

APPARITIONS;

In Essay,

EXPLANATORY OF OLD FACTS AND A NEW THEORY.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

SKETCHES AND ADVENTURES.

BY

NEWTON CROSLAND.

"It is hard to deem that spirits cease, that thought
And feeling, flesh-like, perish in the dust.
Shall we know those again in a future state
Whom we have known and loved on earth? Say yes!"

Festus,—P. J. BAILEY.

LONDON:

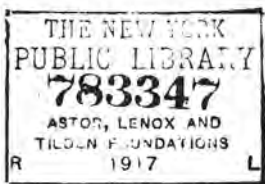
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TO
MY BRAVE FRIEND
WILLIAM HOWITT,
THE
GREAT PREACHER OF THE MODERN SPIRITUAL
CRUSADE AGAINST MATERIALISM AND INFIDELITY,
THE
PETER THE HERMIT
OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY,
I DEDICATE
THIS LITTLE BOOK.

Ἀπολογία.

I have been told, and I am aware, that there is in this book some rather hard-hitting; but I wish it to be understood that I have struck with the gloves on, and with a button on the point of my foil. If I have "punished" my adversaries, I have endeavoured to fight fairly, with the spirit of a pugilist or fencer, and not with the feelings of an enemy. I have not a single personal antipathy to gratify, and I would not intentionally inflict a serious wound on any opponent. My nature is controversial; and, perhaps, I entertain a real regard for those whom I treat with the most apparent argumentative severity. But truth must be vindicated at any cost.

N. C.

BLACKHEATH,

15th February, 1873.

APPARITIONS.

PART I.

ARGUMENTS.

"There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body."

"For to one is given by the Spirit . . . the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits."

S. PAUL.

"O Julius Cæsar, thou art mighty yet!
Thy Spirit walks abroad."

SHAKSPEARE.

WHEN Madame De Staël was asked what she thought of ghosts, she replied that "she did not believe in them, but she was afraid of them." It would have been a proper retort to say, that "if her knowledge of them had been greater her fear would have been less." In fact, there is nothing more cowardly than ignorance. In all ages supernatural stories have exercised a startling power over mankind, and appeals to angels and spirits unseen and unknown, have controlled the conduct of human multitudes, when more practical and obvious influences have been ineffectual.

The questions which I now intend to discuss are these. Are spiritual manifestations real or imaginary? Are they good or evil, dangerous or harmless, beneficial or useless, frivolous or important? In fact, I wish to expound, in an elementary manner, the moral and philosophy of Spiritualism. Every one knows that during the last twenty years the subject of spiritual manifestations has been brought very prominently before the public mind, either as a matter of ridicule or of serious examination.

When, in the summer of 1854, my attention was first directed to the phenomena of Spirit-manifestations, and before I knew anything about them beyond what I learnt from mere rumour, I considered that they must necessarily be "the most impious buffoonery ever palmed upon the credulity of a nation." Further investigation, of a laborious and minute character, not only satisfied me that this hasty and insulting opinion must be retracted syllable by syllable, but I became convinced that "the manifestations" are among the most valuable and important indications of the principles of God's dealing with mankind.

I am quite aware that whatever I may think on one side or the other of any question, can have very little influence with the public; but this consciousness of my own insignificance shall not

deter me from saying exactly what I know to be the truth on a subject that has engaged much of my leisure during several years.

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

The fact that the spirits of the departed do return and communicate with living persons, I deem to be so thoroughly established by a host of witnesses in all ages, that I scarcely think it necessary to treat doubts on the subject with any great degree of respect; it is, however, an interesting topic of inquiry to ascertain what purpose is served by these Spirit-visitations. The argument of this Essay is intended to maintain that they clearly demonstrate the individual immortality of the soul; the certainty of a future state corresponding to our deserts and conduct in this life; God's government of the world through the instrumentality of good and evil spirits; His individualising and incarnating Himself in the person of a Saviour, through whom our prayers are to be addressed; and the infallible efficacy of prayer in

calling down assistance from heaven to protect us from evil and guide us aright.

But we are taught all these certainties in the Bible! Exactly so. That divine book contains all that need be known respecting Spirit-manifestations. It is in fact the literature of the whole subject; and no modern refinements or philosophies can add much of original value to its lucid and wonderful teachings. In the 12th chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul tells us expressly, with what spiritual gifts God has endowed his church and his people; and scripture is as applicable to modern times as to the age in which it was first written. It has been frequently asserted, that when Christ had established his worship, he withdrew from the world his displays of miraculous power; but there is no warrant to be found in scripture for this opinion; and if the maintenance of his divine religion requires his miraculous intervention, there never was a time when this intervention was more needed than at the present day, when pagan reasoning and scoffing infidelity are secretly taking possession of the minds of many of our leading philosophers and scientific guides. There never has been an age in which these miraculous gifts have not been manifested, but philosophers and sceptics have called the miracles tricks or

delusions. Whenever your rationalist meets with a circumstance which he cannot explain, he immediately, and coolly, denounces it as imaginary. The argument of the infidel is, that the testimony of the Bible to its own authority is worthless evidence; and this objection cannot be conclusively answered except by some decided modern miraculous interposition. The miracles of Spiritualism, acted out in our presence, furnish us exactly with the demonstration we require, to overwhelm the reasoning of the unbeliever, and to baffle his stern logic with a triumphant success, that no polemics ever yet achieved.

One curious fact elicited through the instrumentality of Spirit-manifestations is this; that when the soul goes to the other world, it apparently receives a "Spirit-name," descriptive of its most prominent quality, and by this name it is generally known in its communications with the living.

Here is a list of the names of the spirits with which we have communicated—forty-two in number. Observe what an array of beautiful words—they are among the choicest in our language!

Adoration.

Devotion.

Benevolence.

Elevation.

Charity.

Enlightenment.

Clemency.

Faith.

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

Some of these beings represented themselves as pure angels who had never been embodied, many of the others professed to be the spirits of friends or relatives with whom we were intimate in this life. All these spirits testified to the truth of that kind of teaching which we are accustomed to associate with Christianity, respecting which, I must confess, I was previously too often inclined to be indifferent and sceptical.

At the commencement of our *séances*, before we became experienced, we were sorely perplexed by the contradictory character of the messages, apparently given by the same spirits ; and so hope-

less did it appear to us to extract anything like order out of such a chaos, that we had almost determined to give up the whole affair as an atrocious mass of unintelligible absurdity ; when a friend suggested the advantage of resorting to the old system of exorcism, and making the *séance* a religious service. We successfully adopted this advice. By prayer to "God, the Saviour of Man"—to use the exact title given by the spirits to the object of our adoration—and by accosting them in his name, we contrived with tolerable accuracy to distinguish the evil messengers from the good ones, and to see our way more clearly to a solution of the mystery. We also discovered, that we are all more or less accompanied by good and evil spirits, and that to enter into parley with us, the evil imitated the names and signals of the good ; but that the evil spirits could not answer "Yes," when we asked them if they came from God. That appeared to be a lie which they were not permitted to utter, provided the Medium-exorcist took good care that he himself was animated by the requisite earnestness and purity of purpose, and that he did not carelessly use the Great Name of the Almighty. Putting this solemn question was, therefore, not the only precaution that we found it necessary to adopt. It was essential to watch the tone of the message

that was being given to us ; for if after elevating our thoughts to the required devotional altitude, we allowed them to drop to a low self-interested standard of mundane occupations, or vulgar curiosity, that moment an "undeveloped spirit" would creep in, seize the message almost in the middle of a word and finish it with a Satanic colouring, or render it ridiculous. To clearly distinguish good from evil spirits, requires a polished acuteness of perception and a depth of right feeling to which poor humanity is almost a stranger. In fact this part of the subject is a grand mysterious problem, of which, I am convinced, Bible-Christianity is the only solution. I do not expect to make many intellectual converts to this opinion, as it is too old-fashioned to be acceptable to those who are constantly seeking after what is novel and profound.

Flippant critics, and philosophic buffoons, who bring their shallow experience and pugnacious dispositions to scrutinizing and testing these phenomena, may be assured beforehand, that they will gain no advantage whatever from the investigation, beyond additional food for their "exposures," jokes, and impertinence. Those self-reliant rationalists who, without the proper divine key, attempt burglariously to pick the lock of the Spirit-world, will only succeed in fouling

the wards, and thereby raising a new obstruction to legitimate admission.

A very large class of pseudo-philosophers, who are guided by no evidence but that of their senses and "positive" experience, have formed respecting the nature of Man and its relation to the Creator, a very simple and infidel theory, which may be thus briefly stated: that Man is a compound being formed of matter and spirit originally created by the Deity; that death is the dissolution of this union, causing the material part of the human being to resolve into dust, and his spirit or immaterial essence to be absorbed in God, as a drop of water is lost in the ocean: that in fact there is no separate, independent, individual immortality of the soul; and that all statements and revelations to the contrary are simply "a pack of old women's stories." A man who has encased himself in this dense creed is beyond the reach of argument: if the whole Bench of Bishops were to reason with him till they were exhausted, they could make no impression upon him: he simply ignores their facts, and scoffs at their inferences. How are we to convince such a rationalist of his shallow error? We can only reach his reason through the evidence of his senses, and the physical manifestations of spirits, or miracles, are the only weapons with which we

can charge and overwhelm his materialistic convictions. Any one determined to investigate this subject carefully and intelligently, cannot fail gradually to elevate his experience through the following stages, beginning with the lowest:—

1. He will observe that inanimate objects, such as chairs and tables, are moved by some “power” over and above that of any human being present; although it is essential to the manifestation that some one called “a medium” be near at hand.

2. He will then discover that this power is an intelligent, independent something.

3. That this intelligent something is either a good or evil spirit.

4. That good or evil spirits have an affinity for us—are “polarised” to us—according to the good or evil state of our own disposition and nature.

5. That Religion is the only means by which our dispositions may be so purified, that evil spirits may be avoided, and only good spirits associated with us to influence our thoughts and conduct.

Thus does the unbelieving investigator commence his examination of the phenomena of Spiritualism by simply seeing a table moved, and he ends by discovering the necessity of being religious! Yet we are told that these phenomena are “useless”! I am astonished that the clergy

as a body have not supported Spiritualism as an ally of Christianity; and yet one hears these reverend gentlemen constantly using against the modern miracles, the very same arguments as the neologist urges against those ancient miracles, which are the evidences of the divine origin of our Religion! Such self-stultification and refusal of help, indicate an incredible amount of prejudice, apathy and blindness on the part of our ecclesiastical guides!

But good, simple, earnest people who lead wholesome and honest lives, and thoroughly believe in and realise a future state of the soul after the death of the body, and who are not officially teachers of others and defenders of the faith, do not need such demonstrations as are intended to convert the sceptic. To virtuous and religious persons who have no special mission on the subject, I would say, "Do not trouble yourselves about these spirit-manifestations; they will teach you nothing but what you already know by the perception of faith: they are merely the scaffold-poles by which the unsettled homeless mind can build itself a mansion of religion and philosophy to dwell in; and when this habitation is erected, the aids by which the work has been accomplished, may be handed over to the next mental architect who requires them. No builder

leaves his scaffolding, as an unsightly encumbrance, round a house after it is once finished. Cast down the ladders and the temporary props and carry them away, when they have served their purpose ! ”

At the threshold of our argument we must clearly distinguish between mere manifestations, and the purpose to which they may be devoted. The phenomena may be of the most trivial character, and yet their meaning may be most precious. The facts may be insignificant, but true philosophy may convert them into a lever for accomplishing the grandest results. The apparent outer cause may be small, but the inner consequence may be transcendent.

I would not now go across the road to witness the most extraordinary phenomena exhibited by the most wonderful medium. They would add nothing to my benefit. The real advantage to be derived from the teaching of Spiritualism is, so to cultivate our natures, that our thoughts and conduct may be always unconsciously influenced by a high and celestial order of Spirits.

The *modus operandi* of sitting for manifestations may be thus briefly described. Any number of persons sit round a table with their hands resting quietly upon it. It is not necessary that the hands should be so placed, but it is a favour-

able condition, and it is as well that each person should account for the occupation of his hands. As a rule the manifestations are more powerful and rapid in darkness or a dim light than in a high light. The mental attitude of each member of the circle should be calm and watchful, and before the manifestations commence, the conversation should be cheerful and pleasant—not disputations, antagonistic, or even too animated. Mere credulity or incredulity has nothing to do in influencing the result. A sitter is not required to take leave of his common sense. If a “developed medium” is present under these conditions, manifestations will soon appear, and these will be more conspicuous and satisfactory in circles that regularly and habitually meet. A medium becomes developed by practice and training. I know a gentleman and his wife who sat for manifestations at a little round table, for about an hour a day for three months, without eliciting the slightest sign of success; but at last the lady became a developed medium, and then manifestations of an important character were produced.

It is, of course, uncertain what shape the phenomena will take; the table may be tilted or rapped, or the medium may be entranced. Sometimes, if the circle is newly formed, and not homogenous in its nature; or if the medium is

exhausted by want of food and rest, no manifestations whatever will appear, or they will be so weak as to be worthless. At other times the phenomena are feeble, because the persons forming the circle are not rightly placed. When communication is established with the spirits, it is always advisable to ask them to indicate by raps or tilts in what order the sitters are to be placed, and their names should be called over accordingly, thus: "Ought B to sit next to A?" and so on. A code of signals has been established which saves a great deal of time. Three raps or tilts, are agreed to mean "yes;" five indicate that the alphabet must be repeated; two are expressive of doubt or uncertainty, and one rap, or tilt, means "no." Sometimes A, B, or C are altogether excluded from the circle by command of the spirits. When at last a circle is successfully formed, and communication with the spirits is clearly established, order and discipline must be observed, and only one person at a time may be permitted to receive a message, otherwise confusion will prevail, and the whole affair will be ridiculous. All impatience on the part of those who are not receiving a communication must be rigidly restrained. Some one who happens to preside at a *séance* must therefore be the spokesman. He will ask the spirits to indicate, by tilts

or raps, the person present with whom they wish to communicate, and then the president will call over the names of those forming the circle. When three tilts or raps are given in response to any name, no interruption must be allowed, until the spirit has finished the message to the person so selected, and the spirit may also be asked to choose the one who is to repeat the alphabet.

People at a *séance* must conduct themselves in a polite and well-bred manner; their behaviour and disposition will determine the character of the manifestations. Those who indulge in rampant ridicule and folly, will reap nothing but corresponding results.

It is advisable at the commencement of a *séance* for every one present to repeat the Lord's Prayer mentally, or to utter it audibly in response. I know no better mode of approaching the investigation in a reverent and dutiful frame of mind, and it will tend to keep evil spirits at bay.

It will be perceived by any one studying these instructions, that the subject is more of a religious than a scientific character, unless we use the term science in the very highest sense. Properly speaking, science deals more with properties which can be always made subservient to the mind of man, and not with those conditions

which concern the government of his soul, its attitude towards celestial revelations, metaphysical good and evil, and the wonders of that intermediate state between man and the angels. The spectacle of a scientific materialist attempting to investigate angelic ministrations, brings us almost into the scoffing region of burlesque.

We have long since given up "sitting for manifestations," for the following reasons, anyone of which is sufficient:—

1.—Because so many strangers and friends wished to sit with us that we found it impossible to accommodate them. The Spirits appear to work their marvels by using the vital magnetic fluid of the medium, who necessarily becomes exhausted. However pleasant and curious the Spirit-revelations may be to those persons who are merely observers and investigators, the mediums soon suffer in their health, especially if they are surrounded by other active duties of life demanding their care and attention. Mediumship is a gift, and it may be cultivated, or neglected, or suppressed, like any other faculty.

2.—Because the same spirits came to us so repeatedly, and gave us the same messages word for word, that at last we considered the occupation uninteresting and a waste of time and energy, when we had satisfied ourselves of the genuine-

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

3.—Because sitting for manifestations is dangerous if too frequently practised. The undeveloped and earth-bound spirits throng about the mediums, struggle to enter into parley with them, apparently with the purpose of getting possession of their natures, or exchanging natures; and I have heard of sittings terminating from this cause in cases of paralysis or demoniacal possession. If you leave your doors open, an enemy may enter sometimes as well as a friend; or, to glean another lesson from the old story of Dr. Franklin and his kite; if the philosopher had gone out whenever there was a thunderstorm, to show over and over again, his expertness in drawing electricity from the clouds, and if in this idle occupation his career had been suddenly arrested by a chill or a thunderbolt, his fate would have extorted scant pity from our remorseless common-sense.

