

THE SALEM SEER

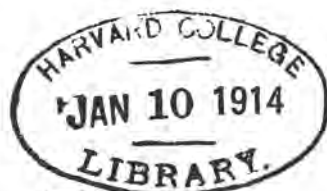
REMINISCENCES OF
CHARLES H. FOSTER

BY
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CHARLES H. FOSTER.

PREFACE.

CHARLES H. FOSTER was undoubtedly the most gifted and remarkable Spiritual Medium since Emanuel Swedenborg. Since the death of Mr. FOSTER, I have been frequently importuned by his friends, and by many prominent Spiritualists, to give my experiences while with him. Having been associated with him for a number of years, I had the privilege, and took advantage of thoroughly testing his peculiar gifts. A prominent New York artist called on me recently, and said that he considered it my *duty* to give a thorough and complete account of the manifestations which I, together with friends and acquaintances, had witnessed through Mr. Foster's mediumship.

I have rather reluctantly consented, and give in this volume a plain statement of facts and descriptions of many seances held in different parts of the world, thinking that this record may be of service to investigators of these phenomena, in the future. I sincerely hope that this book will stimulate practical and scientific men to such investigations.

GEORGE C. BARTLETT.

THE SALEM SEER.

CHAPTER I.

I MET Charles H. Foster, the famous Spiritual Medium, in 1870, while spending an evening with a poetess, in New York City, who, while suffering from extreme poverty when living in New Orleans, wrote the following verses :

A nameless joy I do begin to find,
In being as I am, thus lone and poor—
I never felt so far from false mankind,
I never drew so near my God before!

Oh, what to me are closed, unfriendly hands?
And what care I for cold, averted faces!
One sometimes gathers gold from miry sands,
And violets oft bloom in darksome places.

Mr. Foster appeared to be a jovial man of the world. The poetess was an enthusiastic spiritualist, and had spoken to me many times of "Charlie" Foster, as she called him, urging me to call on him and investigate spiritual phenomena, believing I would be more fully convinced (as she had been through Spiritualism) of an after life. No doubt, principally on the lady's account, Mr. Foster gave me a pressing invitation to call and see him as a friend, that he would not regard my visit professionally, but would gladly give me a seance free

of charge. The following week, two gentlemen from the South—strangers to me—a New York friend, and myself, sat around his table, and for the first time in our experience investigated the supposed phenomena of spiritual manifestations, as given through a medium. The seance was a wonderful success. We were astonished and mystified beyond expression. Long after the others had left, Mr. Foster and I were talking over what seemed to me the most marvelous power I had ever witnessed. I said to him, "If this is true, you can entirely revolutionize the world, and—make a fortune." He replied that he had made some money, but that it went as fast as it came; that he was not a business man, did not understand how to advertise, and, as regarded revolutionizing the world, that I had yet to find out how unpopular mediums were, and what great opposition there was to Spiritualism.

His price for a seance at that time was two dollars for each person. I advised him to advance the price at once to five dollars, and to sit for those who were poor and in trouble free. We gradually became friends, and I took quite an interest in his business, as he seemed willing to follow many of my suggestions. I proposed that he should advertise in the *New York Herald*. He agreed, and asked me to insert the advertisement. I shall not soon forget my visit to the *Herald* office. I told the clerk under what head to place the advertisement. He seemed surprised, and said he could only insert it in what he probably would not call disreputable columns, but which seemed so to me. At the office door I met Mr. Stenhouse, who was one of the writers on the *Herald* at that time. I told him of my failure in attempting to insert an advertisement of Mr. Foster in a respectable part of the

Herald. He said, "Come with me, and I will introduce you to the editor, Mr. Donnelly. There must be some mistake." Donnelly treated me with less courtesy than the clerk, and intimated that he was surprised that I should associate myself with Spiritualism, or spiritualistic mediums. We had an animated conversation, which called to my memory what Mr. Foster had previously told me, that I did not realize the opposition to Spiritualism. I finally worded the advertisement so that it was accepted under "Amusements," and from that day until Mr. Foster's death, he had more business than he could attend to.

That evening I called on Mr. Foster, and told him my experience at the *Herald* office. I also told him that if I found his manifestations genuine, and if there were no fraud nor deception connected with them, that I was positive I could induce the entire press of the country to acknowledge the genuineness of his demonstration of the phenomena. He thought it would be impossible. However, I went to work in earnest, calling usually upon the editors, offering them free seances, and allowing them to bring any one they chose with them. I was usually treated politely, but with suspicion. At first they were inclined to sneer, but I had two strong points in my favor—I was honest and thoroughly in earnest, and in time was successful. In 1873, I published quite a lengthy pamphlet, called, "Voices from the Press: All about Charles H. Foster, the Wonderful Medium." It was sold by Brentano of Union Square. I quote a few lines from the introduction:

While making an extended tour through the principal cities of the United States with Mr. Foster, I made it my especial business to invite the editors of the principal newspapers and journals to investigate the

phenomena, as they occurred in Mr. Foster's presence—having confidence in the fairness and justice of the editorial corps throughout the country, and believing that they would give truthful accounts of their experiences during the seances.

In a short time my business made it necessary for me to visit eleven of our largest cities, and I proposed that Mr. Foster should go with me, and give seances in each city; that I would attend to the press, and do the advertising. We did not at that time make any effort with the press of New York, intending to do so later. Quite extensive articles, however, did appear in the New York *Day-Book*, New York *Sunday Era*, and especially in Brick Pomeroy's *Democrat*, from Mr. Pomeroy's pen.

Upon arriving in Philadelphia, the first city which we visited, we called on Col. Forney, editor of the Philadelphia *Press*, who knew Foster, and was interested in Spiritualism, Mrs. Forney being a thorough believer. We invited the Colonel to a seance at the Continental Hotel, with the request that he should write for the *Press* what he there witnessed. He declined the invitation, and did not seem at all anxious to write an article on Spiritualism. He spoke as though he were deeply interested in the subject, but did not seem anxious that the public should know it. We then requested him to send a capable man from his paper. He finally consented, saying he would send the city editor, remarking that he was a thorough skeptic, and a sarcastic writer, and he thought probably that he would do us more harm than good. We replied that he was just the kind of a man we wished him to send; all we desired of him was to write exactly what transpired, and his impressions of the seance. An appointment was made for four o'clock the next day. The gentleman was

promptly on hand. Mr. Foster was in especially good form, and gave a very remarkable seance. As usual, the next morning about nine o'clock, I asked at the news-stands for the principal Philadelphia papers, and found all of them with the exception of the *Press*. They said they were entirely sold out. I stepped across the street to the Girard House news-stand, and inquired for the *Press*. "All sold." I asked if it were not unusual to be entirely sold out at that time. They replied that it was, but that the paper contained an article on Foster and Spiritualism, which had caused the unusual sale. Having inquired at several other news-stands with the same report, "All sold," I went to the office of the *Press*, and asked for the morning paper. The same reply came, "*All sold.*" I finally succeeded in finding the writer of the article, and he procured a single copy for me. He remarked that they had received many orders which they could not supply. He called upon us in the evening, stating that there had been so many inquiries for the paper during the day, that they had concluded to republish the article in the weekly edition, and that if we wished a few extra copies we had better leave our order at once. The following is a part of his account of the seance which took place at the Continental Hotel, on the last day of March, 1873 :

"Well, sir" (with the usual *brusquerie* of the journalist, who has no time to lose in conventionalities, for the paper must go to press at a certain time)—"well, sir, let me grasp the situation at once, and I confess candidly that I have not even a scintilla of doubt as to the falsity of Spiritualism and its varied forms and phases of

HUMBUG AND JUGGLERY,

contrived and carried out for the purpose of entrapping the simple-minded, credulous ones who are always willing to prove in their own

persons the truth of 'the fools are not all dead yet.' First, who are you, for I confess never to have heard of C. H. Foster?"

The gentleman smiled meaningly in answer to the first part of the abrupt address of the journalist, and his smile passed into a quiet laugh, as if at the ignorance of the speaker as to who he, Mr. Foster, was. Indeed, his remark followed the laugh; turning to his friend, he said, "I have not heard such charming *naïveté* for many a long day. It is quite refreshing to be spoken to in this way."

Passing by the by-plays and spicy sparring which always arise between a skeptic and a believer on almost any subject, the party, now augmented to the number of five (for a stranger and also a friend of the journalist had come up in the meantime), passed up stairs to

"ROOM NO. 110."

The ordinary caparison of a room in a hotel, with the usual number of stands, and trunks, and chairs, etc., was noticed more for the absence of machinery, and juggler's boxes, and absurd tokens, and cards, and all the varied contrivances for imposing upon the credulity of people who usually sit at the feet of these mountebanks. We say these things were conspicuous by their absence; still, the utter want of faith of the newspaper man was not shaken in the ability of the quiet, gentlemanly man to even guess, with any degree of accuracy, at commonplace occurrences of the past, or to foretell any more of the future than any man of ordinary judgment and a knowledge of men and things could do.

As the journalist approaches his subject more closely, he feels that his usual impersonality must be sometimes sunk as

HE RECITES HIS EXPERIENCES

for that one-half hour in that medium's room. These experiences are not simply strange, unaccountable, mysterious, or any of the words which denote the idea of things unaccounted for by natural causes; they are simply "awful." The writer feels as though he were drifting into sacrilege in his endeavor to give or to conceive of an idea of the power of this man. When the reporter saw this man look back over long years of time and long miles of space, and down deep into the moldering dust of long-forgotten graves, and drag up to the clear light of the present noonday sun of Philadelphia thoughts from the inmost recesses of the heart of a woman who, in life, would hardly have confessed those thoughts to herself—when he saw the name of the woman and that of the man she loved (names which the inquirer had himself almost forgotten, time and circumstance having almost com-

pletely blotted them out of memory)—when he saw those names written in

PLAIN, DISTINCT CHARACTERS,

in letters formed of the living blood at that moment coursing through the hand of Foster—he could not refrain from yielding to the impulse to cry out in ideal pain and awe-striking fear, stagger up from the table, and walk about the room till a modified calmness came to his excited feelings. And yet these were but the mere rudiments of the “art,” if it may so be called; but it may not be so called, even though the loss of a word leaves the sentence unfinished, for it was no “art” that enabled this man to read the events of the past and its dead, the present and its living; to tell of deeds done years ago and forgotten by their actors, of thoughts conceived of at the passing moment and unshaped even in the brain of the thinker. It was no “art” that gave this man the power to look into the heart of a woman far away and tell her secret, which she had concealed religiously for years. It was no art; it was—but the pen of the journalist refuses to write the impious thought, when he knows that he writes about the power of a mortal such as you and I and all of us are.

Mr. Foster spoke truth when he made the remark, “Mr. —, I will reveal to you things that you would not dare publish; they are too sacred; they touch family, social, and heart relations too nearly even to be mentioned by the faintest allusion.” And the listener paid the penalty for his skepticism and scoffing even to the uttermost farthing, such a penalty the amount of which he dare not publish,

IT IS “TOO SACRED.”

The writer then proceeded to give a lengthy account of the seance. Also favorable accounts of seances were reported in the *Philadelphia Bulletin* and *Philadelphia Evening Day*, of April 4th, 1873. In fact, all the papers of Philadelphia gave extended reports, as later did many of the leading papers of the country. The following extracts from them may be of interest. The first is by a celebrated artist of New York City. The caption of the article reads, “Is There an Invisible Human Intelligence!” He proceeds:

A gentleman accompanied the writer to have a sitting with Mr. Foster. He had twelve questions carefully inclosed in sealed envelopes; they were all numbered. Mr. Foster took them in his hand, and passed them one by one over his brow, and gave correct or pertinent answers to each and every one. During the same sitting a word of three letters appeared upon the back of Mr. Foster's hand—the letters were formed by a red discoloration of the skin. The word was one which was agreed upon by the gentleman and his wife before her death, and it was to be used as a test by the one who should die first. The word had never been mentioned to any person. During this same sitting, Mr. Foster called the names of a number of deceased persons, who, before they died, were closely related to those who were present, and, in many cases, gave an accurate description of their persons. In addition to all this, he gave numerous tests and stated many circumstances which were unknown to any person present, but which were *afterwards ascertained to be true.*

[*Philadelphia Bulletin, April 11, 1873.*]

Turning to me with a cheerful smile, the medium instructed me to write as many names as I chose of "spirit-friends." I wrote three, on separate papers, and folded them, and *I believe they were not opened till I reached my own home.* Immediately three distinct knocks on the table, and a rapid communication from each. Mr. Foster wrote the communications and the signatures corresponding with the names that I had written. Now I shall state a test that I did not acknowledge to him. One of the names had a middle letter that the deceased in his lifetime always ran into the last name, and persons on reading it for the first time always pronounced the two capitals in one sound. Mr. Foster wrote that signature the same way, though I had separated the letters in my paper, and *he made the same mistake in pronouncing,* so that for an instant my heart stood still. Another name I wrote in full, and he signed the communication with the abbreviated name I had always used in the lifetime of my friend. The mental questions were answered before I could raise my eyes; the written ones kept the medium busy for twelve minutes, when I was perfectly bewildered with the dispatches, and left the table as I would a telegraph battery after operating the President's Message for the *Bulletin*. Not one mistake, and all as clear as if we had been confidants for years, though I did not exchange fifty words with the medium, and walked off with my written questions folded as I dropped them from my fingers.

