the inference which Crooks professes to have obtained in the same individual by Mr. Crooks, F.R.S., has long ago ascertained, by careful experiment, that electricity produced a very slight difference, but so minute as only to be regarded or measured by the scientific chemist. Crooks' s experiments on Home brought out considerably greater results. These have not, however, been accepted by most scientific men as at all reliable. This, however, is, for our present purpose, a matter of little importance. Even the greatest results which Crooks has obtained in Home are directed to subjects as various as those toward which Crooks objects to have been obtained in the medium Home. In short, all kinds of literary effort may be expected from the ghosts, with the solitary exception of a gospel sermon. A devoted educational reformer imagined he had gained a great point, when he raised the ghost to its own way — the royal road to knowledge, long sought in vain, has at last been found.

to entertain. Their intellectual efforts are directed to subjects as various as those which engage the thoughts of ordinary mortals. A book of their communications might fitly serve the title given to an ancient treatise concerning all things and a few other matters. Besides the cow, he had an rope to swing himself by, or any plank to walk upon; or whether there was any opportunity of his using any other ordinary means of transit—there is no evidence to show. We have only the fact that he went in some way from the room in which he was sitting, along with three others, and that some time afterwards he came in by the same mode of opening the window nothing is said, because nothing was seen. Lord Lindsay was sitting with his back towards it. It will surely require stronger evidence than this to make us believe the inference which this credulous nobleman presents. 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Another lady expressed her disbelief of the reality of such a thing, and a trial was agreed upon. Several sat down with paper and pencil, waiting for the ghost to move them. A question was asked by one lady, "Who gave me these pins?" and another wrote down as an answer, "The one that gives you a maid and a cook." This answer was correct. A friend in Florence who had given the pins, had also sent to her a ladies' maid and a cook. This produced great astonishment, and the spirit of some departed author seems to have been the subject of the writing. A devoted educational reformer imagined he had gained a great point, when he raised the ghost to its own way — the royal road to knowledge, long sought in vain, has at last been found. 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the servants connected with both families, were also acquainted with each other. The circumstances, both of the pins and the servants, would thus most likely be communicated and in this way reach the ears of the lady who wrote the reply. To my mind this appears far more reasonable and probable than fathers were during the night preceding. It may be said this is a mere supposition. I answer Mr Owen's explanation is a mere supposition too, and mine I hold is far the more likely. It must be remembered, too, that the burden of proving a ghost's presence lies on those who assert it to be there. Mr Owen professes to remember writing—namely some Latin words with the sounding head he thought he could distinguish writing—namely some Latin words with the date, April, 1504. This ancient date on it, of course, greatly increased the old gentleman's interest in it. "During the night after such excitement, as was not unnatural, he had a vivid dream about it. A young man in the ancient costume of a musician composer of 67 years of age, who lived in Paris, received from his son a musical instrument called a spinet of a very antique description, on 4th May, 1585. He was delighted with it, and spent most of the day in admiring it, trying its tone, and inspecting its mechanism. On a bar of wood which supported the sounding board he had painted a small inscription on it, during his first somnambulistic attack. It is quite evident, too, that he now wrote down in this second somnambulistic attack what he had seen during his former somnambulism, but had forgotten during the interval. This is very much like what is well known as double-consciousness. The recurrence of the same train of ideas as he formerly had, and the recalling vividly what he had formerly seen, is quite according to the ordinary experience of such cases. The most remarkable thing about the case is the simplicity of Owen, who imagines he has discovered a ghost. He goes into a long and laborious investigation, presents full evidence of the statements he could distinguish in the inscription on the spinet. He laboriously strives to demolish the supposition of imposture in the case, for which I think there was not the slightest ground, but regarding the most natural and simple explanation that it was a case of somnambulism, he has nothing to object except that the old man did not know previously that he was subject to this affection. A slight acquaintance with well-authenticated cases of somnambulism, will afford a sufficient explanation of many things as wonderful as this. Dr Abercrombie supplies a host of them. I may mention one, as it is somewhat remarkable for the kind of accomplishment manifested in this state, and the peculiar way of acquiring the knowledge to which it is subject. A girl 7 years of age slept in an apartment near one frequently occupied by an itinerant fiddler. He was a skilful musician, and