I therefore recommend the world to believe in the verity of these manifestations, but not to seek them, unless conviction cannot be secured by any other evidence but that of personal experience

and examination. If, however, we will investigate for ourselves, and not trust competent witnesses, our labours must always be re-commenced. Christ came to overthrow the dominion of the devil, and yet we seem disposed to insist upon fighting this evil personality over again, when we might simply, by faith in our Redeemer and dependence upon His might, avoid the terrible and Satanic combat. The Spirit-manifestations have satisfied me that the Bible tells us all we need know of the world to come, and how to reach its blessed regions in safety. Some years ago, I should have considered this opinion and advice so much deplorable "cant," but what I then deemed cant, I now regard as the language which will best express the ideas Religion is charged to convey. Those observers who maintain that these Spirit-manifestations are of diabolic origin, are so far in the right, that one half of the revelations, at least, cannot be attributed to any other source. The devil has certainly firm possession of an active moiety of our thoughts and actions; and he would be a poor plotter, indeed, if he did not contrive to take advantage of so splendid an opportunity for creating confusion and leading us astray.

But the ministry of evil is just as precious as the ministry of good; because the combination of

both ministrations tends to prove most satisfactorily, that the amount or kind of good or evil which surrounds us is attracted by a corresponding tendency in our own souls; and this tendency or inclination may be encouraged or suppressed, in accordance with our will, and our choice of thought and behaviour.

One caution it is very necessary to observe. Whenever at a *séance* a spirit comes and gives us a minute description of its social occupations and amusements in the other world, or represents itself to be Plato or Socrates, Bacon or Locke, we may be generally quite sure that the spirit is an undeveloped or evil one, and that it resorts to this trick to interest us in soul-trifling, and to decoy us away from the great practical duties of life. The American spiritualistic newspapers teem with communications, purporting to be the biographies of departed souls, and the mundane speculations of dead philosophers. I do not for a moment doubt the fact of such descriptions and expositions having been received, for we have been favoured with similar subtle and fascinating extravagancies; but we invariably found that they proceeded from the undeveloped spirits, whose designs, if encouraged, will certainly lead to the most dangerous consequences. Indeed, so liable is this practice to be abused, that no one

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

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

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

The ancient and modern learning, which could be resuscitated to illustrate the subject of Spirit-manifestations, by anyone competent to the task, is extensive—very curious, interesting, and instructive. I believe this task has never been better done than in Wm. Howitt's "History of the Supernatural," a work which deserves to be a text-book on the subject.

A wide field of investigation is here open for able, enlightened, and unprejudiced scholars to cultivate. We have been too long treated to conventional doses of edification concerning "popular delusions," "barbarous rites," "pagan superstitions," "idolatrous priestcraft," "heated imaginings," and every other form of speech to express

philosophic contemptuousness, in answer to our demand for an explanation of those phenomena, which in all ages have alike ruled powers, principalities, and peoples.

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

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

—Google

declare unto them. The similarity of the ancient and modern oracles is further shown by both being represented as sometimes true, sometimes false, and sometimes ambiguous—in accordance, doubtless, with the character of the spirits that presided over the manifestations. The wits and scoffers among the old Greeks and Romans amused their acquaintances, and each other, with cutting or playful attacks on “the humbug of the oracles and diviners” in a fashion that is now drearily and ambitiously imitated by the satirical Joe Millers, who take upon themselves the critical duty of directing the tastes, prompting the sentiments, or petting the prejudices of the public mind.

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

It is quite possible that, during the decline and fall of the Grecian and Roman states, their priests and rulers—having lost the gift or privilege of communicating with spirits—may have resorted to oracular artifices, to support their tottering dominion over the souls and bodies of the people.

It has been asserted that "speaking statues" were constructed, with suitable acoustic apparatus, for the use of some cunning performer placed in a secret recess. We grant that nothing is more likely; but we may be quite sure that this kind of fraud would be very soon suspected, and treated with the contempt it deserved. All falsehoods determine and deepen the mischief they are short-sightedly meant to avert.

Table-turning is perhaps the lowest form of spiritual intervention. To the investigation of this phenomenon, Professor Faraday devoted his rare and magnificent powers of scientific research. He only succeeded in wasting his time, for I am told he never witnessed any of the veritable, indisputable phenomena; and he rendered himself the laughing-stock of every spiritual circle in England and America. When, through a friend, I invited Faraday to come to my house to witness manifestations, he wrote to say that he had not time to investigate such a subject; but my friend brought Dr. Tyndall instead. The result was, however, very weak and unsatisfactory, as it generally is on a first occasion; but such as it was, Dr. Tyndall afterwards wrote in the *Pall Mall Gazette* an inaccurate account of his visit. I sent a refutation of his statements, but of course no notice was taken of my communication.

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

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

The treatment which Spiritualism has received in these days from men of science is very natural, and what might have been anticipated. We can scarcely expect that those people who have gained distinction by a careful study of Nature, should have patience to investigate a class of phenomena calculated, if established, to extinguish much of the pseudo-philosophy by which these men have gained their renown. Some of my scientific friends pretend to have mastered in a few hours,

what has taken me as many years to examine and understand.

The *Times* newspaper, of the 26th December, 1872, published an exposition of Spiritualism, but the commissioner appointed to examine the phenomena, did not devote sufficient time to the task to enable him to arrive at any authoritative conclusion. He gives an account of his attendance at four *séances*, each of about two hours' duration; so that his practical experience of the Spiritual-manifestations was limited to a period of eight or ten hours altogether. Could any scientific investigation be more flippantly indeterminate! He certainly witnessed some remarkable phenomena, of which he does not pretend to offer any explanation. He tried to detect imposture, but failed to discover a trace of it; nevertheless, in the teeth of his own evidence to the contrary, he charitably winds up his report by saying that he is forced "to suspect imposture and legerdemain" as the causes of the peculiar phenomena he observed. Why is he *forced*? Generous and consistent inference, certainly! He, however, candidly admits that he is "puzzled"—a state which is generally the first stage in the progress to enlightenment.

The tone of the whole article must satisfy any impartial reader that the author of it has not offered any solution of the mystery which can be

accepted by intelligent minds. The fact is that the truth about Spiritualism is not yet popular and fashionable: when it has attained this measure of success and distinction, the *Times* will become its most nimble convert and trenchant advocate. We must not expect too much from poor human editorial nature!

It must be frankly admitted that "Spiritualism" has its ridiculous and objectionable side, but the same accusation may be brought against almost every mundane institution. The absurdity of many of the manifestations is the necessary consequence and product of the absurd and unhallowed state of mind of those who attend or officiate at the *séances*.

Any one who conducts the investigation of the subject with a fair and reverential disposition, will in time have no reason to be disappointed with the quality of the results, which will reward his inquiry and labours. But a system which can succeed in demonstrating the immortality of the soul, and which enables us to interpret some of the most curious psychological riddles of the past, has surely its sublime side.

In the eyes of an editor of a leading journal of the present day, of what value is the doctrine of the immortality of the soul compared with the transcendent importance of whether a vessel of

war should have a turret or a broadside battery? Two or three hundred years ago a belief in spiritual things was currently received; but Royal Societies, the newspaper press, and the reaction against the superstitions of Popery, have succeeded in demolishing some of our most sacred ideas, and in reducing our minds to a dead level of materialism and rationalistic, utilitarian philosophy.

Among those eminent *savans* who have favoured me with a visit to witness Spiritual-manifestations in my house, Dr. Carpenter came once, and in the *Quarterly Review* for October, 1871, he has given an account of this visit, which I am sorry to say is inaccurate in almost every particular, either as affecting matters of fact or matters of inference.

Why are these experts so inexact when they deal with the spiritual phenomena? I am afraid we must attribute their erring complacency to a species of mental arrogance, the result of a long career of scientific triumph.

Dr. Carpenter does not even quote correctly what I told him. The manifestations were feeble and unsatisfactory, as they generally are on the first occasion of forming a strange circle; and he makes me attribute the failure to his "atmosphere of incredulity." I beg leave to observe that mere credulity or incredulity has very little to do with

the production of the phenomena, and I wish also to inform him that I did not talk what every experienced Spiritualist would call "nonsense." What I did say was, that "he *absorbed* the magnetic atmosphere of the medium, and thus frustrated the development of the manifestations." "Magnetic atmosphere!" What is that? The clairvoyant or seeing mediums tell us, that when a circle is formed, they see emanating from themselves and others who are present, a luminous vapour, which is laid as a bright ring round the table; and that it is through this vapour or atmosphere that the spirits are enabled to act upon material objects. If this "bright ring"—visible only to the mediums—is broken or absorbed in any part of its circuit by any unfavourable condition, the intended manifestation is suppressed or extinguished.

The whole article in the *Quarterly* shows a most sublime contempt for novel facts, and a slavish worship of a 'poor, weak theory called "unconscious cerebration." When I tell the author of the article that I have seen tables raised in the air, and received messages through tilts and rappings, in defiance of the ordinary and known laws of Nature; he replies by asking me if I have never, while earnestly engaged in conversation, walked to a certain place and

arrived there unconsciously? Of course I have experienced this common-place phenomenon of "unconscious cerebration," but as an analogy to the Spiritual-manifestations it is ludicrously *mal-apropos*. If we could imagine the case of a man who walked on his head and talked with his feet, it would be more relevant to the question under discussion. But the *Quarterly* contents itself with jauntily explaining away minor phenomena, while overwhelming manifestations are coolly denounced as fraudulent or imaginary, and the witnesses are stigmatised as duped or crazy. If this style of argument is a specimen of "scientific method," what, I should like to ask, is "scientific absurdity?"

In October, 1871, the *Quarterly* denounces a number of persons for believing and accepting certain miraculous incidents which these persons witnessed deliberately and carefully with their own eyes. In April, 1872, this same *Quarterly* unmercifully castigates another class of persons for not believing miracles which happened more than eighteen hundred years ago, and which were certainly not recorded in any known work till four hundred years afterwards. This is a specimen of modern criticism when it is dealing with creeds which are fashionable, and creeds which have not yet attained to that dignity.

And here I may correct a common error, which is very prevalent in the public mind, respecting what have been called modern miracles.

Darkness and the exclusion of sceptics are not necessary conditions to the production of the Spiritual phenomena. Active hostility on the part of any one present at a *séance*, sometimes checks the development of the manifestations, and their promptness, power, and abundance are generally favoured by darkness or dim light; but some of the most remarkable phenomena on record have been witnessed in broad daylight or in a well-lighted room. I believe that these singular manifestations are produced by the agency of spirits acting upon or using the magnetism of the medium, and as magnetism and light are correlative, the laws which govern their reciprocal influence have yet to be studied, discovered, and mastered. Perhaps whichever of the two forces is predominant and in operation at a given moment, absorbs the other. Thus, locally, magnetism may conquer the light, or the light may swallow up the magnetism.

We do not know why the presence of a hostile observer sometimes disperses the conditions through which the spiritual phenomena are manifested, any more than we know why the similar

poles of two magnets repel each other when they are made to meet, nor why the opposite poles of the magnets attract each other under the same circumstances. And here, perhaps, I may be allowed to digress so far as to express a belief that the old-fashioned, clumsy, mechanical, vulgar Newtonian theory of the Universe being governed by the attraction of gravitation, and the centripetal and centrifugal forces, must, some day, be superseded by the far larger, grander, and more philosophic doctrine of Polarity—its attraction and repulsion.

According to this new theory we shall be required to teach that the world is held together by the attraction and affinity of its north and south poles; that the revolution on its axis is caused by currents of magnetism and electricity crossing each other at right or other angles; and that the revolution of the earth round the sun is produced and maintained by their presenting opposite or similar poles to each other, and thus gradually and alternately attracting and repelling each other. By this theory, there is no chance of two heavenly bodies coming into collision in space, unless they happened to present their opposite poles to each other exactly at the moment of contact, and even then they would probably cling together without doing any

damage, until some rival influence separated them again, and sent each on its natural course. Perhaps their active motion will always prevent that steadiness of approach necessary to secure cohesion.

We know that the circulation of the blood is caused by its polarity; each globule has its opposite poles accompanied by the consequent attraction and repulsion which send the blood bounding through the animal frame.

It is no reflection upon Sir Isaac Newton, one of the greatest men of all time, that he did not invent, one hundred and fifty years ago, a theory for which the elements did not then exist. If this wonderful man lived now he would of course choose, by the light of modern science, a different vocabulary. "Gravitation" is merely a word used to interpret a certain class of phenomena, which can now be explained by the aid of a more subtle and refined nomenclature.

But let us now return to the current of our exposition of Spirit-manifestations. The Clairvoyants or Seeing Mediums declare that they actually discern the spirits—appearing something like our ideal of fairies—engaged in the duty of co-operating with or opposing human beings. On one occasion, a friend of ours was passing along a street in London, when, on the

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

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

Few persons will be disposed to doubt that human beings are indebted for their strength, activity, ability of locomotion, to the spirits which

animate their bodies. Why, then, should it be so difficult to believe that, after death, the spirits out of the bodies still preserve the power and the will which our physical organisation merely obeys? I think it easy to imagine that this power is more constrained and limited in its operations while it is resident in mortality during life, than after it is liberated by death from its material habitation; a spirit out of the body having more power for working good or evil, in influencing and impressing the minds and feelings of mankind, than a spirit in the body. To release a wicked soul from its earthly bondage may send it forth on an errand of woe and destruction more fatal in character and consequences than any injury it could perpetrate in its mortal tenement. If we wish to know how the death of good persons benefits the world, we must study the Martyrology. There is surely little difficulty in believing that every disembodied soul, by a law of sympathy, seeks out kindred natures to urge them to the performance of kindred deeds.

I have frequently heard the Spirits play most exquisitely on the accordion, when the instrument has been held by Mr. D. D. Home in one hand under the table, the keys downwards; his other hand being on the top of the table in a well-lighted room. A musician, who was sitting next

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

One day after treating the courtiers to a specimen of his great musical powers, he hung his harp on the wall; no human finger was near the instrument, when it was suddenly played with

skill by some unseen power, to the astonishment of all the persons assembled. Modern wiseacreism, of course, prates about secret machinery, as if such clumsy trickery would have long remained a mystery to the knowing investigators of the tenth century, and the very witnesses of the performance. Impounding the harp would have soon revealed the juggle, if any had been perpetrated ; there was the miracle, and it did not admit of a mechanical explanation. Good society behaved then, as good society behaves now, when it meets with supernatural circumstances ; it coolly sought a solution of its difficulties by denouncing St. Dunstan as an ally of the Devil. The Saint was stigmatised as a wizard, and compelled for a time to abandon his sovereign's court. Truth and Nature would not submit to be thus despised and persecuted, and the unfortunate object of the world's slanders and suspicions, subsequently acquired, as we well know, a great reputation for sanctity, and became the intellectual and ecclesiastical ruler of England. Grave historians seem in modern times to ignore or despise spiritual intervention ; they are perpetually disposed to sigh over the " traditions and fables of the past," as so many " delusions." Let these writers be warned that sighing people are very indifferent company. If we cannot have our histories with-

out so much typographical whining, our cheerfulness will be compelled, in self-defence, to abandon them to their sepulchral fate.

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

The Death-Watch! Science never chuckled so heartily over Superstition as when she discovered an insect to which were traced the sounds invested with so ominous a name. Poor, old, blundering, blasée pseudo-Science here, with misplaced confidence and abortive merriment, turned up another choice specimen of her numerous mare's nests. No one presumes to doubt the existence of the insect and the noises it makes, but this creature has nothing whatever to do with that particular kind of gentle ticking or tapping which is sometimes heard as a forerunner of death, and which we are now satisfied is of the same genus as spirit-rapping manifestations. The death-watch of science, and the death-watch of superstition have nothing in common except a faint resemblance in the sound they emit; and as Science refuses to acknowledge any source of sound but that which she can see, feel, or handle, we can easily understand how the old learner would confound two distinct causes and arrive at one materialistic conclusion. The proper occupation of natural Science is to wallow in the mire of results; when it endeavours to soar into the region of primary causes, it is likely to meet the fate of the ambitious Ass who attempted, from a precipice, to imitate the flight of the eagle.