I have no explanation to offer, no theory to suggest; no advice, no

opposition for others to try it; but I believe that what Joanson said applies here: "What no mortal can comprehend or explain, must be the power of something more than a mortal."

[*New York Day-Book, June 7, 1873.*]

We came to this meeting determined to put Foster's remarkable powers to a severe trial, and prepared the test beforehand. An intimate friend of ours, every page of whose life, for at least thirty-five years, we were familiar with, consented to sit at our side at the table on this special occasion. At our request he had prepared a question to the "spirit," should he be favored with a visitation, and put the same in a sealed envelope prior to leaving his office on that day. The question was written thus—we give it *verbatim*, to show that Foster, even with his superhuman vision, if he depended on *sight* alone, could not have divined its full meaning: "Can I get a communication with S. C., of S., who died at B. in 1849?" These words were written on a slip of paper and placed inside of an envelope, and the envelope sealed before our friend ever looked upon the seer. Our friend sought out the place of meeting, where we joined him to see the results of his test. Seated at the table, as we have already stated, sundry slips of paper were written upon, and the results were astonishing. Finally, C. drew out his envelope, and said to the seer: "Within is a communication, written before I came here. Shall I offer it?" "Certainly," said Foster, and it was laid with the rest before him. Foster took the envelope up, touched it to his forehead, and turning to C. said: "I am impressed by several spirits anxious to communicate with you. There are two or three female spirits at the back of your chair bending over you. One is—wait a moment—her name is A—y B—t" (Foster gave the name in full of a lady friend of C. who died in 1853), "and the other is—is—why—your wife! How young she looks! She died—long—long ago. Let me see; she will write it on my hand, and I will tell you the year—1849—yes, 1849—was the year. She says to you"—here a communication followed, in precisely the style of phraseology Mrs. C. used with her familiars; so very like that it was most startling. Now, we ask, what was there in the communication within the envelope to denote that "S. C." was the "wife" of the party at the table, or anybody's "wife," or even the name of a female? There was nothing in the communication to show that "S. C." might not have been the initials of some one of the other sex. Foster described the personal appearance of "S. C." so clearly that he evidently saw *something*, as he stated, at the back of

C.'s chair. *What* did he see? *Why* did he say *wife* instead of sister? And again, how could Foster know that A—y B—t and S. C., near friends on earth, were evidently near friends in the spirit-world, unless he really saw them, and communed with them on this occasion, as he states he did? If he had not thus communicated with them, how could he have told the name of the one, and the relation of the other to C.? There was much more of strange and mystical character at this seance with Foster, which the length of this article forbids our touching upon, and we simply present these facts for the mental digestion of our readers—the great public. The test we suggested for the seer was fairly applied, and his superhuman powers were evidently equal to it. We were astonished; though, if asked what our convictions are, we cannot answer. Nor can we announce those of our friend C. He was deeply moved and amazed, but touching his opinions as to the source of Foster's knowledge, we have nothing to say. Mr. Leaman, in the article in *Scribner's* touching his interview, says: "Summing up the results, it may be asserted in brief that Foster told nothing of a specific nature that had not been, by *written* answers, first told him; the answers of the spirit were reproductions of the *written* answers." Now, as we deal with facts and not theories, having no opinions to offer on the subject of Spiritualism, our investigation in that direction being simply investigations after truth, we assert that our interview with Foster proves the complete falsity of Mr. Leaman's "summing up." There was not a word *written* in the communication prepared and sealed before the interview, and miles away from Foster, that could have given him the slightest indication of the information he gave our friend C., excepting that "S. C. died in 1849"; and with what kind of eyes did he see thus much? The communication, exactly as it was written, and its results, we have here detailed, and speculators in mental phenomena can draw their own conclusions as to *how* the seer found out "S. C." was the name of a lady, that the lady was the wife, over a quarter of a century ago, of one of the gentlemen present.

CHAPTER II.

MR. FOSTER lived some time with the novelist, Bulwer, at Knebworth, England. Bulwer was much interested in Spiritualism. He once said in speaking of these phenomena, "No man knows *how* they are, nor denies *that* they are." He studied its phenomena, and never suffered himself or others to rail at it. Yet he was not a convert to Spiritualism, as then or now understood. He had trained himself always to look at both sides of every question, so that when others attacked Spiritualism, he would guardedly defend it; and when others enthusiastically supported it, he would attack its abuses; so that neither side of the argument could fairly claim it.

During Foster's visits to Bulwer the latter was engaged in constructing that wonderful novel called, "A Strange Story," in which certain spiritual phenomena are discussed and illustrated in a manner as yet unsurpassed for originality and interest. Certain points in the hero of this novel were taken from the *personnel* and history of Foster, and Bulwer often alluded to the fact that Foster was the model upon which he had based his Margrave.

On several occasions Bulwer, who evidently regarded "A Strange Story" as his greatest book, would read passages from it to Foster. The two, author and medium, would sit in the library at Knebworth, side by side; and there, after the reading, the author would become a disciple, and Foster would hold a seance.

On one occasion Bulwer advised Foster confidentially

not to call himself a "spiritualist," so that the name should not excite popular prejudice against him, but to give his "exhibitions" merely as "scientific phenomena"; but this advice was unpalatable to Foster.

[*The New York Era.*]

And now the questions naturally arise, What does this man Foster do? And how does he do it?

With regard to the second question with reference to the "*how*"—the *modus operandi* of the phenomena—nothing can be definitely known. Mr. Foster says unhesitatingly that they all take place through spirit agency, of which agency he is a mere instrument, and that he does not cause the phenomena any more than he could prevent them. He says candidly that the spirits come to him, and take possession of him, and communicate with him, and that all he can do is to submit to their influences, to do as he is told, and to tell others what *they* tell him. He certainly *seems* to be sincere in what he says, and resorts to no clap-trap whatever. There are no trances, no darkened rooms, no spirit faces, no music in the air, no feeling of hands and legs, etc., no charlatanism or trickery of any *visible* kind. He sits during a seance in a well-lighted room, beside a small table with no apparatus upon it and extremely simple; he holds nothing in his hands, smokes a cigar, and converses on the ordinary subjects of the day at intervals. He claims that the spirits appear to him, or else whisper in his ear, and that their communications to him are all "external"—made from without—entirely independent of his own volition or mentality. It may be that all this is not true; it may be that there *is* some trickery in the matter; but, if so, from the very nature of the case, it is so skillfully done as to amount to a positive miracle of skill; and certainly no one, as yet, has been able either to expose the trickery or to explain the phenomena.

[*The Boston Herald.*]

The spirits may not have any part in the wonderful things done by Foster the "medium," but any man who sees his performances and thinks they are done by any sort of jugglery is an idiot of the most hopeless kind.

[*Boston Journal of Commerce, July 12, 1873.*]

Mr. Charles H. Foster, who has excited so much attention in London and New York by reason of his wonderful powers of com-

municating with the other world, is at the Parker House, where he is holding seances. During the week several members of the press have visited him, and he has afforded every opportunity for a close investigation. His powers seem principally to be directed to the answering of written questions to the deceased. We ourselves witnessed a most remarkable exhibition of power on the occasion of our visit. A gentleman connected with the press was notified that a brother of his was present. The journalist wrote in short-hand for his brother to write his initials on Mr. Foster's arm if he were present, and Mr. Foster immediately after notified the journalist that his brother had written his initials upon his arm, and, turning up his coat-sleeve, displayed to the astonishment of all the initials in red marks upon the arm. Other equally astonishing tests were given, and there can be no doubt that Mr. Foster is capable of astounding all with the phenomena he can develop at his seances.

The following paragraph from the *Philadelphia Evening Day* of April 4, 1873, gives a good idea of the condition of mind which the editors and reporters were in when about to attend Mr. Foster's seances :

We girded our armor, tightened any defective links, and grasped the sword of skepticism in one hand, with our breast guarded by the shield of unbelief, and helmet crowned by the theories of anti-spiritualistic religious education, and made our way to the Continental Hotel.

We give a few quotations of this writer's report :

A PEEP AT THE FUTURE.

One gentleman wrote, "When will I go to Europe?" on a piece of paper, folded it up, and threw it in the pile. Rapidly, without opening the paper, or even looking at it, Foster replied, "Not before 1875." The gentleman, who was apparently an Englishman, acknowledged that such was his intention.

Then the brother of the gentleman appeared, and his name and date of death were announced. A student then asked if his sister should take a journey. In a minute the medium was greatly excited. He said the influence was upon him very strong, and meant something urgent. "She must go at once," the spirit says; "great danger menaces if she remains. Go—go—go, by all means go"—at the same time forcibly striking the table with his hand, and much determina-

tion. The gentleman, at our request, explained that his sister had come from England, but this climate did not agree with her, and she had urged him to send her back.

A PUZZLED PARTY.

We now thought it our turn, and asked the name of our infant brother who died in 1852. It was at once written on a piece of paper, in a large, scrawling hand, the medium exclaiming, "Ah, now we have one very near and dear to you." It was correct. Then we asked what disease brought death to him, and were requested to write a number of diseases on paper. We wrote about a dozen, and the medium, taking a pencil, half closed his eyes and ran his pencil through until he hit the right one, which he marked and threw to us. Our lips we bit slightly. How could he know that?

At one time during the sitting he announced: "A spirit who died of apoplexy is present." None of us recollected any such friend. Presently he gave the name, and we then recollected that it was the name of an acquaintance, a person with whom we were on but little better terms than an occasional meeting and conversation. He had died, however, several years ago, during our absence from the city, and we had either never heard the cause of his death, or else forgotten it. Here, then, was an admirable test,—and this morning, on our way to our office, we stopped and inquired of a person who knew, and ascertained that the death occurred from apoplexy. That's a stunner for us, and leaves us more mystified than ever.

In conclusion, we would state that Mr. Foster remains here until the 15th inst., and those who disbelieve our statements can call on him themselves, assuring them that our article was in no way prompted by Mr. Foster, but by a desire to place our experiences before the public, we having heard extraordinary statements of his ability.

We regard the account of the following seance as one of the most remarkable:

Last night we again held an interview with Mr. Charles Foster, the spiritual medium, and our object was to ascertain how far he could communicate with the spirits of the ancients. Unknown to him we wrote on separate slips of paper the names, Virgil, Don Pedro Calderon de la Barca, Lope Felix de Vega, Don Miguel de Cervantes, and also the name of a dead man under whom we had received instructions in the modern languages. Very soon Mr. Foster handed us a paper, stating that it bore the name of

VIRGIL, THE LATIN BARD,

who wished to communicate with us. We asked him several questions, among them the authorship of the lines in the *Æneid*, "*Hæc olim meminisse juvabit*," which were written on a slip of paper and apparently not seen by Mr. Foster. Virgil claimed the authorship of these lines, and added nine or ten consecutive verses. By request made in writing, as all our questions were, and none of them read by Mr. Foster, proper quotations were made from the various passages in the *Æneid* and *Georgics*. Satisfying ourselves on this point, the

SPIRIT OF THE PROFESSOR

in the above named manner announced its presence, and thereupon ensued the following dialogue, Mr. Foster speaking as the medium of our ethereal friend, whom we asked concerning a friend, long dead, and whom we shall call Albito, he being an Italian :

Dov'e' ? (Where is he ?)

Spirit—Dov'e' chi ? (Where is who ?)

Albito ?

Spirit—Non e' Inglese ; e Italian. (He is not an Englishman ; he is an Italian.) Stelle infermo da sei mese. (He was sick about six months.)

Dov'e' il mio socio ? (Where is my companion, or friend ?), we now asked, for our credulity was shaken, inasmuch as Albito had been killed by robbers.

Spirit—L'uccesero al suo ritorno. (They killed him on his return.)

We felt satisfied the medium knew something, for the manner of this young friend's death, murdered as he was, was here related, and each circumstance connected with it detailed. We next were requested to hold a conversational

INTERVIEW WITH CERVANTES,

whom we asked to give us the concluding lines to the piece of poetry in the second chapter of *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, which reads, *Munca fuera caballero*, etc. Immediately was written its other lines, *De damas tan bien servido como fuera Lanzarote quando de Bretano vino*. Other test-questions were asked Cervantes, who answered them promptly.