spent a part of the night performing fine pieces. The girl, however, merely regarded his music as a disagreeable noise. After 6 months she repeated the airs she had heard and removed elsewhere. After recovery she acted as servant, and during the night there was heard in the house where she was the most beautiful music, which could not be accounted for. At length it was found to proceed from her lips, and resembled the sweetest tones of a small violin. On further observation it was found that during the two hours in bed she became restless, then uttered sounds like tuning a violin, and then dashed off into elaborate pieces of music. After a year or two she imitated the sound of a piano, which she heard in the house where she now lived. A year after she began to talk as if instructing a pupil in a vast variety of topics, and with great ability. She has been known to conjugate Latin verbs, and speak several sentences in French—though ignorant of these languages when in her waking state. This case shows clearly how powerfully the faculties may be excited in this condition, and especially how memory may give back even impressions which had been apparently forgotten as soon as the spirit to which they had been heard it affords ample grounds for explaining M. Bach's remembrance of the parchment and what was on pencil, then lost consciousness, and in that state he wrote that the spinet contained a piece of parchment written by King Henry and nailed on the inside of the case, and beneath was written a copy of the parchment. Signed, Salazarini. The spinet was accordingly sent for to the museum, where it was opened and the inscription closely resembling what was written down by M. Bach, in his state of unconsciousness, was, or, as I would call it, somnambulism. No doubt he had examined the instrument and seen the first parchment nailed inside, and read the inscription on it, during his first somnambulistic attack. It is quite evident, too, that he now wrote down in this second somnambulistic attack what he had seen during his former somnambulism, but had forgotten during the interval. This is very much like what is well known as double-consciousness. The recurrence of the same train of ideas as he formerly had, and the recalling vividly what he had formerly seen, is quite according to the ordinary experience of such cases. The most remarkable thing about the case is the simplicity of Owen, who imagines he has discovered a ghost. He goes into a long and laborious investigation, presents full evidence of the statements he could distinguish in the inscription on the spinet. 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it while in the same peculiar state. The most usual form in which Spirit writing is practised by those men solicited public attention in London about the year 1808, when a well-known medium called Foster held séances, charging a guinea for admission, which the nobility in great numbers attended. He requested visitors to write down any names they chose, each on a separate piece of paper, which was rolled up as a pellet and placed on a salver. Foster then requested any one of the company to point out one which he wished to be read by spirit power. Very speedily Foster produced on a piece of paper the name contained in the pellet pointed out, and that written in a style bearing a close resemblance. Multitudes believed in the man as a real medium between the spirit power. Very speedily Foster produced the name on which he was asked to write by spirit power, it was the easiest thing for an expert conjuror to take up the pellet between his fingers and drop another in its place before the eyes of the spectators without detection. Having it concealed in his hand, it was easy enough to read it while the attention of the audience was directed by conversation. Then, with an appearance of great mental agitation, he wrote, as he pretended to take up the pellet from the table, a simile of the name which he had surreptitiously read on the pellet. This will indicate sufficiently the principle on which the whole practice of those impostors called test-mediums is carried on. Of course there are many variations in the particular modes adopted for drawing off the attention from the writing, and small cunning in the conjuror. In watching Owen write, I on the arm was easily enough accomplished by Foster in the course of the many movements which were made during the performance to divert attention. Although this is one of the commonest conjuring tricks, and one therefore which might most readily be suspected, the possibility of it never seems to enter Mr Owen's mind, and of course he is quite insensible to it. I would have no hesitation in defying any test medium whatever, to do what they profess to do, and what Mr R. D. Owen believes, in his simplicity, they do, under anything like reliable test conditions. Every pretension to such supernatural power or knowledge, set up in the name of clairvoyance, has been found, when put to the test in anything like a scientific way, to be mere imposture, performed with varying success, according to the natural cleverness and acquired audacity of the performer. To show you what is the tendency of this whole system, as it appears to any calm and impartial mind after close and careful scrutiny, I may quote a sentence from the judgment delivered by the Vice-Chancellor in the Court of Chancery, in the famous suit which was raised by Mrs Lyon against Home, the well known medium, in the year 1857. Mrs Lyon had been induced to adopt Home as her son, and had given him £30,000 as a free gift, and £30,000 more in reversion. When her eyes were