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

I now proceed to give a number of facts; for the accuracy of most of them I can vouch. I believe that they have never appeared before in print, except some of them in the previous editions of this Essay, now rewritten.

PART II.

FACTS.

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

JOHN WESLEY.

"What if her guardian spirit 'twere ?
 What if she knew her mother near ?
 But this she knows, in joys and woes,
 That saints will aid if men will call,
 For the blue sky bends over all !"

Christabel, by S. T. COLERIDGE.

IN one of the midland counties there is a small town, which, not being near any railroad, is, therefore, very naturally, on the high road to decay. Within the precincts of this shabby town are the remains of a ruined mansion. Its iron railing is rusted and dilapidated, its garden overgrown with weeds; its doors are battered down; its windows have long since disappeared; and at night the stars of heaven can be seen through its shattered roof. The only occupants of this humanity-deserted dwelling are bats,

owls, and echoes. Echoes! I never feel so lonely as in their companionship: they give me the idea of loneliness with the addition of a mockery.

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

In the morning, the master of the house did not make his appearance. Search for him was made; the door of his dissecting-room was burst open, and there in one corner he crouched—a

gibbering idiot! He lingered a few days, and then died. The gossips of the town will tell you, that if you choose to keep watch in this ruined house on certain nights, you may see a shrouded figure hanging from the ceiling, attended by the spectral semblance of the young surgeon.

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

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

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

announcing her brother's death; an event which happened at the time the spectre was seen.

Apparitions of living persons have also been witnessed. I will give an instance. A little girl was one day playing under a tree in the garden, when at some distance off she saw apparently her mother advancing towards a gate which was always kept locked, and through which, therefore, the girl always felt an intense desire to pass to the meadow beyond. She immediately ran after her parent; but before the barrier of the garden was reached, the appearance of the mother vanished. The child then entered the house, and found her mother sound asleep on the sofa, from which she had not stirred during the time of this occurrence. The presumed intention of the apparition was, however, soon revealed. While the girl was running after the phantom, the tree, under which she had been playing, fell to the ground, and would probably have killed her, if she had not been decoyed away. May we not infer that there was here a direct spiritual interposition for the purpose of rescuing this child from an impending catastrophe, and reserving her for a brighter destiny? I believe that those circumstances which we call coincidences are always planned by angelic ministers.

The two following instances of apparitions

came under my notice recently. They are brand new from the mint of spiritualism, and have not yet found their way into general circulation:—

I know a dear, interesting little girl. Her mother died in giving her birth. When she was five years old, this child was sent to visit a friend who possessed a portrait of the departed mother. The child at once identified the likeness, and exclaimed, “Oh, that is Mamma! she comes to me in the night; and I know why she walks so softly—because she’s dead!”

On the 30th of January, 1856, at the early age of thirty, died the Rev. Theodore Alois Buckley, formerly one of the chaplains of Christ Church, Oxford. He was a man of extraordinary ability; his life was unfortunate, and his death sad. When he was alive and well at Oxford, about the year 1850, conversing on the subject of ghosts, one day with a mutual friend, Mr. Kenneth R. H. Mackenzie; the two friends entered into a compact, that whoever departed this life first should, if permitted, visit the other as an apparition; and the signal of communication was arranged to be the placing of a ghostly hand on the brow of the survivor. On the night of the 2nd of February, about twelve or half-past twelve o’clock, Mr. Mackenzie was lying in bed watching the candle expiring, preparing his,

mind for sleep, and *not thinking of his departed friend*, when he felt placed over one eye and his forehead a cool, damp hand. On looking up he saw Buckley in his ordinary apparel, and with his portfolio under his arm, as in life, standing at the bed-side. The figure, as soon as it was recognised, retreated to the window; and after remaining plainly in sight for about a minute, disappeared. A few nights afterwards, the spectral Buckley again made his appearance, bearing in his hand the exact image of a letter, which Mr. Mackenzie at once identified as an old one, which he had casually picked up from his letter-box in the course of the day. The letter had been formerly written by Mr. Buckley when alive.

On Croom's Hill, Greenwich, there resides a friend of mine, Mr. H*****d, a gentleman of great respectability, of varied attainments and of considerable mental ability, a student of literature, religion, and science. His position is that of an underwriter at Lloyd's, and in the society of his wife and children, he enjoys a wholesome domestic life. Among those persons engaged in this comfortable household in the year 1866, was a young widow, named Mrs. Potter, whose services were occasionally required for various periods as a needlewoman and general assistant.

She had one son named Tom, a bright, handsome, delightful boy: he could sing and play; he was clever and accomplished; he excelled in any study to which he gave his attention, and though he was wayward and restless, he was the favourite of everyone who knew him. This brave and troublesome boy was provided with a home and educated at the neighbouring Roman Catholic Orphanage, under the direction and mastership of an able and enlightened priest, Dr. T**d. Those who know this kind and estimable ecclesiastic will not require to be reminded of his many excellent qualities. His learning and intelligence, his affability and wide sympathy, his devotion to the cause of education and religion, and his high principles, have endeared him to all those who are honoured with his friendship. His heart is as tender as his mind is acute and sagacious. You might impose upon his good nature but not upon his intellect.

Tom Potter, the restless and impetuous scholar, caused many an anxious thought to his mother and her friends, and at last they raised a general chorus of "What shall we do with Tom Potter?" About the year 1863-4, when he was probably fourteen years of age, he was placed in a first-rate house in Manchester, but his vocation was

evidently not in "dry goods;" he would not settle down to a mercantile life—he determined to go to sea; and at last his friends most reluctantly consented that his whim should be gratified, as they could make nothing of him on shore. He was placed on board a training-ship at Woolwich, and in due time drafted on board one of Her Majesty's ships of war. After a voyage or two, Tom got tired of the navy and rebelled. In company with some other naughty boys he deserted his ship, and after some disastrous adventures, he returned in a piteous plight—worn, famished, and half naked—to his Greenwich home.

The tables were soon turned upon the young and interesting truant; he became very ill, and a warrant was issued for his apprehension. His mother and her patrons immediately raised a despairing cry, and asked, with more emphasis than ever, "What shall we do with Tom Potter?" Dr. T. again intervened with his kind offices and intercession. The captain of the ship consented to receive back again, with only a nominal punishment, the irresistible and pardoned culprit; and at last Tom was fairly shipped off on board the "Doris" frigate bound to the West Indies.

Tom's mother having thus provided for her

son, left the H. family altogether; got married again, and became Mrs. Cooper. After a time a new servant, who had never heard of either Mrs. Potter or Mrs. Cooper, arrived, and filled the office of housemaid. This new servant we will call Mary; and so ends the first chapter of my tale.

On the night of the 8th of September, 1866, Mr. H's. street door bell was rung. Mary, the housemaid, answered it; the door was duly opened, and, after a little confabulation, the door was shut again. Mrs. H., who was unwell, was in her bed-room, which commands a view of, and is within ear-shot, of the entrance hall. She listened, and distinctly identified the voice of Tom Potter. She was surprised, and called out, "Mary, who was that at the door?" The servant replied, "Oh, Ma'am, it was a little sailor-boy: he wanted his mother; I told him I knew nothing of his mother, and sent him about his business."

Mrs. H., whose anxiety was roused, asked Mary "what the boy was like?"

"Well, Ma'am, he was a good-looking boy in sailor's clothes, and his feet were naked. I should know him again anywhere. He looked very pale and in great distress; and when I told him his mother was'n't here, he put his hand to

his forehead, and said, 'Oh dear, what shall I do?''

Mrs. H. told her husband what an unwelcome visitor had been to the house, and gave him the unpleasant intelligence that "she was sure Tom Potter had run away from his ship again." The family now laid their heads ominously together and vexatiously exclaimed, "Goodness gracious! What shall we do with Tom Potter?"

They sent to make enquiries of the mother, but she had heard nothing of her son; then they thought he was lost, and they upbraided themselves for "turning him away from their door."

In their trouble they went to consult the genial Dr. T., but his opinion only increased their perplexity and astonishment. He told them, "It is almost impossible Tom Potter can have deserted his ship. I had a letter from the boy himself only about two months ago, and then he was getting on capitally."

It was then arranged that Mary should have an interview with Dr. T., and be examined by him. She was accordingly ushered into Dr. T.'s presence, and invited to take part in the council. Dr. T. had a store of photographs of many of his pupils, and among them was a carte of Tom Potter. He laid a number of these portraits before Mary, and requested her to pick out the

one that resembled the boy she saw ; at the same time with the view of testing her accuracy to the utmost, he called her attention to one which was *not* a photograph of Tom Potter, and quietly remarked, "Do you think that is the boy? he was very likely to run away from his ship." "No," said Mary, positively, "that was not the boy I saw; this is the one;" at the same time pouncing upon the likeness of Tom Potter; "I could swear to him."

The mystery became more mysterious; but the only decision the conclave could wisely make, was to await the issue of events; in the meantime they could do nothing but patiently exercise their faculty of wonder. A solution of the mystery was at hand. In the next month of October, Dr. T. received a letter from the Admiralty, stating that they communicated with him because they did not know the address of Tom Potter's mother. The letter gave the sad intelligence that on the 6th September, just two days before he was seen at the door of Mr. H.'s house, Tom Potter breathed his last, in consequence of a dreadful accident on board the "Doris" frigate at Jamaica. He fell from the mast-head on the 24th July, 1866, and was frightfully injured. He lingered a few weeks and died raving, and calling for his mother.

It was at Mr. H.'s door that the ill-fated boy parted from his mother, and there saw her for the last time in life. This circumstance may account for the spirit of the boy having been mysteriously attracted to the spot where he left his mother, of whose departure he was not aware. Disembodied spirits only know what comes within the compass of their experience and capacity. Their intelligence and information are sometimes very limited. The facts of this story are certain and indisputable. I have taken great pains to verify them.

About the year 1790, there resided at Lyme Regis, in Dorsetshire, an honest and industrious shoemaker named Champ. One day he received a large order for seventy or eighty pairs of dancing shoes to be got ready in a hurry, as a distinguished lady who resided in the neighbourhood, Lady Rolle, had sent out invitations for a grand ball.

On the eve of the festival, Champ discovered that his workmen had left about a dozen pairs of shoes unfinished, so he determined to sit up all night to finish them himself, as he had promised to deliver them the next day. While he was actively at work at the dead of night, a little old lady, in a curious antique dress, entered the shop, and pointed to the ground under where Champ

was sitting—the floor was hard earth, not boards. He paused in his work, stared with astonishment at the intruder, and asked her what she wanted ; but he elicited no answer. The visitor appeared to be dumb and unable to reply except by signs, which clearly denoted that she wished Champ to search for something in the earth beneath him. She then, having made herself understood, departed as noiselessly as she had appeared : no sound accompanied her movements. The honest shoemaker was amazed but not frightened, and when had finished his work, he decided to carry out the mysterious commands of his extraordinary visitor. He got a spade and dug a hole in the floor at the spot to which he had been directed ; when lo ! about a foot or two down, he discovered a large jar containing antique plate and coins, worth between four and five hundred pounds. His joy and surprise may be imagined. He wisely determined to convert the treasure into ready money, and accordingly he conveyed the valuables to Exeter, where he sold them to a Jew for £300 in cash ; and for the balance, Champ unwisely took a promissory note, which document, I am sorry to report, was never honoured. His good luck cheered him, and made him too confiding. The money thus obtained was, however, the foundation of his fortune ; with it

Champ purchased the lease of some houses in Lyme Regis, which remains in the hands of his descendants to this day. The property thus obtained consisted of some tenements, and the business of a general trader attached to them. In consequence of town improvements these houses were demolished, and two others erected near the same spot. The premises are situated at the top of Broad-street—the corner pointing one way to Sidmouth the other to Axminster. The house in which the treasure was found had been previously occupied by persons of the same name; the family left France and settled in England about the time of the revocation of the edict of Nantes. What has become of this house I do not know.

My next story reads like an extract from a superstitious mediæval romance; but I am assured, on the best authority, that the incidents I am about to relate, actually occurred, early in this century, in a family of high position in one of the English counties; but names, dates, and locality are purposely concealed. A female servant in this family fell desperately in love with her young master, an only son, and the heir to the property. Her passion seemed hopeless, as being a good modest girl, she kept it secret. The young gentleman treated her with cool and polite in-

difference, but her love had taken such entire possession of her soul, that she could not subdue it, and it seemed as if it was her fate to sink under the weight of her ungratified desire. One day when she was going up stairs she met a strange gentleman, who accosted her in this style,—“I know the secret which is eating into your life, and I will assist you to realise your fond hope on one condition. I will endeavour to bring about a marriage between you and your young master, provided you sign this paper, stipulating that you will come to me after you have been married to him twenty-one years.” The stranger seemed so respectable and earnest, that the girl at once acceded to his proposal. In fact, to obtain the object of her love she would have signed any agreement, however harsh in its terms. She accordingly went into an adjoining room, and signed the document which the gentleman laid before her. He then took it away, and left her to ruminate over this singular adventure. Soon afterwards, she noticed a decided change in the manner of her young master towards her, and at last he professed the most devoted attachment to her. By-and-bye the engagement of these two young persons became a matter too evident to be unobserved. The family endeavoured to prevent such a mesalliance, but

destiny was against their interference. The young man was determined to have his way; and as the girl was most estimable in her personal qualities, the family deemed it prudent to withdraw their opposition; and accordingly she was sent away to a school to acquire the education necessary to fit her for her future station.

In due time she was married, and she entered upon her new duties most discreetly and happily, and we are assured that neither husband nor wife ever repented their bargain. He was attentive and indulgent—she wise, loving, and gentle. On their twenty-first wedding-day the husband determined to give a grand ball. His wife acquiesced in the plan, but on the eventful night she was observed to be depressed, and she desired to have the assistance of her spiritual adviser; his attendance, however, could not be procured conveniently, and she was obliged to dispense with it. In the course of the evening she left the drawing-room, and as she was absent a long time, her husband went in search of her. He found her on her bed, lifeless, with the fatal paper, which she had signed more than twenty-one years before in her hand!

As the Spirit-phenomena may possibly soon be withdrawn, when they have served their purpose, and the routine of life once more, for a time, find

its ordinary track, it is worth while to chronicle incidents which may seldom recur in our generation. I, therefore, feel it to be my duty to bear witness to the following manifestation, which I experienced at the house of Mr. Rymer, of Ealing—Mr. Home being the principal medium on the occasion. Ten persons—I being one of the party—sat round three sides of a large dining-table, the fourth side, nearest to the window, was left vacant, that all those present might have an opportunity of seeing the expected manifestations by the aid of the dim twilight which entered the window. We commenced our sitting at nine o'clock in the evening, of the 24th July, 1855. A wreath of jasmine and mignonette, made expressly for the purpose in obedience to a previous request of the spirits, was laid at the edge of the unoccupied side of the table. After remaining quiet for about five or ten minutes, we saw rise up between the window and table, and about four or five feet from me, a gracefully formed female hand, with drapery falling from the wrist. The hand was solid and opaque, for wherever it passed across the window it eclipsed our view beyond. I also observed that the hand moved, not like a severed limb, but easily, as if it belonged to, and was supported by, a body. After repeated wavings, as if making signals to

bid us be attentive and calm, the hand deliberately took up the wreath, carried it round outside the circle of visitors, and placed it firmly on the head of a dear friend of mine who was sitting next but one to me. When the wreath was placed on her head, my friend says that she distinctly felt the fingers adjusting and fixing it. I must confess that, when I witnessed this act, I felt some trepidation; my hands became cold, and the roots of my hair seemed inclined to disarrange themselves; but I soon recovered my equanimity, and the ultimate effect of my acquaintance with the spiritual phenomena was to render me extremely composed whenever I was present at such manifestations, and to remove all dread of death, or of the supernatural.