CALDERON

next communicated with us, and we asked him to state the third line to the two last in his drama, entitled *El Principe Constante*. Instantly was written on the paper, "*Aqui de sus yer ros grandes*," which line

is the one asked for. We then asked for the second line in the third act, after

THE DEVIL ENTERS.

The answer was written correctly, in these words : "Osabio maestro mio." We doubted that Calderon was the author of three hundred and twenty pieces, but he assured us he was the author of many more which had never been published. Our conversation with de Vega was interrupted, and not as many questions asked through the medium of Mr. Foster, who stated that he did not know the meaning of the words written ; he was an agency merely, and had no comprehension of what often was dictated. Very often he would speak the answers, but usually so fast none but a true Italian or Spaniard could catch every word. As to the means he has of communicating this information, selecting even the concluding word in a line from almost any poet of antiquity, we do not pretend to explain at present, but merely leave our readers to infer.

The extracts of accounts of the different seances previously quoted were written, I think in every instance, by gentlemen who had no faith in the genuineness of the so-called spiritual phenomena. I might say that the majority were convinced that they would be compelled to write adverse criticisms. They were men of ability, position and character. Men not easily deceived, and their testimony, together with that of the writer, I think sufficient proof that there was no trickery, sleight-of-hand, or deception in Mr. Foster's manifestations.

From whence came the power? I know not. I have given this matter years of study and investigation, and I am not convinced that there is any communication between what is termed the spiritual world and this world. There are a certain class of people designated as mediums, who have a power, a gift, or sixth sense, which has never been satisfactorily explained. It is my impression that three-fourth to seven-eighths of all so-called spiritual manifestations are fraudulent ;

that the mediums willfully deceive for money ; that the one-eighth to one-quarter of genuine phenomena make it possible for the frauds to exist.

Humanity always has been and is to-day, thirsting for some satisfactory proof of immortality. "If a man die shall he live again?" is a question asked anew every day. Alas, will it ever be answered beyond a doubt! It is this unanswered question which makes new religions and isms spring up, and for a time flourish like the green bay tree.

I have a vivid recollection of a certain seance where Mr. Foster described the brother of a certain individual in the room as a spirit. The spirit was described as having bright red hair, freckled face, short chin-whiskers, etc. The gentleman said, "You have given the name correctly, and you have perfectly described my brother, but he is alive and lives in Albany." Mr. Foster replied, "In these visions, I perceive the persons plainly, but I cannot always tell whether the spirit be in the body, or out of the body." This incident seemed to be strong proof that the other life has nothing necessarily to do with the manifestations. He had the gift to see with the mental, or what might be called spirit eye, certain forms, which he saw distinctly, and could describe correctly. Mr. Foster sees a form standing at the back of a gentleman's chair. He describes him so accurately that we are positive he sees him, but we find that the person described is alive and lives in Albany. That certainly does not prove an after life! Now we will suppose the person to have died, and gone to the supposed spirit world instead of Albany. Does the fact that Mr. Foster sees distinctly the vision of that person prove immortality, or another life, or a continuance of this life?

I feel that it is a duty which I owe—with the experience I have had—to defend the small part of the phenomena which I am positive is genuine. Occasionally a reporter or editor of some journal would explain away Mr. Foster's supposed power, showing how the "tricks," as they termed them, were executed. For instance, the New Orleans *Picayune* gave what they called an *exposé* of Mr. Foster's performances, in seven different phases.

No. 1, they called the pellet trick, that is, where questions were written, folded up, and thrown down upon the table. They said Mr. Foster had a secret spring, which would let the questions drop into a drawer, and while he engaged the party in conversation, he was opening the questions by the aid of his hand and knee. Of course such an explanation was absurd, as he sat at different tables nearly every day. The tables could be examined by any one, and if he had read the questions, at least two-thirds of them would not have given him any clue as to the correct answer.

No. 2, which was independent writing under the table, was said to be done by Mr. Foster's using a lead-pencil which was placed between his toes, calling attention to the fact that he usually wore slippers, and that he could easily wear glove socks, or split socks. That he was no doubt an expert writer with his toes. This explanation was equally absurd, as Mr. Foster was quite fleshy, and it was with some effort that he could even cross his legs. He certainly never could have been taught to write communications with his toes.

No. 3, was the writing on his arm and hand, which they said was a common trick, which he did with a match, or the sharp point of any piece of steel. As

soon as Mr. Foster and I read that explanation, we tried the experiment, but it was a failure. We did manage to get a few queer initials, but they failed to come and go as quickly. If the number of names which appeared on his arm and hand in one week had been caused by scratching matches on his flesh, I think he would have been badly mutilated. I know of no explanation of this "blood-red writing on the arm," the *Stigmata*.

All the *exposes* of Mr. Foster's power simply strengthened his reputation, and confirmed its genuineness.

It was in the early days of my acquaintance with Mr. Foster that a friend of mine, by the name of Adams, from Evansville, Ind., called upon me, stating that he was interested in Spiritualism, and having been told that I was acquainted with Mr. Foster requested me to introduce him. We called upon Mr. Foster, and Mr. Adams procured a very satisfactory seance. As he was leaving, Mr. Foster told him that in all his experience he had never known one individual to bring so many spirits; that he should suppose the whole Adams family had appeared to him, the room being literally packed with them, coming and going. About two o'clock the next morning, Mr. Foster called to me (I was sleeping in the same room), saying, "George, will you please light the gas? I cannot sleep, the room is still filled with the Adams family, and they seem to be writing their names all over me." And to my astonishment, a list of names of the Adams family were displayed upon his body. I counted eleven distinct names: one was written across his forehead, others on his arms, and several on his back. It seemed to me then, and still seems to me, as being almost miraculous. I can simply term it unexplained, genuine phenomena, where trickery was impossible.

As a class, I do not regard the character of mediums high. They are morally weak. It seems necessary, if controlled by this peculiar power, to be of a decidedly negative disposition, pliable, and easily influenced. Mediums who can easily become entranced, or be controlled successfully by this mysterious influence, can as easily be controlled by their associates in this life, either for evil or good. I wish to convey the idea that they have less will power than ordinary humanity. They are not vicious, but passive, and more easily led by others. If their associations are in the higher and better walks of life, their lives will average well. On the contrary, if they are associated with the immoral, they are easily led down the stream. It has been my observation that when a man or woman has been controlled by these peculiar influences, they are inclined to be weak, dissipated and immoral. They are almost invariably kind-hearted, generous and childlike. I am inclined to think that many of the fraudulent mediums have some genuine power to start with, but they are such weak characters, and with such utter lack of principle, that they soon turn into mere mountebanks, to procure a few dollars from credulous believers. At times, while investigating supposed phenomena, I have been pained, at other times disgusted, to see with what apparent ease intelligent and good men and women were deceived by imposters. There are many people so anxious for some token or proof of an after life, especially those who are in sorrow, that they seem blind to all reason, and are willing to accept any kind of falsity as truth. Possibly many of that class are so good and pure themselves that they cannot conceive of men and women who are willing to falsify and trick upon such sacred matters.

I do not wish to convey the idea that there are not good men, women and children who are gifted with mediumistic powers. Especially do we find such outside of spiritualistic circles. There are several excellent men, like Judge Edmonds and Mr. Kiddle, who were converted to Spiritualism through the marvelous manifestations which they witnessed through their own children.

Speaking of the mediumistic power, which has shown itself from time to time through children, brings to my mind an interesting incident which Mr. Foster and I witnessed while visiting New Orleans, in the year 1873. A gentleman called on us at the St. Charles Hotel, bringing his two daughters, aged five and seven years. He said he came to make some inquiries, as he and his wife were somewhat worried about the peculiar manifestations which had occurred through his daughters. Hearing that Mr. Foster was a celebrated spiritual medium, he hoped to obtain some explanation. They were quite ordinary looking children, and not well dressed. Among many manifestations which he testified to having seen occur through them, was the smaller one's being tied and untied, without the aid of human hands. I asked him if I should put the child in the ordinary clothes-press which stood in our room, if he thought the phenomenon could take place? He said undoubtedly. I asked the little child if she would sit there, and be tied. She lisped out, "Yeth." Indelibly is the occurrence stamped upon my brain. I vividly recall the afternoon, and remember how I picked up the little one, about as I would a good-sized doll, and placed it on a pile of crumpled linen in the wardrobe. I said, "We have no rope." Mr. Foster suggested tying together some of our neckties. I did so,

as we had a number which we were anxious to dispose of. When tied, they measured about six yards in length. As the child requested, I placed the necktie rope folded in her lap. She lisped out again, "I am ready." I immediately proceeded to close the door, but hardly had I done so before I heard another lisp, which said, "I am tied." I pulled the door open instantly, and beheld her tied most securely. She was still sitting on the linen, with the cravats around her waist and wrists, and tied to the topmost hooks above. It was in broad daylight, and her father and Mr. Foster were sitting at the opposite end of the room.

After untying with some difficulty some of the knots, I retied them as securely as possible, and at such places in the wardrobe as were impossible for her to reach. In fact, I tied her so that she could not move. Upon closing the doors, she at once lisped out, "Untied." Only a few seconds elapsed in tying or untying the child.

Up to that time, I had witnessed much phenomena which had astonished me, but this in its simplicity, and the utter impossibility of deception, made an impression upon me which I shall never forget.

CHAPTER III.

[*Northern Border, Bangor, Maine, September 13, 1873.*]

We now sit down, after having given a sketch of the origin and histories of the two Spiritualisms, as presented in our last issue, to relate what experience we had with the great spiritual medium, Mr. Charles H. Foster; and this service we propose to do, whatever may have been or may now be our personal opinions, with judicial fairness.

Our friend first received the attention of the medium. He received many wonderful statements; but we shall not relate them; for, as testimony through us, they would be second-hand; and we shall confine our report to those things that concern ourself.

When our turn came, the medium remarked that he was getting a wonderful manifestation—the initials of a spirit present stamped in characters of blood upon the posterior surface of his left hand; and when he held the hand up where we could see it—it was before upon his lap—we could see certain lines running *transversely* to the direction of the veins, of a deep purple color, which the medium could not quite read. The letters were evidently three in number; they were about four inches in length; and Mr. Foster thought them to be G. F. T. "Perhaps," said we, "they are meant for G. V. T." "Oh, yes," said Mr. Foster, "they are the initials of your own dear GEORGE!"

Mr. Foster then said that George was present; that another person was standing near us, professing to be our mother; that still another, standing on the other side of us, was our father; and that they were all glad of this opportunity of holding intercourse with us, and ready to answer any questions.

We asked, "Can you see them?"

"Oh, yes," replied the medium, "very plainly."

"If you can see them," we resumed, "you will be so good as to describe our father."

"Certainly," said Mr. Foster. "He is a tall man—a little round-shouldered, as if he had been a student, but not at all disfigured; has a very large head, with a high, broad, massive forehead; has a full, prominent, blue-gray eye—looks stern, even severe, and has a heavy,

prominent nose; he is not severe, but only looks so—naturally given to mirth, when not seriously engaged; is very approachable if you have any business with him; stands holding out before him a very large book, like the Bible or a law-book; he must have been a minister, or a judge."

We then asked him if he could decide upon what his business was in life. "Oh, yes," said the medium. "He says if you will write down the names of a dozen occupations, he will point out his own."

We complied with this request. We wrote them with a pencil on a slip of paper. The medium seized the pencil as we dropped it—began to trace lines in a trembling rotary motion all about the paper—crossed off name after name as the pencil quivered along its tortuous and irregular course, till two names were left.

We said, as he dropped the pencil, "There are two names."

"Yes," said the medium, "and he had two occupations."

The words left upon the paper were *Lawyer* and *Justice*.

"How long," we asked, "was he a justice?"

Almost as soon as we could speak the words, the answer came from Mr. Foster's pencil—"30 years."

"What was our father's name?" we then inquired.

"He says I shall write it for him," replied Mr. Foster. Upon this he seized the pencil and wrote a name, which might have been deciphered Amor, or Amos, or Amon Teft.

"It cannot be our father," said we; "for he knew exactly what his name was; and he also knew how to spell it."

"Will our friend write his name more plainly and spell it right?" asked Foster.

Seizing again the pencil, he wrote very plainly, and this time resembling our father's real hand—AMON TEFFT—the only man of his name, we believe, since this world began; and no person in Maine or in New England, besides ourself, could have so readily stated it.

"But you say our mother is here also. Can you give us her maiden name in full?" we asked.

"She says she will write it," was the immediate answer of Mr. Foster.