opened to her folly, she instituted this suit to set aside these gifts, on the ground that they had been obtained by undue influence. Evidence on both sides was adduced to a very full extent. The whole matter was impartially and judicially investigated, and the conclusion of the Vice-Chancellor's judgment—which judgment, of course, was founded on the evidence—was as follows:—

"That the system" (namely, Spiritism) "as presented by the evidence, is mischievous nonsense; well calculated on the one hand to delude the vain, the weak, the foolish, and the superstitious; and on the other to assist the project of those who are the instruments of the adventurer; and lastly, that beyond all doubt there is plain law enough and plain sense enough to forbid and prevent the reception of acquittances such as these by any 'medium,' whether with or without a strange gift, and that this should be so is of public concern; and (to use the words of Lord Hardwicke) of the highest public utility." I quote from the official Law Journal Reports for November, 1858, which is admitted in every court of law. I would only remark here that probably the Vice-Chancellor's principle is one which might admit of easy application to many other dupes as well as Mrs Lyon, and the well-known charge of reputation is also plausible. I think, fairly and legally be established against any of the travelling quacks and impostors, both Spiritists and others, who fatten upon the credulity of the public. I promised in my advertisement to refer to the pretensions in regard to spirit diagnosing and the healing of diseases, and I shall now do so. The healing of diseases in persons able to walk and disappear with or without a medium, is a matter of doubt, no reliable evidence having been adduced to a very full extent. The result has been that the patient has at once, first with reluctance and protestations on the part of the patient, has often consented by spirit power, or by any unusual influences. Whether they call themselves clairvoyant, or magnetic healers, the source of their power is simply the force of their auditor to ordinary beholders almost miraculous. No class of practitioners are probably more likely to exercise a powerful influence on such individuals than persons who set up great pretensions to heal by spirit power, or by any unusual influences. Whether they call themselves clairvoyant, or magnetic healers.
called by various names—mesmerism, animal magnetism, electro-biology, somnambulism, and now spirit-healing. He was born about the year 1754, and is said by some to have been a native of Switzerland. Like the great majority of the impostors, he had a certain amount of notoriety in the word on account of their healing pretensions, he was a scheming impostor. A commission was appointed by the Empress Maria Theresa to investigate a cure alleged to have been wrought by him on a blind girl in Vienna. A large assemblage of 800 persons, comprising medical men, met for the purpose of testing the reality of the girl's vision. She was found able to distinguish bright colours, but when it was observed that Mesmer made signs to her, and he was ordered to withdraw—which he was very unwilling to do, however—she could no longer distinguish colours at all. Mesmer thereafter ceased to practice, and the city was 24 hours. What a pity such a law was not in force in Dunedin! In Paris, to which he afterwards removed, M. Campan being seized with pulmonary affection, Mesmer was called in. To ensure a speedy and perfect cure, Mesmer ordered one of three things to be done: that a young woman of brown complexion, a black man, or an empty bottle should be placed at the left side of M. Campan. "Sir," said Madame Campan, "if the choice be a matter of indifference, pray bring the empty bottle." The treatment did no good, and taking advantage of the absence of Madame Campan he had recourse to the old system of bleeding and blistering, and M. Campan recovered. The conditions were accordingly relaxed—i.e., the »y the lady's brother. He himself became indifferent, and now spirit-healing. He was a native of Switzerland. Like the great majority of the impostors, he had a certain amount of notoriety in the word on account of their healing pretensions, he was a scheming impostor. A commission was appointed by the Empress Maria Theresa to investigate a cure alleged to have been wrought by him on a blind girl in Vienna. A large assemblage of 800 persons, comprising medical men, met for the purpose of testing the reality of the girl's vision. She was found able to distinguish bright colours, but when it was observed that Mesmer made signs to her, and he was ordered to withdraw—which he was very unwilling to do, however—she could no longer distinguish colours at all. Mesmer thereafter ceased to practice, and the city was 24 hours. What a pity such a law was not in force in Dunedin! In Paris, to which he afterwards removed, M. Campan being seized with pulmonary affection, Mesmer was called in. To ensure a speedy and perfect cure, Mesmer ordered one of three things to be done: that a young woman of brown complexion, a black man, or an empty bottle should be placed at the left side of M. Campan. "Sir," said Madame Campan, "if the choice be a matter of indifference, pray bring the empty bottle." The treatment did no good, and taking advantage of the absence of Madame Campan he had recourse to the old system of bleeding and blistering, and M. Campan recovered. The conditions were accordingly relaxed—i.e., the...