I may here remark, that when the hand holding the wreath passed out of the plane of the window, I lost sight of the proportions of the moving figure in the darkness of the room; it then appeared more like an ash-coloured shadowy form advancing in a curve towards me. On subsequent occasions I had opportunities of touching these hands—they felt like soft human flesh; sometimes they were warm and pleasant, sometimes cold and clammy, according to the medium's state of health; if we clutched them they melted away.

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

Human nature is fond of analogies and illustrations. If we seek in the material world for a resemblance to the spiritual fact I have just related, we shall probably find it in the process of crystalization, in which various forms are spontaneously assumed in obedience to laws of which we are comparatively ignorant. Electro-metallurgy may also furnish us with some analogical types to interest the imagination and convince

the judgment. To the Divine Mind the laws of miracles are, doubtless, as certain as the laws of ordinary nature, although more inscrutable to us. Perhaps the end of all wise knowledge is to lead us to a consciousness of our ignorance, and to persuade us that we may unfailingly depend upon, at least, two divine principles of conduct, —belief and adoration.

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

With regard to the communications received

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

On the 21st of June, 1855, an old relative of mine died at the age of eighty-two. She appointed myself and a friend her executors. Among the creditors of the estate was another still nearer relative, who made a disputed claim for an amount, a great portion of which I and my co-executor knew to be morally, if not legally, due; but as the claim had not been previously enforced, as the Statute of Limitations might have been pleaded against it, as the matter was virtually left to my decision after much rambling discussion, and as I thought I might naturally be suspected of unduly favouring my living relative, I proposed paying, as a compromise, one-quarter of the sum claimed.

On the 26th of August, some members of the family met at my house, and tried to persuade me not to acknowledge the claim in any way. After they were gone, I and my wife sat down as usual to our little table alone, when lo! it tilted *eighty-two times*, the exact number of years my deceased relative lived. On that evening we neither of us entertained the least idea that we should experience this special visitation. Through the alpha-

bet the spirit then spelt out her three names, and gave me this message—

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

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

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

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

Answer, "Yes."

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

Answer, "Yes."

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

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

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

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

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

His answer, dated the 29th of August, was in these words:—"When I was in town, I obtained from Mr. W—— a small bundle of papers relating to Mr. A—— P——'s affairs (about which I was then making inquiry), and on receipt of yours this morning, and reading your intimation of opinion that the guarantee in D——'s case *must be with me, I, by way of being more completely satisfied that*

it was not, referred to the bundle named; and, to my surprise and satisfaction, there, sure enough, I found it. It must have got there by mistake, and continued there till now. On that head, therefore, all's right."

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

Will the philosophers be good enough to favour us with a commentary on these facts, without heaping any insults upon our sanity? I was engaged for more than eighteen months in carefully investigating this subject of Spirit-rapping, before I ventured to give in public an opinion on the subject, and I have been unable to come to any other conclusion than that which I have endeavoured to expound in these pages. I have not been misled by my imagination or my feelings; for I am not bountifully supplied with either. I am not a medium; I never in my life saw a ghost; I never experienced an optical illusion; I never was, and never could be, mesmerised or biologised. In short, I believe there

could not easily be found a more ordinary mortal, or a person more completely on good terms with himself and his senses.

About four or five years ago, a friend of mine, now dead, Mrs. Fenton, formerly of Ealing, took her son for the benefit of his health to a little place near Montpellier, in the south of France. While there she made the acquaintance of an artist and his wife, and they soon struck up a sympathetic intimacy. One day Mrs. Fenton called upon her new friends, and found the wife in great distress—overwhelmed with grief and vexation. The cause was soon revealed, in answer to tender inquiries. The artist had been out for a walk that morning, and he had lost a beautiful sapphire ring—the gift of the Emperor Napoleon. Its associations and intrinsic value made it so precious to the painter and his wife, that they declared they would rather have lost all they possessed than be deprived of such a treasure. Mrs. Fenton was touched by the sorrow she saw so plainly manifested, and she inwardly prayed to God that she might be the means of removing it. She then departed, and the same afternoon, while taking her usual walk in the suburbs of the small town, she was mightily attracted by a bank of wild-flowers. She thought she would like very much to help herself to a posy, so she

left the beaten path, went to the bank, and began to gather a nosegay. The instant she commenced her pleasant occupation, lo! something met her eye! It was the painter's sapphire ring! Not a moment longer did she remain revelling among the flowers. She hurried—she almost flew back to her friends, and the joy she brought to a troubled home may be imagined.

The following curious incident happened to myself. On the 29th October, 1857, I was going from my office to sign an export bond at the Custom House, Lower Thames-street; when just as I was crossing Great Tower-street, I was seized with a sudden and an unaccountable panic. I conceived a dread that I might be attacked by a tiger, and the idea of this horrible fate so haunted me, that I absolutely began running in hot haste, and I did not stop till I found myself safe inside the walls of the Custom House.

Anything more contemptibly absurd than this apparently causeless fear could scarcely be imagined. A merchant in the streets of London in danger of a wild beast! The possibility of such a disaster seemed to me so ridiculous, the moment I thought about it, that I laughed at myself for allowing such a morbid fancy to take possession of my mind, and I really considered that I must be fast becoming stupidly nervous. The feeling

of apprehension, however, soon passed away, and wonder at my own weakness became predominant. The next morning I took up the newspaper, when to my utter astonishment, I read that at the same time when I felt the crazy fear the day before, a tiger had actually escaped from its cage while it was being conveyed from the London Docks, seriously injured two children, and had, to the terror of everyone, ferociously misconducted himself in the public street of Wapping, about a mile, as the crow flies, from where I was passing. Now here is a mystery, and what is the explanation of it? The only satisfactory and intelligible solution I can give, is the theory of guardian angels. I believe that my guardian angel saw the frightful spectacle of a tiger attacking passengers in a London thoroughfare, and immediately came to my succour, by impressing me with a dread of a similar catastrophe to that which the angel had just witnessed. But I fancy I hear a host of sceptics inquiring—why did not the guardian angels of other people treat them with equal care and consideration? I cannot answer this question, except by supposing that very few guardian angels were spectators of the incident; and perhaps, also, still fewer persons are on sufficiently good terms with their guardian angels to receive impressions with

celerity while the occasion exists for the warning to be useful. But in my case the caution was useless. Perhaps so; but the guardian angel, whose intelligence is limited, could not be certain beforehand, that the impression made upon me would prove to be unnecessary. How often do we think of a friend a few minutes before we see him? May not this anticipation be the work of a guardian angel?

On another occasion, some years ago, I dreamed that I saw an old uncle of mine dying. It was a morning dream. I had not seen or heard of this relative for many years previously. I believed that he was alive and well as usual at his house in Reading. The next morning I received a letter from a cousin, giving me the information of my uncle's death, which happened about an hour after the time when I experienced the dream.

For my next four stories I am indebted to a lady, a relative of our present Prime Minister; and although she is a Roman Catholic, and therefore liable, as we Protestants suppose, to indulge superstitious inclinations; she is altogether too gifted and high-principled, to take up lightly with any circumstances which have not a solid basis of truth. She writes:—

No. 1. "The first incident I have to narrate

has relation to an old friend of my father's, Mrs. A. Many years ago she was residing with her daughter, then a young girl of 14 years of age, in a cottage in one of the suburbs of London, near Richmond, if I mistake not. One day an accident happened to a carriage opposite her house; the vehicle was overturned, and the occupant severely injured, so much so in fact, that he could not be taken back to London, but was carried into Mrs. A's cottage: the suffering stranger turned out to be a Russian general, an aide-de-camp of the emperor. Mrs. A. nursed him for six weeks, and at the end of that time, just before he took his departure, he had an interview with Mrs. A., told her that he had fallen passionately in love with her young daughter, who was a most lovely girl; that he knew however Mrs. A. could not but object to her forming any engagement whilst she was so young; that never by word or look had he given the girl any reason to suspect his feelings, and that he wished she should consider herself as quite free; that nothing was to be said to her on the subject by her mother, and that at the end of seven years he should return and request her hand in marriage. He then placed a ring on Mrs. A's finger retaining one on his own. Mrs. A. was provided with his address, but she was only to write to him in

case of her removal from London, or if anything should befall her daughter. The seven years had nearly passed and no sign was made on either side. Mrs. A. had almost forgotten her visitor, and the romance connected with his visit ; when on the very day at the end of the seven years he had fixed, he presented himself, found the young lady disengaged, offered her his hand, and was accepted. His leave of absence being short, the marriage came off almost immediately, and the bride and bridegroom went to Russia. Mrs. A. removed to Liverpool : scarcely a year had elapsed, when she was expecting to hear of her daughter's confinement. It was summer, Mrs. A. and her brother were sitting in the drawing room ; on account of the heat, the door was set wide open, giving a full view of a corridor. Mrs. A. heard her brother utter a sudden exclamation ; he was looking down the corridor ; she followed his glance, and saw, passing down the corridor, her daughter dressed in white, a garland of white roses on her head, and a baby in her arms. ' Did you see her ? ' she asked her brother ; he replied ' yes ' and spoke of the dress she wore which was exactly like what Mrs. A. had seen. I need hardly say that at that very hour, as it was afterwards ascertained, the young bride had died in her confinement, and that her child had died also.

There was some peculiarity about the dress which I cannot remember, but which both Mrs. A. and her brother had noticed, and which it appeared, was what is always usual in Russia, when a lady dies in her first confinement."

No. 2. "Another incident relates to the wife of Dr. Northcott. She had been for a long time ill with cancer; of course her recovery was hopeless, and at last her death was daily expected. Just at that time something happened which made her very desirous to live a little while longer, in order to settle some affairs connected with the occurrence which had taken place. She was living at Torquay: one morning when her death was looked for every moment, she told her husband that she had been praying to God, to permit her to live a few weeks longer, and she was sure her prayer would be granted: she then desired her husband and the Dr. who was with him to go to church and pray for her. They went very unwillingly, as they expected to find her dead, on their return. When they came back, however, to their utter astonishment, she was up and dressed. She told them she would live six weeks, which would be sufficient for the settlement of her affairs. During all that time she seemed quite well, was able to attend to all her duties, and never suffered any pain. But on the

very day six weeks she died, passing away without any suffering." Here I may supplement this story with a ghastly theory, which I believe to be quite within the limits of spiritual possibility. Mrs. Northcott may have died on the Sunday morning, when she sent her husband to church, and her body may have been revived by her guardian angel for a special purpose! The person who was up and dressed, and attended to all Mrs. Northcott's duties, might have been really her corpse temporarily animated by a possessing spirit to carry out the fulfilment of her last prayer!

No. 3. "My third story has to do with a poor servant girl in Lyons,—but it is so purely Catholic, that perhaps you will not care to have it. I may however as well tell it to you. This poor girl, owing to various circumstances, was unable to get a situation. Her money was fast disappearing—at last she had only one franc left. She went into a church to pray, and whilst there, seemed to be inspired with a feeling of ardent charity towards the suffering souls in purgatory: so she went to the priest, and giving him her last coin, asked him to say a mass for the next soul that would come out of purgatory. Then she left him and walked sorrowfully up the street on her way to make another search for employ-

ment. She had not gone far when she met a young gentleman, who stopped her and said 'what is the matter? You look very sorrowful,' she told him that she was without a *sou* in the world, and did not know where to get employment. He replied, go to such a house in such a street—the lady who lives there wants a servant, and will take you. She obeyed his directions. She knocked at the door and told the man-servant who opened it, that she had heard his mistress wanted a maid; he replied that she was mistaken, and told her to go away. Just at that moment, however, the mistress of the house appeared, chanced to see the girl, and asked her to come in. She went upstairs, and then the lady remarked that it was a strange circumstance—that it was only that morning she had been thinking of making some alterations in her household, which would oblige her to take another servant, that she had not mentioned the matter to anyone, and she then asked the girl who had spoken to her about the situation. The girl replied, a young gentleman whom she had met in the street, and then she told the lady all that had passed. The lady was more puzzled than ever, but being pleased with the appearance of the girl decided to take her. As they were going down stairs, the girl observed hanging against the wall, the portrait

of a young man ; and at once exclaimed, 'that is the very young gentleman who spoke to me this morning.' The lady started with astonishment and said, 'that is a portait of my only son who died just a year ago.' "

Here I must tell my friend that I do not object to her story, because it has a Romanist colouring and tendency. I believe that God rewards true devotion, in whatever shape it comes before him. Our prayers, like our letters, although misdirected, may yet reach their proper destination. Whatever a man may do, so that he wrongs neither himself nor anyone else, believing it to be an acceptable service to the Almighty, is really more or less beneficial through the faith which prompts the deed. If a man were to tell me that "it was good for his soul" to drive a flock of geese round Blackheath every morning, I should not doubt that he positively experienced the benefit which he professed to receive, although I should be disposed to consider his mode of worship somewhat eccentric ; but we cannot safely dictate to others any special or infallible plan of winning the divine blessing. With these remarks I shall now pass on to my friend's last story.

No. 4. "I will now mention to you a circumstance which occurred to myself not very long ago. In 1871, my eldest brother's noble girl,

aged about 14, fell into a most mysterious state, resembling a trance. For eight months she hardly ever opened her eyes, ate scarcely any food, spoke very seldom and never smiled, lay all day long on her bed or the sofa, and from a fine, healthy, plump child, was wasted away to a shadow. My brother took her to London, had a consultation of four of the most eminent physicians on her case, but they could not make anything of it; they agreed however in one thing—that she could not recover—that her days were numbered, and that my brother would do well to take her home at once. Her own doctor came to London to be with her during the journey. A little while after she got home—one Sunday morning as her father and mother were sitting by her bedside, every moment expecting to see her breathe her last, she suddenly put her hand to her head and cried out—‘Oh, it has gone! it is lifted off!’ opened her eyes, smiled at her mother, and asked for something to eat. From that moment she never relapsed, and her father described to me her improvement and the progress she made as being something miraculous.

And now for my part in it. As you may imagine, dear little M——y G——e had continually been in my thoughts and prayers. One morning in church I felt a sudden impulse to make the

blessed Virgin an offering on her behalf, and to offer for her the mass and Holy Communion. It was on that very Sunday morning at the very hour that she exclaimed 'the weight had been lifted away.'

Of course, scientific people will say that it was only a curious coincidence, but I cling to the text, that God chooses the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, to be to some a stumbling block, and to the philosophers foolishness."

Some years ago, a gentleman named Lieutenant S—— lost his mother. Before her death she was lame, and she walked with a peculiar hobble which was very noticeable. Soon after the death of his mother, his young brother sickened, and Lieut. S—— went to watch by his bedside. One evening, just as the twilight commenced, the ailing boy said, "Oh brother, I am tired of bed: let me sit in your lap. I feel very ill, and I shall be happier in your arms."

The lieutenant was a kind-hearted fellow: he at once gratified the child, lifted him out of bed, and nursed him in front of the fire. While he was thus occupied, Lieut. S—— distinctly heard his mother's footstep on the stairs—there was the peculiar tread which could not be mistaken. It seemed to ascend the stairs and enter the room. At that moment the eyes of the sick boy turned

with a fixed stare towards the door, and their glance followed something which was apparent to them only. The mother's limp went audibly round and round the room, gradually approaching the group seated by the fire. At last the sound ceased apparently close to Lieut. S——; his brother's head dropped, and then the poor frail body was left lifeless in his arms. It seemed as if the mother's spirit had come to invite the soul of her sick child to accompany her to another and a better world.

Every one has heard of the phantom ship "The Flying Dutchman;" but few persons know the origin of the story which has made the name famous. It may perhaps be worth while to repeat the legend. About 200 years ago, when the Cape of Good Hope was in the hands of the Dutch, a vessel sailed from that place bound to Europe; the ship was caught in one of those dreadful storms which are so frequent off the Cape; and the passengers and crew saw no hope of safety except in immediately returning to port: they went in a body to the Captain, and implored him to put the ship about, and make the best of their way back again before it was too late. The Captain was named Vanderdekken. He was one of those obstinate, daring, blasphemous

skippers, who, because they set at defiance all the courtesies of life, are supposed to be best qualified to do battle with the winds and waves. Vanderdekken received the panic-struck deputation with a volley of oaths, and he told them, "that rather than put back, he would beat about there till the day of judgment." The story goes, that the vessel was lost with all hands, but that in stormy weather, she can still be seen "beating about till the day of judgment."