Taking a slip of paper, about four inches square, and holding it under the table about ten seconds, he brought it up again, when we saw written on it what might have been read Hott, or Hatt, or Hett, so badly were the letters formed. We pointed out this ambiguity to Mr. Foster, and he at once said: "Will mother write her name so plainly that we can read it?" He then held another similar slip be-

neath the table, between ourself, and him, and in less time than before brought it up with the name written in a round, full, legible hand—HOLT.

The moment the latter name was produced, Mr. Foster broke forth in a personal address to us, as if from our mother, full of kindness and affection, and promising us with constant love and guidance, which closed up with the words, "*From your own dear mother,* REBECCA HOLT."

Only one person in New England, besides ourself, knew that name!

Mr. Foster then said that "George" wished us to write down such questions as we would like answered. We hesitated an instant. "He says he will answer the questions you have in your pocket," interposed the medium. We had forgotten that we had brought any written questions. We felt in several pockets and could find none. We remembered writing some, but thought we must have left or lost them. We so stated. Mr. Foster insisted that we had some with us. We made a more thorough search and found them jammed down by a mass of letters into the bottom of our coat-pocket. Taking them out, and folding out the crumpled mass—the paper was soft printing-paper—we tore off half a dozen questions, in separate pieces, folded each one up several times over and over, then laid them down upon the table.

One was, "Is there any resurrection of the material body?"

Mr. Foster picked it up, and at the same instant answered: "I do not know, father; but I think not. Why should there be, for I have now as good a body as I could wish?"

Another question was: "Is there any intermediate state of the dead?"

The medium began making this answer the moment his fingers touched the paper: "No, father, when we leave the world, we go straight to heaven."

A third question was, "Have you seen in your present state any of your relations?"

The reply came as promptly as before: "Yes, father, I am with them very often."

We then asked the medium if the one he called "George" would answer a test-question. He answered, "Yes, he says he will." We then asked in an audible voice, "Will you state how many of your father's family are in this life, and how many there are in spirit-land?"

"He wishes to know," said Mr. Foster, "whether he is to include himself?"

We answered, "Yes"; and then the medium said, "He will point out the numbers on the card."

We then picked up a card that had been lying on the table, which contained the alphabet and the numerals up to *nine* and the *cipher*. We touched the figures all around at random, for quite a while, keeping clear of the true numbers. We at last touched the figure *four*; and we heard the three raps, indicating, as they say, that that was right. We then repeated the process, and we again touched figure *four*, the same raps occurred. "How is that?" inquired the medium. "Oh, I see," he said immediately, "he says there are four with you and four with him, himself included," which was the fact.

We then asked if he would answer another test-question. "Certainly," said Mr. Foster.

Speaking to the medium, we said, "Will you state our exact age?"

Mr. Foster's reply was, "He will point it out on the card."

We then, as before, carelessly struck the figures on the card, for some time keeping clear of the right ones. At last we touched figure *six*, when the three raps followed. We passed on, however, as if we did not hear them. Again, after a little skirmishing, we hit *six* again; the three raps were repeated. We then ran all along the line of figures, touching every one of them, but not in serial order. We obtained no response till we reached the *cipher*; and then came, not three raps, but a sort of confused knocking. The medium seemed puzzled for a moment. Soon, however, his face cleared up, and he said, "George is puzzled how to answer by the card; for he says you will not be sixty years of age till the 20th of this month." It was then the 18th; and the age was thus given to a day.

We then received what purported to be a voluntary communication from George. It was professedly dictated to, and certainly written out by, Mr. Foster. We have not the document with us as we write, but we can give the substance of it very readily. It was about as follows:

DEAR FATHER—It is as great a satisfaction to me as it can be to you to have this meeting. Do not think of me as lying in the ground. All that was material has gone back to dust. But I am still living and very happy. I stand near you every day, and always will stand near you to guard and guide you. We shall meet again, and finally make an unbroken family in Heaven.

GEORGE.

This communication was apparently the closing act of the *seance*; for the medium rose and said that he could do no more. But it was not quite the closing act. "Oh," said Mr. Foster, as if a last word had been hastily added, "George says, 'Give my love to Frank!' Who is Frank?" said the medium. "Is there any one he used to call Frank?"

"Yes," replied we, "he has a living brother of that name, a dentist in this city."

Such, reader, as perfectly as we can recall it, and with the most absolute fairness, by the help of a memory that scarcely ever fails us, was our *seance*, or sitting, with the celebrated medium, Mr. Charles H. Foster. Remember, however, it was our first *seance*. We went twice afterwards, each time with a friend, and a friend whose relatives were our relatives, whose loves are our loves, but in different degrees. All the names they wrote—all the persons they called for—were no more familiar to them than to us; as some things happened to them quite additional to our experience, we propose to write out what we saw and heard on these occasions, to be published in our next number.

It is due to all concerned now to say—which we do frankly—that, as to mere facts, without implying at this time any opinion, Mr. Foster made not one mistake, so far as we were concerned, in this whole sitting. The raps were real raps, quite audible, though not loud, and sensible to the feeling, when the hands were laid upon the table.

Again, the impression of the three large letters, upon the back of the medium's hand, was a visible impression, and not the mere swelling of the veins; for the veins all run the other way; and more than that, the letters faded away and vanished as we were looking at them.

Again, the description given of the writer's father was about as accurate as any one would conceive of him, had he been familiar with his appearance, as we were forty years ago; his name was written correctly, very much as he used to write it, though not exactly; his two occupations were stated rightly; for, though a lawyer by profession, he held that office known under the old New York constitution as County Justice, now called County Judge; and this position he held consecutively for *thirty years*, precisely as Mr. Foster stated; for we well remember hearing him say, upon his being re-elected the last time, that he should not accept the office, as a man who had held the same position for thirty years had held it long enough. He therefore declined the honor, and never took it afterwards; and no person living but ourself could have recalled this fact.

Again, our mother's maiden name was given correctly ; and yet we had not written her name or our father's for months and years. Nor was either name on any of the slips of paper that we had handed in. Our mother's name was really written under the table—in about ten seconds—and not, as we believe, by Mr. Foster. He could not have done so without our seeing the operation ; for the paper and his hand were within a few inches of us. Then, who knew that her name was Rebecca but ourself?

Again, it was a fact we had written out a series of questions before going to see Mr. Foster, but had forgotten all about them, till reminded of the fact by his saying that we had such questions in our pocket.

Again, when Mr. Foster picked up the papers containing our queries, they were folded several times, close and tight. Nor did he look at them with his eyes. He began to make his answers the moment his hand touched the papers ; and he was generally looking somewhere else.

Again, it was and is a fact— a fact that could not have been known to Mr. Foster—that the writer's family of children are equally divided between the living and the departed, exactly as he stated.

Again, the written communication was somewhat after the manner of our son—so were all his answers—but we make no great account of this circumstance ; for any person might have composed the letter ; and the similarities of style may be imaginary or accidental. The last word, however—the message sent to our living son—was a very different thing. Frank was George's idol when they were both alive. They were nearly of an age. They were both brought up together ; and there were circumstances in their joint history, not necessary to be mentioned, which made the younger regard with marked tenderness his elder brother. It was strikingly natural—if he had time to send but a single message to the family—that he should in his hurry, or rather the medium's hurry, send it to his brother Frank. When, during the war, he was away in Europe, he always said that if his brother should be drafted, he would resign his office, go home and take his place. There was great devotion on his part through life. This short message—"Give my love to Frank"—had, therefore, a meaning in it, which no one can feel as he does who here puts it to paper and to print.

We have felt very reluctant to give an exact report of this *seance*, as it enters so far into the domain of our personal and family affairs. But such are the subjects in regard to which we could most accurately

test this matter. We had also promised several of our friends, and the public, that we would publish, without fear or favor, exactly what we should see and hear. We have now redeemed our pledge, and we have at present nothing further to say upon the subject.

¹ It was astonishing the number of people who, upon leaving Mr. Foster's seances, would say, "It is all animal magnetism"; "It is mesmerism"; "It is simply electricity"; "It is clairvoyance." These words are significant. They truly contain a volume in a word, and certainly only superficial minds would use them so flippantly. Others would settle the enigma by saying, "It is mind-reading," as though mind-reading were an easy and simple thing.

This reminds me of my first experience in what seems so incorrectly called—mind-reading. While Mr. Foster and I were at the Southern Hotel, in St. Louis, we received a call from an old gentleman, evidently from the country, who brought with him an awkward lad of about eighteen years of age. The old gentleman said the young man seemed to have some peculiar power, and that he called upon Mr. Foster, hoping he might be enlightened in regard to the young man's strange gifts. I experimented with him for about one hour. I thought of an article in my overcoat pocket, in the adjoining room. By taking my hand he, without much difficulty, led me into the other room to my overcoat, and took the article from the pocket. Mr. Foster was unable to give them any satisfactory explanation. This was the young man who later became so well known as "Brown, the mind-reader." He gave exhibitions before committees at several universities. The so-called mind-readers, including the late Washington Irving Bishop, do not seem to have accomplished much. Many persons occasionally arrive at correct conclusions

regarding another's thoughts, judging by circumstances, or expression of countenance. But I am quite sure that it is utterly impossible to read another's mind. There is no such art, or science, as mind-reading.

On one occasion upon our arrival in New York from a southern tour, we found considerable excitement among spiritualists over a committee which had been formed for the purpose of exposing so-called mediums. They had an office in the lower part of Broadway, and advertised at the spiritual meetings, and other places, that they proposed to expose all professional mediums, and that they were convinced that they could perform, without any spiritual or other unknown aid, any manifestation, performances or tricks which were done by private or professional mediums. I met them at a conference of spiritualists which convened every Sunday afternoon to discuss Spiritualism. I found the committee bright, smart and intelligent gentlemen, who seemed to be in earnest, and I am confident they believed they were doing, and were still to do, work which would be a benefit to society. A day or two before meeting them, I had advertised Mr. Foster in one of the daily papers as the Great *Unexposed* Spiritual Medium. They attacked me quite sharply at the conference, and said they were about to "go" for Mr. Foster; that they intended to expose him, and said they had heard about what he could do; that they had been exposing like phenomena, and if I would call at their rooms on Broadway they would show me how it was done. I told them I had had some experience in these matters, and that I thought they were going a little too fast. That it was true that there was much humbug, sleight-of-hand and deception, but that if they investigated this subject long enough, and were anxious to get at the

truth, they would find enough genuine phenomena which they could not explain to keep them in active study during their earthly existence. They said I looked like an honest man, and talked very fairly, but that I was deceived. They wished to know when they could have a seance with Mr. Foster. I told them I should be glad to make an appointment whenever it was agreeable, but that it would cost each of them five dollars. They then wished to know if two or three persons could sit about the room in different places which they should designate, free of charge. I told them no. That they could bring as many detectives or friends as they chose to sit around the room, or under the table, but it would be five dollars for each person. I told the leader, however, that it was Mr. Foster's custom never to take a dollar unless the parties were perfectly satisfied, and that although they were prejudiced, and it seemed to me almost determined not to be convinced, I would however make the same terms with them, and that if after the seance they still believed they could give the same performance, and that the whole thing was deception, their money would be returned. They were somewhat surprised at the generous proposition. Five of them called, according to agreement. Two or three sat at the table, the others in different parts of the room as they chose. I shall not forget that seance. The facial expressions were a profound study. At the close they each paid their five dollars eagerly, and said they had certainly received the worth of their money. In their insinuating way they complimented Mr. Foster, saying he was the cleverest medium they had met yet. That they intended to get at the bottom facts and expose everything he had done, but they would admit that they could not do so at present.

They proved a very profitable committee to Mr Foster, and had many seances with him, willingly paying the full price each time; and, although they severely denounced Spiritualism, and mediums in general, they were fair enough afterwards, in their speeches at the conference, to do Mr. Foster partial justice. They acknowledged that while they still believed it all a trick, they were unable to find out the *modus operandi*.

Although Mr. Foster has long since been numbered with the dead, thereby preventing the reader to verify the truth or falsity through him of what has been here stated, still there are hundreds of well-known people in New York to-day who were well acquainted with Mr. Foster, and who spent much time in his society, and at his seances. I think I can, without giving offense, refer to such gentlemen as John Russell Young, Frank B. Carpenter, Steele Mackay, George Sheriden, Dr. Crane, George Chase, Charles W. Brooke and A. E. Lancaster. I am sure these gentlemen and many others will gladly verify and testify to the truth of what I have written as to the peculiar gifts of Mr. Foster.