lenders, when fairly tested, have been found to be mere impostors. Those who set up similar claims, but refuse to submit to any fair test, need not be surprised when the public refers them to the same category. Cures, I am prepared to admit, may sometimes be performed by such pretenders. They are well suited to impress powerfully the imaginations of hysterical or hypochondriacal patients, whose disease is mainly due to their own fancy. Not merely are diseases of the joints simulated by hysteria—according to Sir B. Brodie, four-fifths of the alleged diseases of the joints among the higher class in London being of this description—but diseases of almost every kind are simulated by it, and are usually cured suddenly. Nor is this nervous condition restricted to females exclusively; some examples of similar affections occur among men. All such cases offer a rich harvest for spiritualistic healers. Further, as people do not always remain ill, but sometimes get better even without any help, and may when in their recovering state apply to some magnetic or spiritualistic healer, the cure, I am prepared to allow, may, notwithstanding the healer’s trance, go on to completion. In this way, too, he may draw forth certificates of gratitude, and expressions of wonderment at his marvellous power. There is a natural tendency of the system to throw off disease and return to health, aided, in some cases materially, by a strong belief and expectation of cure; and if persons recovering from disease have consulted a spiritual healer they will naturally ascribe the cure to his power. The record of one of the last trials for witchcraft in Scotland presents a sufficient explanation of the belief which some may entertain in the healing virtues of Spiritism. The same belief was cherished with equal reason in the efficacy of charms which were worn on the body. A poor woman was charged with witchcraft, in as much as she lent out to her neighbours for a small consideration a charm said to be efficacious in curing sore eyes. The prisoner admitted the charge, but justified her conduct, as she had received benefit from it in her own child, and it would be equally good for her neighbour’s. She was about to be condemned, when the judge explained to the jury that he knew more about this case than had been put before them. When a young man he had stopped a night at this woman’s alehouse, and seeing her troubled about her child’s eyes, offered her a charm to cure the child instead of paying his bill. From the evidence presented it had been efficacious; but to prove that the woman had acted in perfect sincerity, and that the charm had been originated by himself, he said that if the ball of worsted which constituted the charm was unwound, a piece of parchment with certain words on it would be found. This was accordingly done, the parchment found as he stated, and on it written these words—

The Devil scratch out both thine eyes,
And spit into the holes likewise.

Equally efficacious I am prepared to admit, and not one whit more so, maybe the healing power of the ghosts. It has been said by Owen and some others that Spiritism may be a good cure for insanity, and I would not wonder if, on homoeopathic principles, that statement would prove correct. It would then, however, be a serious question whether the cure were not worse than the disease. Looking at this system of delusion and imposture as a whole, its intellectual imbecilities, its moral results, and its religious negations (which form its real attraction for the sinful and blinded heart of humanity), I say, far rather welcome the bold and defiant front of Owen infidelity, the dreamy speculations and heartless sentiment of Pantheism, or the coarse and confidant dogmas of scientific materialism. These possess at least the merit of honesty; and however repulsive and unsatisfactory they may be to the human heart, that cries, from the depth of its sin and sorrow, Who will show us any good? they do not delude their votaries with the mockery of professed adherence to the Bible. But this heterogeneous compound of silly superstition and crafty imposture, called Spiritualism, is an insult to the human understanding, a degradation to the moral nature, and a destructive snare to the soul.