The next incident on my list was communicated to me by a friend, C. O., who has no purpose to serve, but a regard for truth. I give the story in his own words, merely premising that he conceals his name to avoid any troublesome publicity.

"In the year 1858, I, C. O., was a passenger on board the ship 'Investigator,' of which John Rogers, Esq., was the owner, William Henry Prynn, the captain, and Henry Birch, the first mate. We were bound for Tasmania and Singapore. During the voyage, Captain Prynn related to me the following remarkable occurrence.

'I, W. H. Prynn sailed from London, towards the end of the year 1855, in the ship "Childe Harold," Mr. Birch was my mate.

'I left my excellent father in the full enjoyment of health, he was engaged in a missionary

work amongst the sailors in the neighbourhood of the London Docks.

‘Many weeks after we had sailed from England, I was startled by the apparition of my father, who approached me as I lay in my hammock, and by his countenance, I learned that he was dead. In great terror I sprang from my berth, and rushed upon deck and cried to the mate, I have just learned that my father is dead.

‘Such a hold had this sight upon me, that nothing would induce me to sleep in my cabin for a long time.’

“Captain Prynn further stated that upon arriving in port, ‘a letter awaited him conveying the intelligence of the decease of his father.’ It occurred January, 1856.

“In order to satisfy myself with reference to this matter, I, C. O., sought out Mr. Birch, who had sailed as mate with Captain Prynn during the time of the occurrence. He corroborated the whole statement, and told me that he had used all his powers to persuade Captain Prynn to return to his cabin where the vision had been witnessed, but without effect.

“Not being a believer in apparitions, he recorded the date of the event in his log-book, and was astonished when arriving in port, to learn by letters received, that the death of Captain Prynn’s

father, corresponded with the date of the apparition within three days.

"It is important to add that both Captain Prynn and Mr. Birch were both men of excellent deportment, and thoroughly trustworthy and truthful.

"A further most remarkable fact was also narrated to me.

"On the next voyage which Captain Prynn and Mr. Birch made together, the *latter* had a remarkable vision of a younger brother whom he had left behind at Falmouth. From his appearance in the vision, Mr. Birch concluded that he had met with some sudden death, and in his agony of mind, he awoke, and communicated the fact of the vision to the Captain. The effect produced upon his mind was most distressing, and for a long period he scarcely partook of his food, and went about his work like one who had received the saddest news from home.

"Captain Prynn did all he could to induce him to forget the vision, but without avail. When they finally arrived at port, a letter awaited the mate informing him that his brother had fallen off the quay at Falmouth, and had been drowned."

I could give many more well-authenticated instances of Apparitions, but the families in

which the occurrences happened, are afraid of attracting public attention. I think I have narrated nearly every variety of spiritual visitations, and, therefore, I will now pass on to consider the theory which they support and illustrate.

PART III.

THEORIES.

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

BESSIE RAYNER PARKES BELLOC.

"——— Shade divine!
 Spirit immortal and immaculate, hear!
 Speak! * * *
 What! * * Wouldst have a spirit here,
 And in the day's broad eye?"

"Festus," by P. J. BAILEY.

AN ounce of fact is worth a ton of theory. But to attain a right knowledge of the phenomena of life, we must first be sure of our facts—that we have grasped them with unimpeachable accuracy; and then we may invent theories to elucidate the laws by which groups of phenomena are caused and controlled.

Having satisfied myself so thoroughly of the actual ministration of angels and disembodied spirits in the affairs of mankind, I have ventured to use and apply the fact to the formation of a

new theosophic theory, to account for Apparitions. It must be borne in mind, that no theory is a certainty—it is always open to discussion and correction. I ought properly to term my speculation a hypothesis. The condition of its reception must be its explaining all the spectral phenomena of which it professes to treat. Whether it attains this end or not, I must leave others to decide. Of course, I shall be called “silly or insane;” but I can readily forgive any severity of language towards myself, when I recollect my own former style of thought and expression concerning “Spirit-manifestations,” and those who believed in them.

I now proceed to discuss this branch of my subject.

The great difficulty in explaining the phenomena of Apparitions is to account satisfactorily for the spectral appearance of garments as well as persons. The candid ghost-seer, in relating his experiences, is baffled by the scoffing logician, who exclaims—“I have no objection to believe in the apparition of the soul of your grandmother, but don’t tell me that you really and literally saw the ghost of her night-cap and apron! Your dead uncle, too, whom you saw drowning when you and he were a thousand miles apart; is his pea-jacket endowed with an immortal spirit?”

Our credulous friend is puzzled, and meekly acquiesces in the conclusion—"Well, perhaps it was all a delusion."

To meet this difficulty, I venture to offer as a solution, the following hypothesis:—

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

What an idea of infinity and divine government does it give us, to suppose that after death we shall move through a grand picture gallery of our own deeds self-delineated! What a subject of contemplation and awe to those who are debating in their own minds the character of their actions! What a check to those who have not yet quite decided to perpetrate something un-

worthy of future exhibition ! And what a consolation to believe that true repentance for any vicious deeds may secure the removal of the portraits of such deeds from this gallery of celestial art !

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

This is a specimen of the manner in which the testimony of intelligent and truthful persons is treated by our scientific investigators ! No wonder that we are all of us so guarded in the relation of a ghost story, to conceal names under blanks or initials, and to be careful not to disclose too much of our own experience. To be positive in names, dates, circumstances, and a firm belief, is to render ourselves, in the eyes of our polite philosophers, candidates for Bedlam. A time is at last come, when we shall find less difficulty in extracting the truth, and boldly avowing it, without being deterred by the ridicule of quizzing and supercilious scoffers.

But, exclaims the materialistic scientific scoffer, where does the Almighty keep his stock of chemicals, cameras, and sensitive plates, with which this wonderful photographic process is accomplished? My answer to this literal and prosaic querist is, "When you can tell me where the Creator keeps his paints and brushes with which he colours and decorates the heavens and the earth, I will tell you where he conceals his spirito-photographic apparatus."

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

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

We are at liberty to suppose that the angels unroll before the spiritual sight of the clairvoyant, a grand panorama of past scenes and events in their order of time and sequence of action; so that without leaving the body, the soul can discern literally and faithfully, things and persons that have long since disappeared from this world, as well as those that are now actually in existence. Or we may believe, that in the trance,

another spirit enters and takes possession of the body of the clairvoyant to perform this discerning and descriptive office.

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

While this faculty of communicating with spiritual intelligences may be a natural and healthy gift in some persons, in others it may be superinduced by an abnormal condition of the system. The phenomena then require watchful care, and the attention of a religiously tender and cultivated physician, rather than of a scientific materialist. For instance, excessive mental study, or the misuse of stimulants, may tend so to disentangle the soul from its physical organization, that a want of concord may ensue between the animator and the animated. To a being thus disordered, a glimpse of the realities of spiritual life may be

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

Are we sure that in sleep and in dreams the the soul does not sometimes actually leave the body and go on errands of its own, while it is still held to its mortal habitation by an elastic spiritual cord or tether; and may not death be merely the rupture of this bond?

The argument that phantoms are delusions always caused by some bodily disease, can be very easily met. I readily acknowledge, that these appearances may be familiar to valetudinarians; and that attention to the rules of health may be followed by the cessation of such supernatural experiences. What theory does this admission confirm? That the unearthly things discerned are the unreal products of disordered senses? To answer this question in the affirmative, would be to jump hastily to an unwarranted conclusion. Suppose by way of illustrating our meaning, we

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

I have anxiously and faithfully endeavoured to find an explanation of the manifestations of Spi-

ritualism, by ascribing them solely to some physiological disturbance of the mental and bodily structure of exceptional humanity ; but I feel that such a hypothesis is sadly and recklessly chimerical. It may, perhaps, feebly and unsatisfactorily account for some of the more simple and insignificant phenomena ; but the whole range of those results, which I have either witnessed or studied, cannot, it appears to me, be traced to any other sufficient origin than the direct interposition of disembodied spirits. Those respectable gentlemen, who write and talk learnedly about "sensorial changes," "abnormal states of the cerebrum," and "excited auditory illusions," may be left with the calmest indifference to flounder about in the mazes of their pseudo-science. Our scientific cardinals—those judges who brow-beat truth and call it heresy—keep a formidable *Index expurgatorius*, in which they gravely enter some of the rarest and brightest, mental and spiritual privileges under the head "Delusions." Laymen are not permitted to read and interpret the scientific book of life, without the authorised glossary, under a penalty of logical excommunication. In these days, we surely need some heretical investigator, to counteract the effect of the orthodox psychological researches, which are becoming merely additions to the dead and

unwholesome materialisms permitted to litter and infect the world. We may fondly hope some day to perform a solemn funeral service over materialistic philosophies and their logical kindred, and, perhaps, posterity may condescendingly think it worth while to erect an encyclopædial tomb-stone to their decent memory.

It is an impressive and suggestive fact that the great immortal books produced in all ages—the Bible, Homer, Dante, Shakspeare, Goethe, and Bailey's Festus—teem with the highest spiritual manifestations—the grandest supernaturalism: and no work stands any chance of gaining immortality, if it utterly ignores the reality of practical communion between man and angelic creations.

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

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

I am frequently asked why do not the spirits tell you something useful—What is going to

happen—What will be the price of shares, and what horse will win the Derby? My answer is, that disembodied spirits are not omniscient, and that they only know what they have an opportunity of learning, like any other limited intelligence.

Another great obstacle in the way of obtaining mundane information through angelic agencies, arises from the difficulty of being able to produce or call up the identical spirit who possesses the knowledge which we desire to elicit.

Imagine for a moment the myriads upon myriads of spirits that exist, and what a wild-goose chase it would be to send one of your guardian angels through the celestial regions in search of the individual spirit with whom you wish to hold communication! Japhet in search of his father, or the Geographical Society attempting to find Livingstone, would be child's play and a most insignificant excursion, compared with the probably interminable exploration with which we should charge our spiritual messenger.

The state of the human soul, after the death of the body, is that of gradual progress from one celestial sphere to another, and promotion according to merit and desert. In this sense the doctrine of eternal punishment and the doctrine of universal redemption are equally true. The soul

which has done its duty in this life, gets the start of the one that has done evil; and, therefore, *relatively* to each other, the undutiful spirit is eternally punished, by being kept in a lower sphere and lagging behind its more righteous leader in the march of development and celestial promotion.

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

In the next place, we are told that it is a stupid, an unnecessary and an absurd notion, to suppose that immortal spirits are ever engaged in knocking chairs and tables about! Let us suppose for a

minute that you are a disembodied spirit, and that you wish to communicate with me, how will you make your appearance ?

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

Will you come in all your radiant glory as an angel, and amaze me with your visible presence ? Such visitations are now sometimes made to the Seeing Mediums, and received with awe and rapture ; but until I become knowingly one of that select band, I should not be able to acknowledge the reality of such a presence. I should think it the phantom product of a diseased mind. I should exclaim, "Avaunt !" and rush pale and alarmed to my physician. He—good man—would prescribe certain drugs for me, and warn me against "overworking my brain" and "exalting and stimulating my imagination." Under the doctor's antagonistic treatment, my soul would soon again become buried in my materiality. The celestial messenger would rightly think me a fool and avoid my society in future. How then would you come, so as to satisfy the grossness of my understanding, and convince me that I was dealing with an independent intelligence ?

When we asked the spirits why they manifested themselves by moving tables, their answer was significant and in these words: "If we came with more solemnity, we should awe you too much." Who among us shallow mortals can venture to decide what is or is not most consistent with angelic dignity?

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

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

possible. She said:—"I saw Jesus Christ, the Saviour of man, with his mingled Godhead and Manhood, welcoming me to the world of saints." All the spirits have been imperative in requiring us to address our prayers to this one Divine Mediator. They assert that all devout prayers are taken up to him and answered; and that there is an angel always in attendance upon every human being, to receive and soar up with any prayer that is sufficiently true and earnest to pierce the cloud of individual selfishness and materiality that encases every human heart in its natural state. Before the angel can seize the petition, it must possess sufficient divine momentum—not mere mental force—to bear it within his reach, otherwise it falls back a dead and useless abortion. That this office of Angels is entirely consistent with scriptural teaching may be shown by reference to the Revelation, chap. viii. vers. 3, 4, where we read:—

"And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne.

"And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." 783347

This reference to incense is remarkably curious, as I ascertained by experiment that burning incense always produced a mysterious effect upon the nervous organisation of very sensitive clairvoyants. It put them into a sort of magical and exalted state, and gave them visions resembling in character those described in the *Apocalypse*. In our Protestant form of worship, we have discarded the use of incense, probably because it forms such a leading feature in Popish ceremonies ; but I think it a pity that we cannot discard and reform the errors of the Romish Church without also eliminating from the Christian ritual much that is really beautiful and efficacious. The system of Popery in many respects is very objectionable, and, therefore, it should not be allowed to enjoy a monopoly of some of those mystical treasures and religious rites, which in all ages have formed a part of divine worship, and which the Church of Rome, in her turn, derived from previously existing and not unhallowed sources. Somehow, we have got into the impatient and unruly habit of abolishing anything which is abused, when we might do better to wisely renew and revivify it.

Most people, however, make too great an effort of prayer. They should remember that nothing is nearer to them than God, and that He is open

to the slightest supplication. To approach Him it is not necessary to be hysterical, or to make our minds nervous catapults for discharging our petitions at the Deity. All that is required to render prayer effective, is to unite it with the simplest earnestness and confidence. When a child asks its mother for some food, the little suppliant does not strain its nervous system in making its wants known. In the same gentle spirit of trusting calmness and freedom from doubt, should we importune the Most High, to succour and guide us, and even to grant us special mercies. Truly, we must become as little children ! One of the first messages we ever received from the spirits, was given in these words :—" Do not pray to us—pray to God, and he will give us instructions concerning you."

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

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

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

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

“ Yet do not curl your lips with scorn,
That others are not great as ye ;
Your fathers fought ere ye were born,
And died that thus it now should be !
I tell ye, spirits walk unseen,
Excepting by the soul's strong sight ;
Hampden and Washington, I ween,
Are leaders yet in Freedom's fight !
And shadowy hosts, I need not name,
Are leaders in the cause to-day ;
From dungeon's rack and martyr's flame,
Their spirits mingle in the fray.
See how their sorrowing eyes look down
On every craven's drooping head :
Oh be your nobler nature shown,
If but in homage to your dead !”

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

Among those amiable endeavours to account for the phenomena of Spiritualism by other means than the direct agency of spiritual beings, we must not overlook the recently concocted theory of “Psychic force,” which is explained by its

author, Mr. E. W. Cox, a gentleman, who, by right of his intelligence, learning, and position, is well entitled to a respectful hearing on any subject upon which he undertakes to discourse. The following extracts from his work will sufficiently illustrate his views. His theory, under a different name, 'has been often refuted. Its principal defect is that it is based upon a very imperfect collection and analysis of facts. Those philosophers who have profoundly studied the subject of Spiritualism, and gained a wide and practical knowledge of its phenomena, will have no difficulty in demonstrating that this theory of "Psychic force" simply sets a large number of facts at defiance. It is a scientific and argumentative *cul-de-sac*, beyond which there is "no thoroughfare." I should also think that few Spiritualists will be inclined to accept the doctrine which Mr. Cox attributes to them—that "a blow will extinguish the mind." A blow may demolish the organisation of the mind, and thus put a stop to its sensible manifestation; but it is one thing to destroy the machinery through which the mind works, and quite another thing to extinguish the mind itself. This passage is an instance of that want of mathematical accuracy characteristic of the advocates of the defective

theory of "Psychic force." We now proceed to quote from Mr. Cox's book:—

THE THEORY OF SPIRITUALISM.

The "Spiritualists," for that is the name they have assumed in accordance with their theory, have exercised considerable ingenuity in moulding that theory to the facts. Their creed, as I gather it from the most intelligent of its votaries, may be thus briefly described:—

Man, they say, is composed of body, mind, and spirit. A blow will extinguish the mind, and the body inhabited by the spirit may continue to live. When the body dies, the spirit which occupied it in life passes into a new existence, in which, as it was here, it is surrounded by conditions adapted to its structure as a being which by earthly senses is deemed immaterial, because impalpable to them, but which is really very refined matter. Into this new existence it passes precisely as it left the present life, taking with it the mental, but not the bodily, characteristics it had on earth, so far as these are adapted to the altered conditions of that new existence. The intellect is enlarged to the extent only of the increased power of obtaining intelligence necessarily resulting from exemption from the laws of gravitation and the conditions of time and space that limit the powers of the spirit while it is in the flesh.