Unlike other mediums, Mr. Foster needed no "conditions." All times, all days, and all places were alike to him. Raps in answer to questions came at his bidding, standing at the corner of the street, in the grocery store, in the cafe, or riding in the Broadway stage. Thomas R. Hazard writes :

One day as I was passing down Fifth Avenue I thought I heard my name pronounced, and looking back saw Foster and a stranger standing quietly by an iron railing. I turned, when Foster beckoned and asked me to wait for him a moment, as he wished to see me. Shortly after the stranger left, and Foster joined me. As we walked down the avenue, he told me that the gentleman who had just left him

was an occasional visitant of his circles, who had a short time before joined him on the avenue and said to him : "Mr. Foster, I wish you could make the raps somewhere else than in your own room," to which Foster replied that he could have them come anywhere ! The gentleman said, "I will give you a dollar for each one you will make just here." Whereupon Foster asked the skeptic to stand with him beside the iron railing and count aloud all the raps as they were made. Soon the raps came on the iron railing, and the gentleman counted them until the number ten was reached, when a pause ensued, and Foster asked if the raps should yet go on ? "No," said the gentleman ; "I am satisfied," suiting his action to his word by handing Foster a ten dollar bill, which he then showed to me.

Mr. Foster was fond of walking the streets, and riding in cabs and stages. He did not like to be confined, and was apt to neglect attending to his seances. When I would remonstrate with him, he was always pleased if I would consent to leave it to the spirits as to whether people were waiting for him at his apartments. It was quite evident to me that the spirits were very apt to favor him, for if he wished to make a call, or go riding in the park, they invariably rapped out that there was no one waiting for him at his rooms. He always had the advantage, I think, when any dispute or misunderstanding was left to his spirit friends.

Fabulous stories have been told about the amount of money which Mr. Foster made out of his profession. The reports have been greatly exaggerated. He received five dollars for each person at a seance, and usually averaged from ten to forty persons each day. He was frequently invited to private houses to give seances, and on such occasions he was paid \$50, but sometimes received \$100. The largest receipts in a regular way, which I remember, was one day in San Francisco, when they amounted to nearly \$300. One other day I especially remember, while at the White Heart Hotel, Melbourne, Australia,

when he was visited by a delegation from the Melbourne Club, the receipts were nearly \$400. But a fair average day was \$100. His money, however, melted away like snowflakes in the sunshine. It has been said, "Money flowed into his coffers like water, and as freely flowed out, leaving nothing behind." I wish to state most emphatically that not a dollar did Mr. Foster squander in gambling. A report gained quite a circulation to that effect. I think it only justice to him that I make this statement. While he had many faults, gambling was not one of them. He did not even know the Ace of Spades from the Queen of Hearts, never having played a game of cards in his life.

The largest number at one seance which I remember was thirty-three persons. Frequently people would come with one question, and when answered immediately depart. Others would tax the medium to his fullest capacity, often leaving him in a nervous and uncomfortable condition. Frequently after asking two or three questions, they would be so surprised at the answers, and so astonished to hear the names of their dead ones spoken, that they would make excuses and leave at once. They needed the fresh air!

CHAPTER IV.

THE following account is from the *Evansville Daily Journal*, Dec. 28th, 1872, written by the editor :

The answer came as before, "We are happy to inform you that dear little Willie W——, your aunt's little boy, is with me and very happy. He is much grown."

The remarkable thing about this reply is that Willie's name was written in full, and had not been mentioned or written before that time ; neither had any reference of any kind been made to "Aunt Mary," whose son, little Willie, had been in this world. These things it was impossible for the medium to have gained by anything that transpired in the room or from what had been written, even granting that Mr. Foster saw the writing, which was impossible.

Again we asked of the grandfather : "Can you tell where grandma, mother, and Aunt N—— are ?"

Answer : "Your Grandma ——, N——, and S—— are here in Evansville." Here the names were given just as the grandmother had been accustomed to speaking them in life, the first name of each person. These names had not been written in the question, nor any reference made to them.

It now came the second spirit-interviewer's opportunity, and he wrote the name of his deceased father among others upon the slip, folded them, and placed them on the table.

The medium did as before, and said that this spirit's name would appear in letters of blood upon his hand. He held his open hand just below the drop-light, and gradually the color in the centre of the back of the hand began to redden, one vein became swollen, and finally there were the letters

"W, T," IN BLOOD RED

upon it. He held it there until the color had entirely disappeared and the natural hue restored to it. He then placed a paper under the table, and "W—— T——" was again written upon it. The inter-

viewer then asked, on paper concealed and folded up, "When did I last see you?" The answer came, "1854," which was pronounced correct.

Aside from the phenomenon of

THE DISCOLORED HAND

is the strange revelation of this date, which the interviewer states was not known to a single person in Evansville, his father having died in that year near Cincinnati.

[*The Memphis Avalanche, of Jan. 11th, 1873.*]

In the next seance, a gentleman asked a female spirit what was the favorite air she used to hum. The answer was :

Polly, put the kettle on,
Let's all take tea,

which the gentleman promptly declared to be correct. During this sitting all sorts of names and precise dates were furnished with singular promptness, and a considerable number of predictions were given. Some of the questions and answers were remarkably piquant and significant, and this was probably the most satisfactory seance given by Mr. Foster since his arrival in Memphis. Perhaps the best test of all, the ancient family colored nurse, who spelled out her name by the alphabet, and gave her age at death by the figures 97 in red, on the back of the medium's hand. To Mr. D. came a written message from a gentleman who died nearly three years ago in California, who wrote his own Christian name on a paper under the table, and afterwards gave through the medium his own proper signature ; also a message from a lady who gave her name in full as written, and afterwards, by request, gave an assumed name, under which she was thought to have before communicated.

In this account of Foster's mediumship, the purpose has been not to startle the reader with sensational statements or comical delineations but, in as clear and impartial a manner as possible, to

SET FORTH THE FACTS

just as they appeared to the representatives of the *Avalanche*. Mr. Foster does not seem to court newspaper favor. When the writer presented himself to Mr. Foster as the representative of the great and good *Avalanche*, for the purpose of giving the public the simple truth

respecting him, that worthy replied in substance: "I have but little regard for newspaper men, but, if you have a five-dollar bill in your pocket, we can proceed to business." A significant motion towards your reporter's left-hand waistcoat-pocket settled the medium's scruples on the main point, and after a hearty laugh to business we went.

[*The Memphis Daily Appeal.*]

The parlor was handsomely and neatly furnished, and Professor Foster was clad in a plain comfortable business suit of tweed. Those who expected to see the room hung round with old worm-eaten tapestry, with cabalistic figures liberally embroidered all over it, and the magician himself clothed in a long garment of parti-colors, with many a diamond, cross and crook, like the magi of old, were disappointed, for everything was disclosed to view, and a simple damask cover only was on the table, around which the company seated themselves. It projected a few inches over the edges, and Mr. Foster said, in order that there might not be even the slightest shade of deception, he would strip off the cover; but one of the company, who is in the habit of using a little slang now and then, exclaimed: "Oh, not at all, Mr. Foster; we have come here to give you a good,

SQUARE DEAL,

and we wish you to give us the same."

Mr. Foster—I have nothing mysterious about me. I don't receive my visitors in a long magician's gown, to frighten and astonish them.

Mr. Brown—Can you answer any question that I may ask you?

Mr. Foster—No, sir. I don't pretend to do that. You surely would not go to a physician, if you were suffering from a dangerous disease, and ask him if he could cure you, with the expectation that he would say "Yes." He would tell you he would do the best he could for you; and I will communicate to you whatever is communicated to me.

A long seance followed. I will quote only the last test given:

Mr. Foster—Here is the spirit of Maggie—she wants to communicate with you.

Mr. Robinson—I don't know anything about her. I never knew a girl of that name.

Mr. Brown—Oh, that's all right. I know her. She is an old sweetheart of mine. Send her to me.

Maggie having been safely sent over the table to Brown, Mr. Robinson was particular to know what disease his brother Bob died of.

Mr. Foster—His death was accidental, was it not?

Mr. Robinson—No, sir; it was not.

Mr. Foster—The spirit says the death was accidental; but if you write the names of several diseases,

THE SPIRIT

will pick out the right one as you touch the letter on this alphabetical card.

Mr. Robinson did so, and at the letter "S" three knocks were given, the word "sun-stroke" pointed out from among the list of "diseases," and the French term, *coup de soleil*, found written on the back of the paper. There was an error in the spelling of the French, but as the supposed writer was a Scotchman, the error was easily accounted for, and there was a smile all round the table at Robinson contending that sun-stroke was a disease instead of an accident.

OTHER MANIFESTATIONS

followed even more wonderful, striking, and startling than those referred to above, and the *seance*, which lasted over an hour, was brought to a close. During the entire time Mr. Foster displayed the greatest *bonhomie*. He was courteous, polite and affable, and seemed to enjoy the perplexity and wonder of his visitors when anything particularly strange was revealed.

Business appeared to be particularly brisk yesterday afternoon, as over a couple of dozen cards were brought to the room during the *seance* from parties who wished to peep into the spiritual world, and Mr. Foster informed his visitors that every hour of his stay in Memphis was engaged up till the time of his departure for New Orleans on Monday.

Tests like the foregoing were given by Mr. Foster every day, and apparently without any effort. Sitting with Governor Wood, of Utah Territory, the Governor asked what was the cause of his mother's death. Foster replied immediately, "Cancer," and wrote her full name Margaret Wood.

Another gentleman asks of his spirit friend, "Of what did you die?" Mr. Foster in a few moments replied, "The spirit says to me, 'Smothered in a coal mine.'"

Another spirit came and said, "I thank you for being so kind to me when I was sick and dying. You smoothed my pillow. It will not be necessary for me to give you my name, for you know me." The gentleman said he did.

At another time a lady was sitting at the table, when a rap came at the door, and a strange gentleman walked in. Mr. Foster then said to the lady, "Why you two are connected. I should judge that you were brother and sister. I saw a light go out of each and unite." The gentleman replied, "You are quite correct, we are brother and sister."

I remember one day Foster gave most of his communications in German. It was upon that day that two ladies and a gentleman wrote living names and false names, trying in every way to confuse the medium. But he came out victorious, nevertheless. He said to one of these ladies, a spirit comes to you here whose name you have not written. He says he was shot in the leg. Both ladies with an incredulous smile said they knew no such person, but in a few moments Foster gave the name. One of the ladies then remembered, and remembered so forcibly that she burst into tears.

While we were at Denver, a gentleman called from Golden, Colo. He brought a sealed envelope, with a name written inside. The gentleman said he brought it as a test, as the name was written by another party, he not knowing it. Foster wrote it out at once, "Mary Robinson." The gentleman opened the envelope in our presence, and found it to be correct.

General Chain asked Mr. Foster for a communication from Rufus Choate. Mr. Foster immediately gave him six lines in Latin from one of Rufus Choate's speeches. Foster had no knowledge of Latin.

The day before Mr. Foster left for his summer home in Salem, Mass., he purchased two empty champagne baskets for the purpose of packing therein his extra luggage. We were both awakened that night by certain scratching noises. Mr. Foster said he was quite sure the noises proceeded from the spirits. I told him I thought not, that it was undoubtedly *rats*. I rapped on the bed, and shoo-shooed at the rats. We then endeavored to sleep, but in a few moments there were noises as of scratching on the carpet. He asked me, as usual on such occasions, to light the gas, as it is a peculiar fact that these manifestations do not occur in the light. As I felt tired and sleepy, I did not do so. In a few moments, however, there was a terrible commotion. The champagne baskets commenced running around the room. They flew up in the air, crashing against each other, and what seemed to be electric sparks appeared in many places in the room; and in shorter time than it takes to relate it, all the chairs were piled upon our bed. No harm was done, however, and I was then quite willing to light the gas, which we kept burning for the remainder of the night. I said to Mr. Foster that I did not think it was very kind of the spirits to come and annoy us in that way. He said they were frolicsome spirits, and wished to come back and have a little sport. I suppose Andrew Jackson Davis would call them *Diaka*, or evil spirits. I give these experiences exactly as they occurred.

The next day we left for Salem. Mr. Foster's father was a particularly kind and pleasing man, without

guile, and in his younger days followed the sea. We were sitting together one morning under the large tree which flourished in their yard. After passing the compliments of the day, he remarked that he had passed a bad night, and had not slept well. I inquired what was the matter? He replied that Aunt Bessie had annoyed him and mother (his wife) all night. I replied that I had heard Charles speak frequently of Aunt Bessie, but I had supposed she had died some years ago. "Oh, yes," he said, "but she keeps coming back at night, goes in and out of our room, pulls open the bureau drawers, and fusses over her old things." He continued, "We have asked her repeatedly to keep away, and not disturb us while we were sleeping, but every little while she comes back and makes a night of it." Very innocently he said to me, "Do *you* not see spirits?" "Why no," I said, "certainly not." He replied that *he* did, and that he supposed every one did. That his family had ever since he could remember, and that he did not suppose his family differed in that respect from other families. I certainly think he was perfectly sincere, and that he saw visions. His wife, Mrs. Foster, mother of Charles, told me she had talked with spirits all her life, and that her mother and father also conversed with them. She said when Charles was a baby that she was too poor to hire a girl, and having to do her own work her spirit friends often came to her assistance, and that they had often *rocked Charlie's cradle by the hour*. To hear them speak of the other life, and of their communications with those who had passed to the other shore, made the intercourse between the two worlds seem as real as between Europe and America.

While I was associated with Mr. Foster, we lost no

opportunity to investigate all new phases of these phenomena. The majority we considered fraudulent. Spirit photography seemed to us a thin fraud. Mr. Mumbler, of Boston, had fine apartments, and seemed to be a pleasant man. We had our photographs taken there. Back of each of us appeared a well-known actress, which of course was no test; and, as plenty of photographers could produce equally as good or better "spirit" pictures, we came to the conclusion that this phase was not worthy of any further attention.

Mr. Foster, Mr. George Chase and myself went to Moravia, N.Y., as soon as we heard of the phenomena which was taking place at Mr. Keeler's house. Each of us received some very convincing tests. We felt quite sure we were not known to Mr. Keeler's household. A plain board cabinet was built up in a corner of the room. Miss Andrews, who I believe was a former servant girl, was the medium who sat within the cabinet. There was a small aperture where the spirits were supposed to show their faces. A dim light was kept burning during the seances. This particular seance was given at two o'clock in the afternoon. There were about ten of us, from different parts of the country. We sat in a semicircle, similar to a minstrel band. As the spirits were announced, and were supposed to appear at this aperture, we asked around, commencing with Bones at the end, "Is it for me?" "Is it for me?" and so on, until we came to the Tambourine end. A particularly good test which came to me was in this wise. A woman's hand was thrust through the aperture, and when it came my turn to say "Is it for me?" there were three raps, which indicated yes. I said I thought not, as it had no significance. Then we all asked around again, and

when it came my turn, I said, "Is it for me?" Again there were three raps, and the medium said, "It is your mother's hand. Do you not recognize it?" Then an almost forgotten incident came to my mind, and I said, "Yes," and asked if the spirit would show plainer with her hand what she meant to signify. She did so by attempting to straighten out the hand, while the third finger remained bent towards the palm. A gold ring appeared on one finger. My mother when a baby crawled into a fireplace and burned her hand so that one finger always remained bent over. While her hand was closed it did not show, and while she could straighten all the other fingers, this finger remained bent. On the same hand she wore a gold ring. As this circumstance was not known to any person living outside of our family, I considered it remarkable. What strengthens this test is the fact that I did not know which was the burned finger. When I returned to New York, my sisters informed me that it was the third finger, as above stated. What purported to be the spirit of Louis Gottschalk came to Mr. Foster. They had a long conversation, which was also satisfactory. Many different faces appeared at the aperture, and the spirits were supposed to materialize inside of the cabinet. That part we very much doubted, and I doubt it to-day more than ever, as all attempts at materialization which I have investigated since that time lead me to believe that it is all a *transparent humbug*, and I think the houses which carry on this deception and obtain money under false pretenses, deceiving honest men and women, ought to be closed by the police. If while some of these supposed spirits were dancing around the room, purporting to be loved relatives, a bullet from a pistol should be put into their

forms, I think it would prove a convincing test that they were not disembodied spirits, but the lowest type of humanity.

These evil-faced Jezebels, who sell their tricks so shamefully for a dollar or two, remind me of Salter's poem :

GRETCHEN.

Near the cathedral door, as black and base
As some foul wretch loved by a demon crew,
Squatting in filth, a weird hag met my view,
The mark of bagnios stamped upon her face.

But in the beldame's wrinkles I could trace
A vestige of dead beauty glimmering through ;
Therefore I asked, "What sombre Fates pursue
Thy life, and make thee peddle in this place ?"

She answered : "*I was Marguerite !* For gold
I have unnumbered men since Faust enticed,
And given to each my gladdened kiss of sin.
And now, to warm my withered flesh so old,
I sell these images of saints and Christ,
To buy myself a penny's worth of gin."

Although I have not paid any attention to the different phases of the phenomena for several years, I am still deeply interested in it, and would be willing to spend time and money in its investigation, could I find a few suitable persons to join me. I often hear of such men as the Rev. Mr. Hepworth, Rev. Heber Newton and Mr. Frank Carpenter as being interested in these phenomena, and I should be very much pleased to communicate with any honest investigator in regard to forming a committee to devote one evening out of the week to the study of this subject. "Life is short," and "we are passing away," knowing but little of this life, and less of any other.

As there is no one who has ever seen the century plant bloom the second time, so no one has ever known but one Charlie Foster. It is not surprising that after a few weeks' acquaintance with him, Bulwer found himself supplied with new material for a book. "A Strange Story," indeed. Foster stood apart from all men, distinct and alone. It is true, to a great extent, that humanity is alike, but I wish to convey the idea that while he was like others he was also peculiarly unlike *all* others. He was extravagantly dual. He was not only Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, but he represented half-a-dozen different Jekylls and Hydes. He was strangely gifted, and on the other hand he was woefully deficient. He was an unbalanced genius, and at times, I should say, insane. He had a heart so large indeed that it took in the world: tears for the afflicted; money for the poor; the chords of his heart were touched by every sigh. At other times, his heart shrunk up until it disappeared. He would become pouty, and with the petulance of a child would abuse his best friends. He wore out many of his friends, as an unbreakable horse does its owner. No harness fitted Foster. He was not vicious, but absolutely uncontrollable. He would go his own way, which way was often the wrong way. Like a child he seemed to have no forethought. He seemed to live for to-day, caring nothing for to-morrow. If it were possible, he did exactly as he wished to do, regardless of consequences. He would take no one's advice, simply because he could not. He seemed impervious to the opinions of others, and apparently yielded to every desire; but after all he did not abuse himself much, as he continued in perfect health until the final breaking up. When asked, "How is your health?" his favorite expression was, "Excel-

lent. I am simply bursting with physical health." The same dual nature showed itself in his work. Some days he would sit at the table all day, and far into the night, under tremendous mental strain. He would do this day after day, and night after night. Then days and weeks would come when he would do absolutely nothing. Turn hundreds of dollars away and disappoint the people, without any apparent reason, save he was in the mood for loafing.

CHAPTER V.

Mr. Foster's aunt, who lives in Salem, Mass., sent me the following thrilling article, published in a Boston paper, Dec. 28th, 1885. I remember the seance as though it occurred yesterday. It is as true as starlight.

AN AWFUL VISION

CONJURED UP BY FOSTER IN A SOUTHERN HOTEL—HE DESCRIBES THE TERRIBLE DEATH OF A MAN ALONE ON THE PLAINS—A STRANGE SEANCE BY THE MAN OF MANY WEIRD SECRETS.

NEW YORK, Dec. 27.—I knew Charles Foster, the medium, who died last week, very well indeed, says a writer in the *New York World*. I spent one winter—that of 1873-4, I think—down South. I was traveling from town to town, and every once in a while I found that I was putting up at the same hotel with Foster. We used to meet under such conditions every evening in the bar-room. He was an exceptionally sociable fellow, who never "talked shop," and, without drinking very much, loved to be convivial with cheerful company. He was on a professional tour, giving seances at five dollars a head, and even in the impoverished South thought nothing of \$200 or \$300 as a day's income.

While we were talking one night, Foster and I, there came a knock at the door. Bartlett arose and opened it, disclosing as he did so two young men plainly dressed, of marked provincial aspect. They were ordinary middle-class Southerners. I saw at once that they were clients, and arose to go. Foster restrained me.

"Sit down," he said. "I'll try and get rid of them, for I'm not in the humor to be disturbed. In any case they are only commonplace chaps, and I'll soon be through with them."

I stayed, and it was the first and only seance of Foster's that I, in my character of unbeliever, ever took part in.

By this time the young men had ascertained from the courteous Bartlett that the great medium was disengaged, and they entered.

Foster hinted that he had no particular inclination to gratify them then and there, but they protested that they had come some distance, and, with a characteristically good-natured smile, he gave in. What followed I shall describe as minutely as I can, for the whole seance is to this day as vividly impressed upon my memory as if it had taken place only yesterday.

In the room I have pictured Foster sat as far from the table with the marble top as two feet at least. Bartlett had returned to his sofa and to his news paper. I sat by the door and the two young men, with awe-stricken faces, sat by the table, one of them resting his arm on it. Foster lolled back in his chair, voluptuously watching the smoke of his cigar. His left hand was in his trousers pocket, his right was free and toying constantly with his mustache. One leg was thrown over the other. On the table were several long, narrow strips of paper, about the width of the margin of a newspaper, and a couple of short pencils. The young men looked furtively round the room and at Foster. It was easy to see that one of them

WAS INCLINED TO UNBELIEF.

"Now," said Foster, in his usual indolent manner, "it will be necessary for you (to the skeptic) to think of some person, now in the spirit world, in whom you have confidence. Ah! as I speak to you some one has arrived. It is a woman—perhaps your mother. She is going to communicate with you."

And at that instant there came a rap upon the table, apparently in the lower edge of the marble, so loud and so distinct that three of us started—the young strangers and myself.

"Take this card," proceeded Foster, his eyes shut and his expression one of delicious drowsiness. "It contains all the letters of the alphabet. Spell out, letter by letter, in silence, the name of any spirit you may expect."

Then followed what to me seemed a most extraordinary incident of telegraphy. As fast as the young man struck the right letter an invisible something smote the marble with a ringing tap.

"Do you recognize the spirit?" inquired Foster, still drowsy and uninterested.

"It's my aunt, sir," replied the countryman, very white, but with a resolute face, as became a brave young fellow who was bound to stand any revelation, no matter how tremendous.

"You are sure of it?"

"That's her name."

"She is standing between us looking at you. She is tall and thin, dark hair, mixed with gray, very wrinkled, and her smile is very gentle."

"It's my aunt!" cried the lad, with eyes dilated.

"Take one of those slips of paper," continued Foster, twisting his cigar in his mouth. "Write on it whatever question you want to ask of her. Then roll it up in your fingers as small as possible and give it to me."

It took the young man a few minutes to think out and then compose his question—a task in which he was aided by his friend. Then he rolled it up into a ball about the size of a pea, and handed it to the medium. Foster took it indifferently, held it against his forehead just as he received it, and without a moment's delay, but in rather hesitating voice, said:

"You have asked your aunt whether in her judgment it would be a safe speculation for you to go as a partner in the butcher business with So-and-So (mentioning a name) in Algiers." Algiers, by the way, is the Brooklyn of New Orleans.

"Yes, sir," gasped the young man.

"Your aunt says to you in reply," drawled Foster, "that she does not like to interfere with your plans, but you must be very careful in your dealings with So-and-So. His reputation is a very bad one, and he has cheated everybody he ever was in business with."

A flock of other questions and answers followed, all expressed in the same way. The more he replied the drowsier and more indolent grew Foster. I thought he was tired of the interview and was feigning sleep to end it. All of a sudden

HE SPRANG TO HIS FEET

with such an expression of horror and consternation as an actor playing Macbeth would have given a good deal to imitate. His eyes glared, his breast heaved, his hands clenched. It seemed as if some horrible spectacle fascinated him. I could have sworn he saw a raw and bloody spectre standing beside the young man from Algiers. The lad, on his part, arose stupidly a moment after, his eyes fixed with an anxious stare on the medium.

"Why did you come here?" cried Foster, in a wail that seemed to come from the bottom of his soul. "Why do you come here to torment me with such a sight? Oh, God! It's horrible! It's horrible!" And he clasped his two hands before his face, shuddering as if to shut out the vision which dismayed him, but which none other of us beheld.

Incredulous as I was, the sincerity of his distress troubled me. Even on Bartlett it had such an effect that he dropped his paper and sat bolt upright. As for the two young men, they fairly trembled.

"It is your father I see!" cried Foster, in the same wailing tone of anguish and repulsion. "He died fearfully! He died fearfully! He was in Texas—on a horse—with cattle. He was alone. It is the prairies! Alone! The horse fell! He was under it! His thigh was broken—horribly broken! The horse ran away and left him! He lay there stunned! Then he came to his senses! Oh! his thigh was dreadful! Such agony! My God! Such agony!"

Foster fairly screamed at this. The younger of the men from Algiers broke into violent sobs. His companion wept, too, and the pair of them clasped hands. Bartlett looked on concerned. As for me, I was astounded.

"He was four days dying—four days dying—of starvation and thirst," Foster went on, as if deciphering some terrible hieroglyphs written on the air. "His thigh swelled to the size of his body. Clouds of flies settled on him—flies and vermin—and he chewed his own arm and drank his own blood. He died mad. And my God! he crawled three miles in those four days! Man! man! that's how your father died!"