The reason, say the Spiritualists, why we are not always conscious of the presence of the spirits that are thronging everywhere about us is, that our senses are constructed to perceive only the coarse material of this earth, and therefore we cannot perceive the refined matter of which a spirit is composed. If a spirit touches us, we can no more feel the touch than we can *feel* the particles of musk that another sense tells us are filling the room. The disem-

bodied spirit has no means of communication with us in ordinary circumstances, because its substance is not perceptible by our senses.

WHAT IS A MEDIUM ?

A Psychic (or Medium, as the Spiritualists call him,) is a person possessing an abnormal amount of animal magnetism (which is the name *they* give to what *we* call the Psychic Force). This is something that proceeds from the human body—matter of some kind projected from the whole or part of the structure, and, like the other forces, is perceptible to our senses only when it meets with some obstacle. All possess it, more or less. The medium has it more, and thus attracts it from those with whom he is in communication. When this affluent substance is sufficiently abundant, the spirits, which are always about us, are enabled to use it as a medium of communications between themselves and human beings. They have power to seize and shape it into a substance palpable to our senses. Hence the need for the presence of a medium. Hence the uncertainty of the manifestations. Hence the continual fluctuations of the magnetic material, according to external conditions of health, atmosphere, temperature, and other influences.

A spirit, say the Spiritualists, of necessity can manifest itself to our senses only by assuming a substance sufficiently solid to make an impression upon some one of them. We might be surrounded by spirits, and yet be utterly unconscious of their presence. The air may be so thronged with them that we could never lift an arm without touching or passing through a spirit, and yet we might live and die in perfect ignorance of their presence, because our senses are incapable of perceiving the impressions made by matter more refined than that which they are constructed to perceive.

SPIRITUALISM POSSIBLE, BUT SPECULATIVE.

In this spiritualistic creed there is nothing absolutely impossible. It may be that, as Milton sings—

“Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth,
Unseen both when we wake, and when we sleep.”

As Lord Lytton says, seeing how life teems in all the visible creation, it may be a not unreasonable presumption that the vast interspaces between the worlds are not altogether void of life, and it is conceivable that spirit, in its infinite immateriality, may find there a dwelling-place.

But however ingenious this creed may be, the question is, if it be not purely speculative—a merely fanciful creation, unsupported by any solid *facts*? True, that it explains all the phenomena of Psychism, but so it would explain every other problem in science—and it has, in fact, been invoked for that purpose in all ages and countries. All of the many marvels of science were sought to be explained at first by the easy process of referring them to supernatural (or spirit) power, until sober-minded men investigated them, and proved them to be purely natural, and then they ceased to be the subjects of wonder and the basis of superstition.

So it will be with the speculations of Spiritualism. Touched by science, its visions will vanish, and the facts that lie at the bottom of it will become a solid and invaluable addition to our knowledge of the physiology and psychology of man.

WHAT IS THE PSYCHIC FORCE?

On the other hand, the scientific theory of the Psychic Force, whose existence may now be deemed to be demonstrated, may be shortly stated thus:—

There is a Force proceeding from, or directly associated

with, the human organisation, which, in certain persons, and under certain conditions, can cause motion in heavy bodies, and produce audible and palpable sounds in such bodies, without muscular contact or any material connection between any person present and the heavy body so moved, or on which the sounds are produced.

This Force appears to be frequently directed by some intelligence.

For the reasons, presently to be specified, we conclude that this Force is generated in certain persons of peculiar nervous organisation, in sufficient power to operate beyond bodily contact. To these persons the Spiritualists have given the name of "mediums," on the assumption that they are the means of communication between disembodied spirits and the living; but they who, with myself, dispute the theory of Spiritualism, have given to those persons the more appropriate name of *Psychics*.

There can be little doubt that the Force is possessed by every human being, that it is a necessary condition of the living nerve, if, indeed, it be not the vital force itself; but that it is possessed by Psychics in extraordinary degree. In ordinary persons it ceases to operate at or near the extremities of the nerves; in Psychics it flows beyond them in waves of varying volume and power. Mr. Crookes, indeed, has recently constructed an instrument of extreme delicacy, which seems to indicate the existence of the Psychic Force more or less in every person with whom he has made trial of it.

A NERVE ATMOSPHERE

The existence of such a Force is asserted by Dr. Richardson, in a recent article in the *Popular Science Review*, in which he contends that there is a nerve-fluid (or ether), with which the nerves are enveloped, and by whose help it is that the motion of their molecules communicates sensations, and transmits the commands of the

will. This nerve-ether is, he thinks, no other than the vital force. It extends with all of us somewhat beyond the extremities of the nerve-structure, and even beyond the surface of the body, encompassing us wholly with an envelope of nerve-atmosphere, which varies in its depth and intensity in various persons. This, he contends, will solve many difficult problems in physiology, and throw a new light on many obscurities in psychology and mental philosophy.

If Dr. Richardson be confirmed in this discovery, there can be little doubt that the Psychic Force is that nerve-ether or nerve-atmosphere.

WHAT DIRECTS THE PSYCHIC FORCE?

But, says the spiritualist, your Psychic Force is directed by some intelligence. How is *that* to be accounted for? Whence and what is that intelligence? Unless you can show that it proceeds from the psychic, or some person present, you *must* conclude that it is the product of some other being, and as no other being is visibly present, that being must be a spirit.

To this argument of the spiritualist, urged in a tone of triumph, the advocates of a Psychic Force have an answer, which appears to be complete.

We contend that the intelligence that directs the psychic force is the intelligence of the psychic, and no other. The reasons for such a conclusion will be set forth presently, and will be admitted by the impartial to be overwhelming. All the conditions requisite to the production and exercise of the Force are consistent with its origin in and direction by the psychic, and inconsistent with any conceivable action of the disembodied spirits of the dead.

* * * * *

The communications made by the intelligence that undoubtedly often directs the Force, are characteristic of the

Psychic ; as he is, so they are. The language, and even spelling, are such as he uses ; the ideas are such as he would be likely to possess—neither better nor worse. If he were to communicate avowedly with his own bodily organs, it would be done in precisely the same manner. Thus the communications in the presence of an English Psychic are in English phrase ; of a Scotch Psychic, in Scotticisms ; of a provincial, in his own provincialisms ; of a Frenchman, in French. The *ideas* conveyed are those of the Psychic. If he is intellectual, so are the communications ; if vulgar or uneducated, so are they. Their religious tone varies with the faith of the Psychic. In the presence of a Methodist Psychic, the communications are methodistical ; of a Roman Catholic, decidedly papistical ; with a Unitarian, free-thinking views prevail. If the Psychic cannot spell, the communications are faulty in the spelling ; if the Psychic is ignorant of grammar, the defect is seen in the sentences spelled by the Force. If the Psychic is ill-informed on matters of fact, as in science and such like, the alleged spirit-messages exhibit the same errors, and if the communication has relation to a future state, the descriptions given of that sphere of existence, are in strict accordance with the notions which such a person as the Psychic might be expected to entertain of it.

At this present moment I happen to know “ a medium.” She is clever, and one of her specialities is that of spelling accurately ; but when in writing spiritual messages, her hand is supposed to be guided by her brother, who died very young, and imperfectly educated, she makes mistakes in spelling, which she would not commit in her normal state, but they are exactly those errors which might be expected from a

little half taught boy. It is, however, quite true that the intelligence and information conveyed in "a message" are generally on a par with the capacity and acquirements of "the medium;" but a very satisfactory explanation can be given of this suspicious circumstance. Spirits and mediums of a kindred quality, are "polarised" to each other, and when a spirit communicates through a medium, the disembodied intelligence cannot readily supply a higher intellectual machinery with which to express itself materially, than that furnished by the ordinary education of the medium. The intelligent investigator cannot fail to observe that spirits frequently deliver doctrines and opinions which are palatable to those persons who preside at, or influence the character of, the *séances*. It is fortunate that mediums are fallible mortals, and that spirits mingle error with truth; if they were immaculate, we might be tempted to fall down and worship them.

Let us be quite sure of our facts before we pledge ourselves to a theory. The experience gained by a legal training in sifting evidence according to certain technical rules, is a valuable acquisition in its way, but it is far from being sufficient to guide us in analysing philosophical evidence, and in helping us to solve the grand mysterious problems of life and God's government

of mankind. The testimony which we should summarily reject in a court of *Nisi Prius*, might be most acceptable, and convey the grandest of all truths to the judge sitting in the mental courts of philosophic inquiry.

The press of this country has a great deal to answer for in keeping the people ignorant of the truths of Spiritualism; and yet we must not be surprised at this result when we see the hurried, eager, overworked lives led by the contributors to our periodical publications. These men have not sufficient time to devote to the investigation of the most important subject which has ever been submitted to their comprehension and study. Among the most determined opponents of Spiritualism, the "Athenæum" has been extremely active. The articles which have appeared on Spiritualism in that review, are evidently written by men who have little or no practical experience of the phenomena upon which they deliver their flippant opinions. Would "The Athenæum" insert in its columns articles on astronomy, mathematics, chemistry, physiology, music, or painting, by men who had not gone through a long course of the most cultivated training in these respective subjects? Yet it allows its pages to be disfigured by ignorant articles on Spiritualism, a subject which is not behind any

I have mentioned, in the time, labour and thought required to master it. Even a month's constant practical investigation of the phenomena of Spiritualism would be too trifling an experience to justify the experimentalist in giving any authoritative judgment respecting them; and yet some men are rash enough to think that they can see through Spiritualism, after devoting a few hours to its superficial examination. Because similar manifestations have been exhibited in all ages of which we have any record, "The Athenæum" argues that therefore—notice the Dogberry "argal"—humanity has been attacked by a succession of crazy delusions and mental epidemics. The thoughtful observer would be inclined to infer, that if certain phenomena are repeated in every stage of progress of the human mind, the phenomena are more likely to be real than imaginary, and deserving of the most careful study; but "The Athenæum" intuitively knows better. It is evidently a believer in the "finality" of knowledge and experience, and that nothing is true but what it can reconcile with its own narrow philosophy. When will our teachers consent to be taught? Is not the best teaching that which is itself fortified by constantly learning? Perhaps the greatest compliment which can be paid to Spiritualism is the

inability of such a publication as "The Athenæum" to comprehend the subject. We may speak in very similar terms of the "Saturday Review," whose treatment of the advocates of Spiritualism scarcely deserves notice ; but in estimating the conduct of this periodical, we are consoled by the belief that, when its knowledge is greater, its impertinence will be less. It appears to enjoy the discussion of a subject about which it knows nothing, as then, in accordance with the principles of Mark Twain, it "is not embarrassed by facts." To prove the immortality of the soul, the "Saturday Review" can merely reproduce a second-hand argument from Plato, but we can supply a demonstration. There is all the difference in the world between believing a thing to be true, and knowing it to be true.

The "Quarterly Review," as late as the year A.D. 1872, stigmatises Spiritualism as "a compound of folly and roguery." When we all reach Heaven, we may be sure we shall find plenty of humour there, and plenty of opportunities for its indulgence ; perhaps a great deal of fun will be elicited by our critics chaffing each other on the opinions they expressed in this world. Heaven is not a dull place, and sleek, heavy, solemn propriety will not be so much the mode there as it is here. Merriment will cer-

tainly be one of our celestial blessings. Yet we can only reach Heaven through death. How sad in appearance; how blissful in reality! Love and Death are the two great gifts left to us from the ruins of Paradise; they are the eternal heirlooms settled upon us in perpetuity by our benevolent and Almighty Father. Let us live to die, and die to live! Religion—the true religion of Love—teaches us how to cultivate the present, and how to prepare ourselves to enjoy the future. Labour and progress are our everlasting destiny here and hereafter; without them we should not be happy; but in the infinite occupations of the world to come there will be ample scope for the highest development of those faculties which we are accustomed to associate with the most fascinating indulgences, as well as the noblest duties which humanity can imagine.

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

that they will, at least, give me credit for being animated with a sane and honest desire not to mislead them, however little they may feel disposed to compliment my acumen. I have told the truth, simply and literally, but in discussing this subject, we must be prepared to meet with the curious but human result, that they who have not investigated Spiritualism, and who know little about it, will be most loud and bitter in denouncing those who after having carefully and candidly given their time and energy to its strict examination and unbiassed consideration, have arrived at a conviction of its verity. This treatment we must patiently endure; we cannot expect the world to surrender its prejudices without an obstinate and painful struggle. If, however, sceptics would be good enough to inform us, what amount of evidence they require to convince them of facts contrary to their ordinary experience, we should be better prepared to meet them on their own ground, for the purpose of forming a mutually good understanding. It is, of course, unphilosophical to multiply causes unnecessarily; but it is equally fallacious to attribute results to inadequate causes—a deliberate mistake to which our opponents seem most perseveringly determined to adhere. At present they labour under the considerable difficulty of not being able to furnish us

with a satisfactory explanation of certain wonderful phenomena, which, during the last few years, have been in very obvious existence and activity throughout the world, and which have been more or less manifested in all ages of which we have any record.

I have previously mentioned Mr. Daniel Home, the medium. Some time ago he went to Italy, for the benefit of his health. While there he attracted the notice of a nobleman, who took him under his protection, and, it is said, succeeded in making him a convert to the Roman Catholic Church. I do not attach much importance to this conversion, as Mr. Home is an affectionate, impressionable young man, who is always ready to be biassed by the strongest kindly influences which happen to be nearest to him. I believe him to be thoroughly honest, and incapable of intentionally deceiving anyone. It is not improbable that some day, when he is engaged in public devotion, a hand may possibly appear out of space, and in the eyes of all present, touch the priests and attendant devotees. The miracle would be hailed by the Roman Catholic Church, and, naturally and sincerely enough, used for the spreading of its own sectarian dominion. The manner in which this Church can appeal to its supernatural experiences, is one of the greatest sources of its convert-

ing progression, especially as a pioneer among benighted races.

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

I have now finished the task which I set myself to perform. The difficulty which I, perhaps presumptuously, have endeavoured to solve, has puzzled the world, in a small way, for thousands of years. If I have failed to explain the mystery of Apparitions, the world is no worse off than it was before—barring my intrusion.

To do full justice to the subject of spiritual manifestations, would require an elaborate treatise, as every antagonistic reader will naturally raise his own pet “unanswerable question,” or “insurmountable difficulty.”

As far as I am mentally able, I have carefully and disinterestedly examined every exception that has been taken to the conclusions I have formed. My readers are doubtless glad that I have spared them the infliction of a complete analysis of both sides of the questions which I have been compelled to discuss; and I hope they will have sufficient confidence in me to believe that I have not idly passed over any points which may be considered stumbling-blocks in the path to right doctrine.

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

The first edition of this Essay was published in March, 1856, and since the modern propaganda of Spiritualism commenced, I believe this production was the first separate work—written by an Englishman—which distinctly advocated the spiritual origin of the phenomena, then, as now, occupying public attention, and which gave the name and address of the author “as a guarantee of good faith.” Since that date, the literature of Spiritualism has developed in a wonderful manner, and eminent men have entered the arena;

but there must always be some to incur the odium of being among the first to tell a conventional world new and unpalatable truths ; and, unfortunately for my comfort, this desperate duty devolved upon me. These truths may appear objectionable at first, but a thorough study of them will most certainly tend to place them ultimately among the most fascinating influences which can charm and elevate the human soul, and guide the conduct of mankind. I do not fear that justice will, some day, be done to the cause I advocate. Those who make themselves, before the world, responsible for new truths, are generally "first called Madmen, then Enthusiasts, and, lastly, Benefactors."

The trumpets of Spiritualism are now sounding round the walls of an infidel, philosophical citadel, and the rotten fortifications must soon crumble and fall !

SKETCHES AND ADVENTURES.

HARTSORE HALL.