So saying, with a great sob, Foster dropped into his chair, his cheeks purple, and tears running down them in rivers. The younger man from Algiers burst into a wild cry of grief and sank upon the neck of his friend. He, too, was sobbing as if his own heart would break. Bartlett stood over Foster, wiping his forehead with a handkerchief. I sat stock still in my chair, the vivid scene of human anguish and desperation which had been conjured up slowly vanishing like the illusion of a magic lantern.

"It's true," said the younger man's friend; "his father was a stock-raiser in Texas, and after he had been missing from his drove for over a week, they found him dead and swollen with his leg broken. They tracked him a good distance from where he must have fallen. It is nobody ever heard till now how he died."

Perhaps those two young men are still alive in New Orleans. I believe that Bartlett survives. If they read this they will affirm that plainly and with absolute accuracy I have described the only seance I ever saw conducted by Charles Foster.

Mr. Foster was passionately fond of poetry, music and flowers. He was intimately acquainted with

Alice and Phoebe Cary, and was always particularly happy after being in their society. He seemed to take delight, and derive a great deal of comfort quoting from their poems. "The Window Just Over the Street" was an especial favorite. He was also acquainted with Longfellow, Walt Whitman, William Winter, George Arnold, and many other poets.

His rooms were often visited by musical people. He was much attached to, and very intimate with, Ole Bull, Louis Gottschalk, and other musical celebrities. I remember a most delightful visit of one week, at the home of Ole Bull in Maine. Ole Bull was certainly one of the most charming men who ever smiled on humanity; and pleasantly do I hear the music of his violin whenever my thoughts go back to that cosily furnished house of his. The angels seemed to hover near, when the small hours of the morning found him still playing "The Carnival of Venice."

Flowers fascinated Foster. He seemed to know intuitively the family of every bud and blossom, every leaf and shrub. He was a born botanist. During his lifetime he spent a small fortune in flowers. It seemed to be impossible for him to pass a florist's window, or a stand on the street where flowers were for sale, without purchasing. He almost daily sent them to friends, and his apartments were ever full of blossoms and their perfume.

One night in June we started to call on a lady. June roses were at their best. Foster purchased two rare specimens, one white, the other red. Finding the lady out, he twisted them around the door-knob. We called again the next day, found the lady at home, and the roses tenderly cared for. She said she had been trying to walk off the blues the evening before when

we called, and upon her return those two roses greeted her, and made her feel quite happy and cheerful; and that she immediately dictated these lines to them :

Two roses sweet, and nothing more,
Showed their fresh faces at my door,
Bright as the rosy dreams of yore—
Two roses-white and red ;
More precious far than gold could be,
Or gleaming pearls from deeps of sea—
The cheer they whispered lovingly,
And these the words they said :

I grew so, spake the one of white,
All slowly through the pallid night,
A-tremble at the fear of blight,
A-waiting for the dew.
And I, I heard the red one say,
Bloomed out despite the autumn day,
And little sunshine knew.

Take courage, heart ; somewhere I know,
Flower-wise, we'll to perfection blow—
Be purified, expand and grow
Inside the jasper-gate.
Be patient yet awhile, nor pine,
Though loss and grief and tears be thine ;
Make this thy motto, heart of mine :
I, like the roses, wait !

While spending an evening with Mr. Foster, at No. 29 Fourth Street, a Mr. Farnsworth called, who was then President of the New York Society of Spiritualists. He said that the evening before he had had a discussion with some skeptical friends, who thought that Mr. Foster in some way opened the slips of paper on which questions and names were written. That they wished to bet any amount that they could so fold the questions that Mr. Foster could not answer them. They said they had finally concluded to reduce the test to one

written name of a dead person, and eleven other pieces of paper should contain blanks. These twelve slips of paper were crushed into the shape of bullets, then placed in tin-foil, and rolled and re-rolled, until they had the appearance of ordinary bird-shot. Mr. Farnsworth took these twelve bullets from his pocket, held them in the palm of his hand, and asked Mr. Foster if he thought he could get an impression of the name. Mr. Foster said, as usual, that he would try. The twelve bullets were placed in the centre of the table. Taking up one after another, he asked, "Is this the name?" One rap came as he picked up each of them, until suddenly three raps came. Holding a bullet between his fingers he said, "This is the bullet which contains the name." After repeating the letters of the alphabet, he said, "I have it, and will write it out for you." He did so, asking Mr. Farnsworth if it were correct. Mr. Farnsworth said that part of the test was that *he* was not to know the name. He then left, taking the bullets and the name, and he reported the next day that the name *was* given correctly.

This test reminds me of a like one which happened in Austin, Texas. I stepped into a grocery store to purchase some trifle, and the parties, knowing that I was with Mr. Foster, asked me a good many questions. Something was said which reminded me of the Farnsworth test, and I related the circumstance to the proprietor of the store. When, an hour or two later, I returned to the hotel, Foster seemed quite excited, and said he wished I would stop going around town putting up jobs on him—as he called it. I did not know to what he referred and told him so. He said that two gentlemen had just left who brought some questions wrapped in *sheet-iron*, and that when they

left they said a young man had called at their store and said that he, Mr. Foster, could answer questions, even if they were rolled up inside of a bullet. Then it dawned upon me that these were the same people to whom, a short time before, I had innocently mentioned the test given to Mr. Farnsworth. Mr. Foster earnestly requested me not to mention those kinds of severe tests, as it was much harder work to answer questions outside of the regular straight folded slips.

One might very pertinently ask, what benefit, what permanent good, are all these different manifestations? Very little, I should say, and any one grounded in a satisfactory religious faith I should advise not to investigate. After all, the most gifted medium's power is very limited.

Swedenborg, probably the greatest medium that ever lived, has given to the world, through his writings, some beautiful ideas, although his description of an after-life seems visionary and unreal. Many writers have endeavored to prove his predictions false, and say that strong coffee had more to do with his visions than disembodied spirits. Still his power is felt for good to-day, and will be long after we have passed away. To me one of his most beautiful conceptions is the dress of spirit forms in the other life. Namely, that each spirit will be dressed according to the perfection attained here. Therefore, the garments of a queen may differ very much from her earthly robes; and one poorly clad here may be exquisitely clothed there. The purer and loftier the thoughts, the richer and more beautiful the garments. By their *clothes* ye shall know them!

All countries of the past and present have had their supposed or would-be prophets, which to me is of doubtful quality and quantity. A fulfilled prophecy,

like a first prize in a lottery, is heralded around the world, while the failures and blanks are not heard from. I question whether Foster, or any other medium, ever predicted anything of value as regards the future. If in any large degree it were possible, it would seem a violation of law either natural or spiritual. If by consulting a medium one could procure direct information as to the horse which would come out first in the race, what stocks would advance in Wall Street, which number would draw the prize, it would certainly seem unjust to that part of the community who had no knowledge of spiritual mediums. Or, if doctors from another life could impart their science to ignorant mediums whereby they could cure the sick, it would hardly be fair to the living medical profession. Is it better to know aught of the future? Have we not care enough with the present?

Mr. Foster's power was astonishing because unusual, but it was limited. The entire day long, he could communicate the names of the dead to living relatives and friends, writing pleasant and comforting messages to them, giving time of death, cause of death, etc. Although I have received many remarkable tests, and what to the ordinary spiritualist would be proof positive of direct communication between this and the spirit life, I am still skeptical. The communications were never decided enough. It seems to me, if it were true, such a *great* truth would be known and accepted by all mankind. Spirit telephone and telegraphy seem to work unsatisfactorily—a thick veil seems to hang between. I feel that there is a gulf, a barrier, a dense fog, that will not dissipate. I am still waiting for the sunshine to appear and disperse the clouds, making these mysteries clear.

Speaking of mediums not being able to foretell the future brings to my mind an occurrence which might be considered a contradiction. It was an incident which would be calculated to make a lasting impression. We met an impulsive, dashing young man, by the name of Armijo, at Charpiot's Hotel, in Denver, Col., where Mr. Foster was giving seances. He was a Spaniard, I think, very wealthy, and was called "The Sheep King of New Mexico." One night he and several of his friends had quite a lengthy seance with Mr. Foster. He was inclined to be a little abusive, and, although possibly not intending to be so, was almost insulting. He intimated the whole thing was a fraud; and finally said he would bet a large amount that Mr. Foster could not tell anything that was not in his own mind; could not tell anything which the future would verify. Mr. Foster had borne with him very patiently, but showed that he was somewhat vexed. Suddenly he said, rather excitedly, "I can tell you something that will happen to you which is very painful, if I choose, but I do not care to give you pain." Armijo immediately defied him and said, "That is all stuff." Finally Foster said, "Well, young man, you *will blow your brains out inside of three months.*" And sure enough, in a few weeks, picking up the *Denver Rocky Mountain News* we read as follows:

SAD SUICIDE.

P. C. ARMIJO, THE SHEEP OWNER,

SUICIDES.

HE PUTS A BULLET THROUGH HIS HEART.

LOVE THE CAUSE OF THE RASH ACT.

THE END OF A PROMISING LIFE.

It is my opinion in this instance that Mr. Foster made a mistake. He should have controlled his temper, as I am quite sure no good ever comes from giving vent to such impressions. And, although after the seance the young man laughed and ridiculed the prediction, still is it not possible that it might have preyed upon his excitable mind until he became crazed? Or was his suicide the natural course of events? The account in the paper referred to the "Foster prophecy."

CHAPTER VI.

WHILE I was connected with Mr. Foster I know of no one seance which created such a sensation, and the reports of which were so widely copied, as that given to Mr. C. E. De Long, of San Francisco, an extended account of which appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, of Jan. 23, 1874. The heading reads: "A Windfall from Heaven." I quote the following:

Next day the gentleman met his friend, the Hon. Chas. E. De Long, who had just then returned from Japan. To him he told his remarkable experience of the day before. De Long laughed at him for his apparent credulity, and scouted the idea that spirits had anything to do with the message. Nettled at this, the gentleman invited Mr. De Long to go with him to see Foster and judge for himself. That night they both, in company with Howard Coit, called at the Grand Hotel, and were shown into Foster's rooms. Mr. De Long was wholly unknown to Foster. They all sat down to the table, and after Foster had smoked awhile at his cigar, he said: "I can only get one message to-night, and that is for a person named Ida. Do either of you know who Ida is?"

Mr. De Long looked at Foster with rather a startled look, and said, "Well, yes, I rather think I do. My wife's name is Ida."

"Well," said Foster, "then this message is for her, and it is important. But she will have to come here and receive it."

WHAT THE SPIRITS TOLD MRS. DE LONG.

This was just enough to excite De Long's curiosity, and after endeavoring in vain to get Foster to reveal the message to him, he consented to bring his wife the next night to receive the important communication in person. Accordingly the next evening the same two, accompanied by Mrs. De Long, were ushered into Foster's parlor. They were soon seated around the table, waiting eagerly for the spirits to arrive. After Foster had smoked for several minutes in silence, he

suddenly said : "The same message comes to me. It is for Ida. This is the lady, is it ?" he asked, as of the spirit. "Oh, you will write the message, will you ? Well, all right," and with this he took up a pen and dashed off the following :

To my daughter Ida—Ten years ago I entrusted a large sum of money to Thomas Madden to invest for me in certain lands. After my death he failed to account for the investment to my executors. The money was invested, and twelve hundred and fifty acres of land were bought, and one-half of this land now belongs to you. I paid Madden on account of my share of the purchase \$650. He must be made to make a settlement.

Your father,

— VINEYARD.

Both Mr. and Mrs. De Long sat and heard this communication read with astonished faces. Mrs. De Long knew that in life her father had had business dealings with Mr. Madden, but to what extent, or even the nature of them, she did not know. She was terribly frightened at the *denouement*, for she knew that Foster did not know who she was, nor who her father might have been, and when the communication came in so remarkable a way, the effect upon the whole party may be better imagined than described.

MR. MADDEN COMES DOWN.

Mr. De Long had just enough faith in the correctness of Mrs. De Long's communication to see what there was in it anyway. So the next day he called on Mr. Madden at the Occidental Hotel. Without saying what especial reason he had for asking the question, he asked Mr. Madden if there was not yet some unsettled business between himself and the estate of the late Mr. Vineyard. Mr. Madden thought for a moment, and then he said there was. He said several years ago he and Mr. Vineyard had purchased a tract of land together, and their interest was yet undivided. The land had increased and was still increasing enormously in value, and he supposed Mr. Vineyard's daughter desired to let her interest lie untouched, which was the reason why the matter had never been settled up. Besides, she had been absent a long time from the country, and was not here to have the matter settled. When informed that Mrs. De Long had only just learned of this investment of her father's, Mr. Madden expressed much surprise. He said he supposed she and her husband and the execu-

tors knew all about it, but were simply letting the matter rest for the property to increase in value. Mr. Madden then said that he was ready to make a settlement at any time. This was readily assented to by Mr. De Long, and accordingly, on Saturday last, Mr. Madden transferred a deed for 625 acres of the land to Mrs. De Long, her heirs and assigns forever. Having done this, Mr. Madden offered the lady \$18,000 for the property, but, having been informed that it is worth at least \$25,000, she declined to sell.