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

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

* * * * *

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

In Memoriam.

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

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

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

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

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

"Will you take anything yourself, sir ?"

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

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

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

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

house, a man in his night-dress opened the lattice and indignantly began to exclaim :

“In the name of—”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Well, it is called 'Hartsore Hall.' You must go to the end of the lane on the right, and then turn to the left across a wheat-field, until you come to a barley-field, when you must take the second wide path on the right, and then the second narrow one on the left, and go on until you see a beech-tree—I mean the farthest one, for you will see several beech-trees—and bear off towards the sycamores, and then up by the gravel-pits; and then make for the copse, until you come to where three paths meet; take the one nearest a heap of stones, if they're not removed; go straight along, and then you'll come out directly opposite the lodge-gates of Hartsore Hall."

For a moment I was dumb-founded with astonishment and perplexity.

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

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

I had scarcely trotted more than three hundred

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

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

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

I lifted the latch, and entered the winding avenue leading to the Hall, when a picture of the saddest desolation presented itself. No sound was to be heard but that of my horse's hoofs, and the melancholy sighing of the wind among the

branches: the trees, like animate things, seemed to have grown into shapes and attitudes of sadness and neglect, and to be incapable of uttering any tones but those of bereavement and despair. The roadway was in ruts, the paths were overgrown with rank vegetation, and every feature of the scene indicated Nature collapsing into her original state of dreariness, decay, and death. No distant crow of a cock, no baying of a dog, gave a hint of social life, or indicated the presence of humanity.

At length I stood at the door of Hartsore Hall. It was a terminus congenial to the character of my journey, and a perfect instonement of architectural insanity. It was a chaos of windows and gables, every one of which appeared like a rigid frown or a hideous leer, petrified by the enchantment of some Titan wizard, who had thus determined to show his demoniac power over a human habitation. I knocked loudly at the door, and the echo died away in a thousand spectral responses. Presently a faint glimmer appeared through the fan-light, and very gradually increased in intensity, as though the passage were a long one, and the bearer of the illumination approaching leisurely. I heard a number of bolts withdrawn, the door was opened, and I stood in the presence of a tall, grave woman, dressed entirely in

white. She spoke in a solemn, monosyllabic manner :—

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

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

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

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

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

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

spoke, my informant cast an anxious and startled look round the apartment.

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

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

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

“‘With all my heart!’ was the callous reply;

and immediately a detachment of these ruffians rushed up to the sick man, dragged him down stairs, seated him at the head of the table, and then cried out, 'Now, old fellow, give us a toast and a speech !'

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

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

"Mercy on us !" I exclaimed ; "what did you do then ?"

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

This certainly was not a good preparation for repose. As I walked through the long corridors to the chamber appointed for me, I felt as if I was surrounded with phantoms from another world. My shadow startled me, and as the light struggled

through the mildewed atmosphere of the mansion, it seemed to shape out the forms and features of the revellers, whose deeds had taken such possession of my mind.

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

I had not, in all probability, been asleep long, when I was awakened by the noise of carriage-wheels coming up the avenue. At last I could distinctly hear the champing of the horses, the challenge of the grooms, the drawing up of the vehicle, the lowering of the steps, the thundering rap at the door, the descent of a visitor, and his entrance into the hall; the steps were then thrown up, the carriage wheeled round, and rapidly retreated down the avenue. I had scarcely done wondering at this arrival, when there came in exactly the same manner, a second carriage, and a third, and a fourth, and then more, until I counted thirteen.

"Good heavens!" I exclaimed, "what can be

going forward in the house? Have the self-banished family returned unexpectedly, or is that old hag entertaining an assembly of guests? There is something very strange occurring."

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

"Who is there?" I asked, in a faint tone.

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

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

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

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

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

Again all was silent for a minute, and I began to chuckle over my security, when feet shod with

iron thundered along the corridor, and the next moment my door was almost burst from its hinges by an appalling blow. The messenger rather howled than spoke this summons:—

“My master is enraged at your refusal, and if you do not follow me immediately downstairs you shall be dragged by force.”

I now knew that it was useless to trifle any longer with such a determined and horrible invitation, so I slunk out of bed, put on my clothes, opened my door, and followed my mysterious guide through the dark passages, led by the heavy sound of his iron heel and the occasional flash of his armour. I advanced into the hall in which I had sat and conversed that evening; but how different was its appearance! It was brilliantly illuminated and superbly furnished. A long table was covered with numerous delicacies, and down each side sat a splendid array of guests, clothed in the richest attire, and bearing flashing coronets of gold on their heads. There was one seat vacant, behind which a man in armour, with a drawn sword in his hand, appeared to be attentively watching the lord of the banquet. I stood in mute astonishment, while a majestic individual rose, pointed to the unoccupied chair, and with a frown of fearful import, exclaimed:

“You have kept us waiting too long. Guard,

take care that your *prisoner* does not leave us ; meanwhile let him join in the feast *until*—”

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

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

The expostulation proceeded from the hostess of HARTSORE HALL, and effectually awakened me. I rubbed my eyes, and very soon satisfied myself that a frightful dream had been playing its tricks in my brain. Ill and out of spirits I returned home immediately, and I have never since ventured on any quixotic expeditions. “My ministry of horrors” was effectually arrested by an incident in itself a horror. This adventure was thus not without its influence on my future life, for,

while it fortified my disposition to look to HEAVEN for aid against all perils, it has taught me to be contented with the quiet practice of my social duties ; and I now steadfastly believe that HOME is the chief sphere for the inculcation of our true precepts and the evidence of our good example. Virtue is better promoted by a simple and earnest demeanour than by thundering forth threatening theories and oracular vengeance.

* * I have been accused of stultifying in this story my essay on "Apparitions." I answer—Not so. I believe the phantasmagoria and pictorial effects characteristic of dreams, are as much the result of spiritual agency as any other phenomena associated with humanity. But the conditions which favour the production of dreams and other workings of angelic or demoniac influences, may apparently be of the slightest and most trivial external character. This story, therefore, is intended to confirm my doctrine of Apparitions instead of opposing it.

Any want of perfect accord between the soul and the body, any disturbing elements in a sleeping or semi-sleeping state, become so many avenues, through which spirits—good or evil—enter the faculties of man, and play before him

any fantastic tricks or symbolic games, consistent or inconsistent, absurd or reasonable, purposeless or instructive, delightful or miserable, according to the nature of the spirits and the disposition of the sleeper.

FOODLETHORPE.

"So blest a life these thoughtless realms display;
Thus idly busy rolls their world away.

* * * * *

But while this softer art their bliss supplies,
It gives their follies also room to rise."

GOLDSMITH.

ON the low, flat sea-coast of Colnshire, there is a small agricultural village, known to the initiated as Foodlethorpe. This primitive place is either two or three miles from the sea, according to the state of the tide, which stealthily crawls up, and as stealthily sneaks away again, over a mile of sand. If we mount to the top of the venerable church tower—which we may as well inform the illogical reader, is, unlike Tenterden steeple, not the cause of the neighbouring sand-banks—we look down upon a scene of very rustic simplicity. As far as the eye can reach, comfortable farm-houses and homesteads dot the level plain; flocks and herds are browsing in the fields; here we catch the flash and blaze of a smithy; and there, in solitary gentility, stand the Parsonage and the Squire's Hall. Fortunately, for the health of the

inhabitants, no doctor resides within eight miles of the place ; so that when any of the Foodlethorpians do make up their minds to die, they are allowed "to depart in peace," without being tortured out of the world. Gas has not yet found its way into the village, and the belated pedestrian, on a dark night, runs some risk of not reaching his destination in safety : here and there a light gleaming dimly from a window may help him to find his path, or the black form of a rick-yard may be a familiar guiding land mark. For many miles the country is scored with dykes or deep drains, cut for the drainage of the marsh land ; hedges are almost unknown, and access from one field to another is only obtained by means of a little bridge, of the rudest construction—a narrow plank with a hand-rail on one side. The inhabitants of this village are worthy of the soil they cultivate ; they understand the price of pigs, poultry, and potatoes ; they readily know the difference between milk and cream, and they will sell you twenty-five fresh-laid eggs for a shilling. They are certainly unsophisticated in their observance of the conventionalities of society, and their principal fault is some want of virtue and propriety on the part of the lads and lassies in their conduct towards each other.

One generation succeeds another in the same dwelling, and the oldest inhabitants never saw such a thing as a notice put up—"This House to Let." If, in the progress of time and hollow civilisation, there should ever be erected in the place a board, with these words painted on it, in large letters—

"THIS ELIGIBLE PLOT OF LAND
TO BE LET

ON BUILDING LEASES.

For terms, apply to MESSRS. RACKRENT & Co."

the boys and girls of the parish will gather round the strange object, stare and gape with astonishment at the new phenomenon, and wonder whether the end of the world is at hand.

The electric wires have found their way through the place, but only on their road to more important localities. Even I was surprised at this innovation. During a recent visit, I was walking through the village, meditating on things in general, when my reverie was disturbed by a mysterious and mournful humming above my head, as if Nature were bewailing her fate in being compelled to endure the existence of so dull a spot in her dominions. I looked up and there discovered the familiar posts and wires

which have put a girdle of intelligence round about the earth, and which will not allow us to remain long in a state of blessed ignorance and repose. Unfortunately the contrivance conveys truths and falsehoods with equal impartiality and celerity, so that the balance of human happiness is not increased by this flashy activity. When this far-reaching apparatus was first erected in Foodlethorpe, a little boy enquired, "Why it was put there?" He was told that it was used to carry messages: this was valuable information, so he determined to profit by it. The next time he had a chance of doing something on the sly, without being publicly discovered, he went up to one of the posts, tapped it gently and confidentially, as if to attract its courteous attention, and then placed his ear to its timber lips and listened for the passing message. He went away, however, disappointed and humiliated, and he has quite lost faith in the accuracy of his instructor.

The mental activity of Foodlethorpe is principally shown in its supporting no less than three Methodist places of worship—little ugly, square, brick boxes; but they enjoy the advantage of being rivals, and their supporters rejoice in thinking that the truth is best taught in their favourite "Bethel" or "Ebenezer."

Here I may appropriately chronicle a few inci-

dents of my Foodlethorpian experience. One day, in this locality, a poor woman lost her husband by a sad accident. A kind lady visited the house of mourning, and tried to comfort the bereaved widow with hopes of happiness for the departed soul in the future world, and by reminding her that as her husband was a good man he was probably taken to heaven. The poor woman sobbed over her sufferings, but plucking up a little courage, she replied, "Yes, ma'am, I know he has gone to Beelzebub's bosom."

The Lady: "You have made a mistake; you mean Abraham's bosom, I presume."

The Poor Widow: "I beg your pardon, ma'am, I meant Abraham; but I am in such trouble, I forgot the gentleman's name."

I know a dear little lady who was born in these parts, and who lived there till she was married, and then she went to reside near London. She has a neat figure, bright flashing, spiritual eyes, an imaginative turn of mind, refined tastes, and sprightly manners. After the birth of her first-born son, she took the child to the sea-side, and with becoming satisfaction and pride, exhibited in her early home, the living treasure which had filled up the measure of her happiness. The nurse in attendance on the infant was a thorough cockney, who had never been more than ten miles

from the metropolis; she had only heard of the sea, and the young mistress therefore anticipated the most lively delight in making her nurse, for the first time, acquainted with "the majestic ocean." What a look of surprise! What a feeling of awe would be manifested as the magnificent "waste of waters" burst on the astonished gaze of the inexperienced girl! The inexperienced girl was taken to the beach, but, alas! she showed no signs of emotion; "the wide expanse" was lost upon her. Her mistress was disappointed—the dramatic situation was evidently a failure—so she tried to goad the latent enthusiasm of the prosaic servant by asking her the question—"Mary, what do you think of the sea?" "La, ma'am," was the unromantic reply, "how it does smell of periwinkles!" The desire of my young friend to produce a sensational effect on the mind of her attendant was thus at once most irreverently and effectually dissipated.

Just inside the sea-wall, there is a small low house, standing in solitary moodiness—a kind of humble "moated grange"—which, in my time, was occupied by a curious and remarkable character; a brave, stalwart, worthy, eccentric, amphibious creature—half farmer, half fisherman, whose real name was Richard Hoodless. The humane soul of this man was troubled by several

disastrous wrecks which happened on the coast, and he determined to try what could be done to remedy similar catastrophes in future. A great idea came to him, and in obedience thereto he trained his horses to carry him through the roughest seas to any vessel that might be cast on the neighbouring sand-banks, more dangerous than a rocky shore. Rocks might furnish places of refuge, but when once a vessel was wrecked on the flat coast of Colnshire, succour was far away; there was little or no help for the poor suffering mariner, until Richard Hoodless devised his courageous plan. On stormy nights, he would take his place at the upper window of his house, and for hours watch through his spy-glass the horizon and the raging sea. Whenever the dreadful occasion for his aid called him forth, he mounted his horse, and, rushing into the sea, guided the swimming animal to the stranded vessel. If he had faced the waves, he and his horse would soon have been overwhelmed; so he moved in a slanting direction, and as he saw the huge billows leaping at him, he turned his horse round and allowed the billows to roll and rush harmlessly over horse and rider—submerging both for the moment. In this way he gradually approached on the lee-side of any stranded vessel, where the water was quiet, and then he could

manage to take behind him, on his horse's back, two persons at a time. He would return again and again, until all on board were saved. When he went on these brave errands, he carried in his belt a sharp knife and a small axe, for the purpose of cutting himself free from any possible entanglement in the rigging. He always said that he feared the fallen rigging more than the fiercest waves. England never bred a worthier man than Richard Hoodless. He received gold and silver medals; but at last, after some years' noble service to humanity, he reaped the reward generally granted to all true heroes in this world. His horses sickened and died; his own health and affairs got into disorder, and he went away, whither on this earth I never could learn; but I think I know where he is now—if we want him, we must look for him in heaven!

To me the principal attraction in this primitive place, is my Uncle Sam, the vicar of the parish. He is a character—shy, patient, and long-suffering. He has much to endure in this bucolic neighbourhood—a small stipend, and some obstinate, thwarting parishioners; but he is beloved more than he thinks he is, and his mistake on this point diminishes his happiness. Another of his faults, which are all of a very mild order, is, that he does not like incurring an obligation. I

went recently to pay him a visit, for he is always glad to see me, and his genial reception of me is well worth the long and tedious journey. If he had told his friends who kept carriages, that I was expected, how delighted they would have been to compete for the gratification of serving him by meeting me at the station, and conveying me comfortably to my destination ; but my independent and good little Uncle preferred hiring a carrier's cart to fetch me, and, accordingly, on a dark wet night, I was jolted along for two hours and a half, on a rough road of eight miles. The road itself was visible only by the lurid light which dimly glistened on the water lying in the ruts.

But the dreariness of the drive was not unpleasant to me. I enjoyed it because it was such a contrast to the restless, feverish town-life I had been leading. My little Uncle—my preceptor and friend—is not aware of how much pleasure the indulgence of his independent humour deprives those who wish to render him frequent services ; but perhaps, after all, he is more in the right than fancy would tempt us to believe. May not part of the fascination of wishing to help others be sometimes stimulated by the contradiction of our feeling that they are reluctant to accept our aid ? And may we not often lose the sympathy

of the world by appearing to need it? After I had alighted from the carrier's cart, and entered the Parsonage, I found there was another visitor there—Uncle Zephaniah, the brother of Uncle Sam. I will now describe more particularly these two paternal relatives: Uncle Sam, who has already been introduced to the reader, is a neatly-made little man, with a good-natured twinkle of the eye, and a head so much like that of a celebrated Grecian philosopher, that he is playfully called by his friends, "Young Socrates." He is thoughtful, modest, and reserved; and his benevolence is so practical that when he has anything to give, no poor applicant for his bounty is ever dismissed unrelieved. The village curs know his weakness, and every day at twelve o'clock precisely, they make their appearance at his door to be fed. A hole is left in the fence for the convenience of these daily visitors, who by constant trotting to and fro have made a regular track—known as the Dog's Walk—to the back of the house. When he had nothing else in his larder, I have seen my little uncle cut off nice pieces from a fine joint for the gratification of the appetites of his canine pensioners. It is, however, upon his lovely niece, who resided with him before she was married to an estimable man, that he lavished the higher feelings of his nature.

She was his companion, friend, and counsellor, and the leader of every good work in the parish: the only fault ever found with the young lady, was, that she had rather too fine and expensive a taste in church decoration and school architecture to suit the disposition of the rate-payers—when church-rate-paying was an institution. It was a pleasant sight to see this attached pair taking their daily walks, with a few village children running before them to open the gates, and drop their curtsies, expecting no other reward than a smile of approbation.

In one respect my little Uncle is almost too bountiful, he always returns the marriage and funeral fees to those people he thinks cannot afford to pay them. The last time I was his companion at a funeral, I noticed that he declined to take a nice new pair of black gloves that were offered to him; he was pressed to accept them, but he replied that, "he had more black gloves than he should ever wear out." The bereaved family were poor, but they were evidently anxious not to appear so, and I felt sure that my uncle had lurking in his heart some other more self-denying motive than the one he expressed, for refusing the proffered courtesies. Accordingly, I afterwards observed at the ceremony, that he wore a very old pair

of black gloves, and that he endeavoured to conceal their worn and shabby parts by folding one hand over the other with careful and suspicious pertinacity. When once you have gained the clue to his character, how refined and generous you discover its inner structure to be, under a quiet and reserved exterior.

Uncle Zeph is a very different man from his brother. He is a large, bony individual, sandy in hair and complexion, slow in his pursuits, obstinate in his whims, taciturn in company; very deliberate in his speech and movements; fond of his pipe, which is his constant companion; and kind on those occasions which do not require any expenditure of time, trouble, or money. A jest is lost upon him. I never saw him laugh heartily, or indulge in sport of any kind. I believe his principal weakness is a conviction that he is great at mechanical inventions and contrivances; but I never heard of any one of them proving to be of the slightest utility. Among Uncle Sam's many humane pursuits, is keeping bees; and his partiality for these industrious creatures led to the curious and unlucky catastrophe of which I was an eye-witness, and which I am about to relate. One day, while the two brothers were walking in the garden, near the hives, the following colloquy took place:—

UNCLE SAM : I should like to purchase a tarpaulin, and make a shed to protect the bees from the inclement weather. What do you think of the plan ?

UNCLE ZEPH slowly turned his little grey eyes in the direction of the hives ; but in that solemnly acute glance he had evidently mastered the whole situation. He deliberately removed his pipe from his lips, and then as deliberately replaced it. A great idea was obviously stirring his lethargic soul, and he had determined to do justice to the occasion. Whenever he could by any possibility make a pause in his sentences, he took a long puff at his pipe, and as these pauses occurred after nearly every other word, he thus managed to deliver his oracular opinion, in a fashion which would have been tedious if he had not had, according to his own calculation, the whole day at his disposal

“ You surely don’t (*puff*)—surely don’t intend to purchase (*puff*)—to purchase a tarpaulin (*puff*) a tarpaulin—ready made (*puff*)—ready made, do you ? (*puff*)—do you ? If you will attend to my advice (*puff*)—my advice, I will show you how to make an excellent covering (*puff*)—an excellent covering, which will cost you only a few pence (*puff*)—only a few pence. You have some old sacking (*puff*)—old sacking, and you need

only incur the expense of buying some tar (*puff*)—some tar, which we will melt (*puff*)—will melt, and easily manufacture the article you require (*puff*)—the article you require. There will be little trouble (*puff*)—little trouble (*puff*)—and no danger (*puff*)—no danger. The job will not be at all a dirty one (*puff*)—a dirty one. Leave it to my management (*puff, puff*)—leave it to my management (*puff, puff, puff*).

The suggestion was too plausible to be overruled, and it was accordingly adopted: measures were then planned for carrying it out practically. The first thing to be procured was the tar, which, however, could only be obtained at a distant market-town; and when the article arrived, thrice as much as was required, its cost and its carriage amounted to something considerable. The next proceeding was to borrow from a neighbour a large iron pot of the requisite calibre. The pot was readily lent, but the handle happened to be broken, and it had to be sent away, and money spent for its repair. After all the charges and trouble had been incurred, this borrowed vessel proved to be too small for the purpose for which it was wanted, and it was therefore returned to its owner with many thanks and very long faces. Uncle Sam, who had been supplying all the funds for the scientific experiment, now

began dimly to suspect that he had undertaken a stupid and profitless task, but Uncle Zeph showed himself again equal to the emergency. A cabinet council was held forthwith. Uncle Zeph handled his pipe, and ponderously remonstrated in this style: "You see, Sam (*puff*), it won't do (*puff*)—it won't do to be beaten. Now that we have gone so far (*puff*)—so far, and done so well (*puff*)—so well, we must finish the job (*puff*)—the job." (*Puff-puff-puff*.)

Uncle Sam became corrupted in his judgment, and, at last, with the recklessness of despair, he determined to purchase a large iron pot at the same distant locality where the tar had been procured. Uncle Zeph approved of the investment, remarking, "Bear in mind, Sam, the pot will always be useful for some purpose or another (*puff*)—some purpose or another." At last, after all preliminary difficulties had been overcome, and so much tribulation endured and expense incurred, the old sacking was fairly laid out; the fire was all aglow, and the pot with its now precious contents hoisted above it. Every prospect of success at length dawned upon the undertaking, and the minds of the two brothers were soothed with pleasant visions of beehives protected by the product of such persevering ingenuity. Full of these benign and gentle reveries, the two uncles

went into the garden to talk of their handiwork and to look at the flowers : they left the fire doing its duty, and the maid servant doing hers. Gradually, with the effect of its warm treatment, the tar silently rose above the narrow limits to which it had been confined, it disdained its culinary bondage, and slyly and treacherously bubbled out into the fire, and on to the brick floor. The whole place was instantly in a blaze ! The servant saw the catastrophe ! She ran screaming into the garden, while the kitchen was fast being filled with flame and smoke. Both the astonished manufacturers of tarpaulin rushed into the kitchen, dragged the pot from the fire, and tumbled the pot and its contents upon the floor. I heard the commotion and hurried to the scene of action. There was Uncle Zeph standing at the kitchen-door. The morning-wrapper, which he wore, looked as if it had been employed to sweep out the chimney ; his hat was battered into every possible shape of dilapidation ; his solid and imperturbable face was begrimed with soot, and his hair and whiskers were partially singed off ; but he still smoked his pipe. I could not help smiling when I saw what a ridiculous object he was. He looked at me stedfastly, removed his pipe from his lips, and then dryly inquired, "What are you laugh-

ing at ?” He winked his eyes complacently, grimly replaced his pipe in his mouth, and began to puff. This interrogatory was too much for me. I was compelled to retreat from his sight, round the corner of the house, and give vent to a roar of merriment.

As soon as my sense of humour was satisfied, I found my way back to the kitchen, where the two sooty and discomfited Uncles were anxiously surveying the extent of the damage. The floor was covered with tar, and the walls were begrimed with soot ; part of the oven was injured ; the cupboards and mantel-shelf had also seriously suffered. The principal originator of the mischief, Uncle Zeph, was again giving “advice” and instructing his submissive brother what steps to take to repair the disaster.

He saw what was necessary to be done, and, like all ruling minds, he confided to others the task of doing it. I heard him say, “You had better (*puff*)—set to work, Sam, and rub the tar off the floor as soon as possible ; the walls will require white-washing (*puff*)—white-washing ; the mantel-shelf and oven must be repaired (*puff*)—repaired ; the cupboards must have new doors (*puff*)—new doors.”

No labourers could ever be had in the neighbourhood without long notice being given before-

hand, so down on his knees at once went Uncle Sam, and, with a brick in his hand, began to rub the floor with all his might; but, I am sorry to say the result was not what might have been expected from such earnest exertion. During the operation, Uncle Zeph, with his pipe in his mouth, stood looking on with exemplary resignation and edifying idleness. To add to the mortification of us all, at this unfortunate moment, a kind and esteemed neighbour brought a present of fruit for the acceptance of her reverend pastor and friend, and discovered him labouring in the attitude I have described. "Young Socrates" absolutely scrubbing the floor with a brick-bat! Could anything be more distressingly ludicrous? It was no time for explanation; the begrimed and unlucky little man merely nodded his thanks for the gift, and then went on with his miserable task. The lady took her departure with the utmost alacrity and astonishment. Uncle Sam had not even the sorry consolation of working to any useful purpose. His labour was entirely lost. The tar was immovable; the mess became more smeary; and workmen have been since called in to take up and relay the floor.

My story is not yet ended. Uncle Zeph was rendered sullen and obstinate by his failure, and

he registered a vow not to take any dinner until he had finished his job; so he replenished the large iron pot with the remainder of the tar, placed it on the parlour fire, for the kitchen grate was no longer usable, and sat himself down to keep a stedfast and moody watch upon it—with his pipe in his mouth. The parlour fire was now wanted for cooking the dinner, but Uncle Zeph sullenly disregarded all our expostulations on this point; and, in the meanwhile, Uncle Sam retired to his room, and made himself once more fit for respectable society. At last, the task was finished, and we had some chance of getting a dinner; but Uncle Zeph was still irrepressible. He was preparing to seat himself at the table with his countenance sootily tatooed in the ludicrous fashion in which I first saw it at the kitchen door, when Uncle Sam just ventured to hint that, perhaps “Zeph would like to wash his face.” “Does it require washing?” he calmly asked in reply. He was invited to look at himself in the glass; he did so, and then he gave vent to more lively expressions of surprise and emotion than I had ever before observed in him: “Dear me! Well, I never! Who’d have thought it? Upon my word!” Finally, we demolished a good dinner—a much better one than we expected to get; and the affairs at the

Parsonage were soon restored to their ordinary quietude. The servant lost her fright. The Uncles recovered their temper, and I my composure.

The kitchen has been entirely renovated, at an expense of about ten pounds, every penny of which came out of the pocket of the poor little vicar of Foodlethorpe; and the bees go on humming and making honey under their tarpaulin, totally unconscious of the commotion its manufacture occasioned.

The "gentle reader" is requested to imagine that this incident was very funny when it happened, although it may appear rather dull in print.

If he cannot derive any amusement from it, he may at least learn a moral, and that is, never to undertake, at his own home, the amateur manufacture of any article which can be much better made at the regular factories established for supplying it, if he wishes to avoid the chance of having his Wisdom estimated in Pence, and his Folly in Pounds!

THE ARRINGTONS.

"And talent sinks, and merit weeps alone."

GOLDSMITH.

MANY years ago, when people were compelled to pay their debts, and roguery was not encouraged by Act of Parliament, I was appointed executor to the estate of a deceased friend. The property, to which I administered, was barely sufficient to pay the claims upon it, and to provide a humble provision for those whom it was intended to benefit. Under these circumstances, it became my duty to exercise more than usual firmness and activity in collecting the debts due to the estate, and to insist upon prompt payment.

In my list of defaulters I noticed the name of a Miss Arrington for fifty pounds. I did not know her, but I wrote to her, and gave her very definite information as to the nature of my application, and the necessity of immediately complying with it. The day after forwarding this formal epistle, I was seated in my chambers, glancing at a periodical, when I heard a gentle tap at my door. There was something in the

knock which denoted that it came from a feminine and timid being. I rose and admitted a lady, who held in her white attenuated hand, a letter, which looked very much like one written by myself.

"Miss Arrington, I presume," said I, as I handed a chair to my visitor; "pray be seated."

"I am that unfortunate individual," she replied; and as she spoke, she put aside her veil, disclosing features which would have been attractive if they had not indicated much mental and bodily suffering. Her cheeks were pale and shrunk, and her eye was nervously bright; her form possessed that grace and unpretending elegance, and her manner that diffidence, characteristic of a gentlewoman; but her faded garments, and the wan expression of her countenance, prepared me for the request that she came to make.

"I wish to beg you, Mr. Norroy, to grant me the favour of allowing me a little more time to pay off this dreadful debt, and I think I can make out a strong case for your indulgence;" but here she hesitated, and said, "perhaps, I am troubling you too much?"

"Not at all," I answered; "pray go on, and tell your story."

"Two years ago, my only brother was placed

at the University by a particular friend, who has just lost all his property ; and the allowance he made to my brother has therefore been discontinued. If we can only manage to keep Edwin at the University one year longer, he will obtain his degree ; and, as he is very clever, he will probably distinguish himself. We shall be so happy then, and we will pay you every farthing —indeed we will.”

“Very laudable object, indeed. But what can you do to promote it ?” I asked.

“I am now working all day in teaching, and a great part of the night I am occupied in copying manuscripts for publishers and authors. In order to earn enough, I am compelled to rise every morning at five o’clock, and I cannot get to bed till long after midnight ; even Sunday is no day of rest to me !” Here the poor creature dropped her head upon her bosom, and burst in a flood of tears.

“My dear young lady,” said I, “you must think me very hard-hearted, if you deem it necessary to plead in this earnest manner. Make yourself perfectly easy respecting this affair, and allow me to strike a bargain with you. I will take this debt upon myself, if you will promise to make Sunday a day of rest and recreation. Give yourself, at least, one holiday every week.

Now, go home, and take more care of your health."

"Oh, thank you!" she exclaimed. "These are the first words of kindness I have heard for months!"

I slipped a little money into her hand, and, begging her to look forward to a brighter future, I allowed her to depart

I heard nothing more of my interesting friend for a long period, and then I received a hurried note from her, entreating me to come and see her, as she was dying. I immediately obeyed the summons, and hastened to the humble abode of the sufferer. I found her in a small room at the top of a small house. Everything about her was clean, but apparently worn threadbare. She was stretched on a low, curtainless bed, and evidently in the last stage of existence. On a rickety table, I noticed a bottle of medicine, an unopened letter, and a cup of wretchedly-made beef-tea. A poor, ignorant drudge of a servant, who seemed in the lowest state of incompetence and inefficiency, was in awkward and listless attendance upon the fast-sinking invalid.

I greeted the dying girl with a few cheerful words, and asked what I could do for her. She gently took my hand, and in a voice, scarcely above a whisper, said—

"Mr. Norroy, I have taken the liberty of sending for you to thank you, with my dying breath, for all your kindness to me, and to ask you to do me one more favour." Here she put her hand under the pillow, and drew out a beautiful gold watch. "This," she added, "was my mother's watch. I have saved it to pay the expense of my funeral. Will you take it, and see that I am decently buried. I know I am dying, but I am going to a world where the angels will be able to take more care of me. Do not think I am repining. God has been very good to me, and he is now taking me away from all my sufferings. If—if—my brother should be here in time—in time—you will be spared any trouble about me. I leave no debts behind me, except the one you know of, and a week's lodging. Thank you—thank you."

She stopped and looked, in a startled, anxious manner, towards the door. I also looked and listened, but I heard nothing but the roar of London. I could detect nothing special approaching the room; but the perceptive faculty of the dying girl was morbidly acute, and it evidently anticipated the work of senses in a more normal and healthy condition.

Presently, I heard a firm step on the creaking staircase, and then a fine young fellow entered

the room, and exclaimed, "My dear sister, I have been so highly successful at the examination. I come to tell you the good news, and to assure you of the happy termination of all our cares and struggles. But, good God! What does this mean? How ill you look! My letter not opened! Why was I not informed of your state?" He folded his sister in his warm, manly embrace; but she could only feebly ejaculate, "My brother! it is too late—too late!"

Her limbs quivered for a moment, and she fell back lifeless.

Edwin Arrington was just in time to close the eyelids of his sister, and wipe the death-dew from her lips!

I rushed from the scene; it was too painful for me to witness it any longer!

As I left the room, and returned home, I could not help reflecting upon those numberless social tragedies which Convention and Heroism jointly cause and conceal.

Edwin Arrington is now my friend. He has become one of the world's worthies. We often indulge in tender emotion in conversing over the pathetic life and death of his heroic and angelic sister.

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THE
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A Doric Story,
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Author of "*Lydia*," "*Memorable Women*," "*Mrs. Blake*," &c.

"A TALK—like those unwritten ones which fall
As feathers from the outstretched wing of Time,
Float in the mem'ry of a child or friend,
Then gravitate to blank oblivion's gulf!

So snatch we it from Lethe's threatening spray,
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al J h