Meanwhile Foster is overrun with people anxious to interview their deceased parents, for the purpose of finding out if the old folks are quite sure that their estates have been fully and properly settled.

A gentleman, accompanied by two ladies dressed in deep mourning, visited Mr. Foster, and not wishing to give their names, the gentleman introduced the elder lady as Mrs. Bereaved, and the younger lady as Mrs. Lately Bereaved. The seance had only continued a short time when the elder lady said, "Sarah Jane, behave yourself, and stop hunching me." "Why, mother, I am not hunching you, I am hunched myself." Hundreds have testified that while attending these seances, they have been touched as by a hand, on the forehead, on the shoulder or knee. Was it imagination or a fact?

Mr. Foster could give a communication in any language. He would make mistakes, speak slowly, and sometimes not very accurately, but could in nearly all cases be understood by the questioner. In this connection, I remember one remarkable experience which occurred in New York City. Two gentlemen called on Mr. Foster, and inquired if he could answer some questions in a foreign language. He replied that he had usually been able to do so, and if the gentlemen would kindly be seated and write their questions on slips of paper, he would see what the result would be. I am quite sure that the mental strain was very

severe on Mr. Foster during this seance, for beads of perspiration could be seen on his forehead frequently. It was quite a lengthy seance, and he answered numerous questions, but in a language which he said he had never before spoken. Consequently he pronounced many of the words with some difficulty. The gentlemen were surprised and delighted. In justice to Mr. Foster, and to show what a wonderful test he had given them, one of the gentlemen made this explanation: Some years ago, he was shipwrecked, and drifted to an unknown island, where he was treated kindly by the natives, and where he was compelled to remain for three years before being rescued. It was there he learned this strange language. A young native, who was his most intimate companion, died a few weeks before he was rescued, and it was the spirit of this young man from whom he was supposed to have had the communication, and as there was not another man in New York City, or in any part of Europe, who knew a word of the language, it certainly was a capital test, and shows, it seems to me conclusively, that no fraud could have been practiced. And shows also, beyond a doubt, that there is such a thing as genuine mediumistic phenomena, which has not in the past, and cannot at present, be satisfactorily explained.

A man by the name of Goldberg, a magician, who gave entertainments in public halls and in the parlors of private families, called upon Mr. Foster, with a number of his friends. They were somewhat excited, and had evidently just come from a good dinner, where the wine had not been omitted. Mr. Goldberg's fresh young friends proposed to bet any amount of money that Mr. Goldberg could perform any "trick," as they called it, that Mr. Foster could, and that Mr. Foster's

line of business was the same as Mr. Goldberg's, the only difference being that Mr. Foster called his by another name to make it more sensational. Mr. Goldberg thought, as he was in the same profession, the party should be given a free seance. Mr. Foster, however, begged to differ from Mr. Goldberg, not considering that their powers were at all relative, and said that if they wished to have a seance, it would cost them five dollars for each person. As Mr. Goldberg proposed being able to duplicate anything that Mr. Foster was able to do, Mr. Foster said to him: "I will take twenty of these small slips of paper. I will write one name of a deceased friend. The other nineteen pieces shall remain blank. I will fold each paper over a dozen times, mix up the twenty papers, and if you pick out on the first trial the paper which contains the name, I will give *you* five dollars and a free seance." Mr. Goldberg admitted at once that that was beyond his power. Mr. Foster then said to Mr. Goldberg: "You do the same. Step up to the mantelpiece, turn your back to me, write one name of a deceased person who was very near and dear to you in this life, leave the other nineteen pieces blank. Mix them up, so that you cannot tell one slip from another. Bring them to me, and if I pick out the name correctly on the first trial, you will then no doubt be willing to acknowledge that our professional powers are of an entirely different nature." Another bet was immediately proposed that Mr. Foster would not succeed. Mr. Foster refused all bets, but at once commenced picking up one slip after another, asking the question, as though addressing an imaginary person, "Is this the one?" At different times came the single rap, which, as usual, was interpreted no. Finally, as he picked up one of the slips,

three distinct raps came. Mr. Foster then said to Mr. Goldberg, "This undoubtedly is the name," and handed it to him, saying, as Mr. Goldberg was about to open it, "Do not open the slip, and I will write the name in full," which he at once did. Mr. Goldberg was then as complimentary as he had been insolent, and acknowledged that his sleight-of-hand performance had nothing whatever to do with mental manifestations of that kind. They immediately took seats at the table, had a satisfactory seance, paid their five dollars, and went away—mystified.

The evidence I have already given, I think, shows conclusively that Mr. Foster, could read—or some unknown agency could read for him—names and written questions, folded in envelopes, in sheet iron, or wrapped in tin-foil balls. Let that be a question to solve in the A B C of this phenomena. Can this particular gift be explained? Many will say, it is clairvoyance, but how little is known about clairvoyance! My only object in agitating this subject is to try to show that there is enough of genuine phenomena and truth lying back of all trickery and humbug to warrant the earnest attention of the scientific world. We know of no more skeptical public man than Mr. Labouchere. He writes the following in his paper, the *London Truth*, of a dinner given him at Delmonico's:

We had a private room, and when dinner was nearly finished I happened to say to the president that after all I should leave the country without meeting Foster. "Shall I send for him?" he said "By all means," I replied; and he wrote a note to invite him to come to the restaurant and smoke a cigar with us. Soon Foster appeared. He was a pleasant, gentlemanly man. Dessert was on the table, and he sat down, drank his wine, smoked his cigar, and joined in the general conversation. After a little while this conversation gravitated into a discussion on Spiritualism. Foster asked me what I thought of him.

I said, "You are my guest, so I do not wish to offend you, but if you really want to know, I regard you as a clever conjuror." "I have," he answered, "a certain power." As he said this the chair upon which he was sitting began to crack portentously, as though it were going to fall into pieces. "Give me the chair," I said, and I tried to make it crack in the same manner, but it was a solid piece of furniture, and I utterly failed. Then there were noises like explosions in all parts of the room. "Is that conjuring?" he said. "Probably," I replied. "Can you do it?" he asked. "No, I cannot," I answered. At this moment there were loud banging on the ceiling. I rang the bell and asked the waiter in French who was in the room above? He went to see, and came back with the information that the room was vacant. "A confederate," I observed to Foster, but he denied it. On this we sat down round the table. I then went into a corner of the room, turned my back on Foster, and having written a word on a piece of paper, folded it up and rang the bell. When the waiter came I sent him for an envelope, and having put the paper in the envelope, which I closed, and put it before a candle to see that the light could not shine through it, handed it to Foster, and asked him to read the word. He pressed the envelope to his forehead, and then *correctly read it*. "Does this convince you?" he said. "It convinces me," I replied, "that you have some curious magnetic power, or that you are a singularly clever conjuror; but it certainly does not convince me of Spiritualism." I handed him a cigar, which he lit, and relapsed from a medium into a pleasant companion.

M. Burdin, of Paris, a member of the Academy, made an offer, in 1837, of a prize of 3,000 francs to any one who should be found capable of reading through *opaque* substances. The money was deposited in the hands of a notary for a period of two years, afterwards extended to three; the announcement was extensively published; numerous cases were offered for examination; every imaginable concession was made to the competitors that was compatible with a thorough testing of the reality of the asserted power, *and not one was found to stand the trial*. Mr. Foster, however, performed this supposed impossible feat with perfect

ease, and Mr. Labouchere simply says to Mr. Foster, "You have some curious magnetic power."

In Appendix P. of Prof. Carpenter's book is an account of a seance which he had with Mr. Foster in London. The professor attributes Mr. Foster's success in reading names and answering questions to watching the motions of the top of the pencil as they are written. That explanation will not answer, as it has been proven that Mr. Foster answered questions equally as well when the questions had been prepared at home, there having been no pencil used in his presence. Any one acquainted with Mr. Foster is only strengthened in the belief of the genuineness of manifestations through him, by reading the unsatisfactory explanations by even the most intelligent critics.

It happened some eight or ten years ago in New York City. A gentleman and his wife were seated, one summer afternoon, in their pleasant little parlor, talking of the "hereafter," when the husband jokingly remarked, "Wife, if you die first, will you come to see me again?" She laughingly answered, "Certainly, I will." "In what shape," said the husband, "will you come, so that I may be sure of your identity?" The wife replied, as glancing out of the open window she observed a pet white fawn playing in the yard, "I will come in the shape of that white fawn."

This was, of course, badinage, and the conversation was forgotten as soon as ended.

Five years later, the wife died. The grief-stricken husband, hearing of the remarkable gifts of Foster, concluded he would seek an interview. He was fortunate in finding Foster alone. Questions were written, folded and placed on the table in broad daylight, in the usual manner, but the result was disappointing. No response came. "Strange," said Foster, placing the papers one after the other to his forehead, "I feel no influence whatever. I fear that I am not in the proper condition to-day to satisfy you." Again Foster placed the slips to his forehead without result, and then rather abstractedly leaned back in his chair. All at once, greatly to the astonishment of his interviewer, Foster jumped up with unmistakable symptoms of

flurry and alarm in his countenance, at the same time brushing violently from his lap *something* nobody saw or felt but himself. At last he said: "I know I must be out of sorts, unstrung; for although many strange things are constantly happening, I never had an experience that startled me so before. It may seem very foolish to you, but as I had one of your slips pressed to my forehead, suddenly looking up, I saw a beautiful white fawn run across the floor towards me, and it jumped into my lap the moment I started from my chair. I cannot account for it--cannot understand it; I only know I saw just what I have described."

His visitor said not a word, gave no clue to an explanation, and did not subsequently visit Foster. As he said, he was "afraid to do so."

CHAPTER VII.

[*Memphis Daily Appeal, January 12, 1873.*]

THE VIOLET.

It is recorded in Mr. Owen's book entitled, "The Debatable Land Between this World and the Next." This was in 1860.

Then he turned suddenly to me and said: "Mr. Owen, I see a spirit—a lady standing beside you. Perhaps the same of whom you spoke to me. She holds in her hands a basket of flowers. Ah! that is peculiar; they are all violets."

"Does she communicate her name?"

Mr. Foster paused. After a time he said: "No, but she has taken one of the violets and laid it before you. Has all this any meaning for you?"

"Yes."

"But we ought to get the name. I usually do."

After a few seconds his arm seemed slightly convulsed, as by a feeble electric shock, and he said: "The name is on my arm." Whereupon he bared his left arm to the elbow, and I read thereon distinctly the name "Violet." The letters looked as if they had been traced with a painter's brush in pink color, and extended from the elbow clear to the palm of the hand.

[*Houston Daily Union, March 13, 1873.*]

But what astonished us most was the appearance on the back of the medium's hand, in red letters, the name *Ida*, very plain. It appeared there while the hand was lying idle upon the table, and without any effort whatever on his part. It was the name of a deceased sister of a member of the circle.

To sum up, the entire seance was a wonderful and unexpected phenomenon, and we are free to confess that, while we do not believe that we were actually conversing with the spirits of our departed relatives and friends, we cannot account for the precision with which our questions were answered. We went there an unbelieving skeptic; we came away almost a convert to spiritualistic converse. We will not pretend to deny or contradict anything that we saw or

heard while in company with the medium. The manifestations were simply the most wonderful that have presented themselves to the writer, and he has been "around right smart."

[*Daily State Journal, Austin, March 15, 1873.*]

Mr. Foster, the famous spirit-medium, has arrived in our city and taken rooms at the Raymond House.

On Friday we called on him, and after a short general conversation about his visit to Texas, we arranged to call in the evening.

After tea we called again, in company with some ladies; two other gentleman acquaintances were present. Mr. Foster requested us to write the names of any friends or acquaintances on a paper, and fold then up and hand them to him. A gentleman had given us, during the day, a folded paper to hand to Mr. Foster. We did not know the contents of the paper, nor did any one in the room. He gave the name correctly, and a communication from the person addressed. He gave the test of the spirit writing his initials in blood upon his hand, and many other wonderful tests of his power. Whatever skeptics may say, Mr. Foster will stagger the unbelief of any one who may visit him.

[*Nashville Union and American, Dec. 30, 1872.*]

He returned these names to Foster, who stated that he could not tell him exactly then, because another

WANDERING SHADE FROM THE SPIRIT-WORLD

was present, annoying him very much, and was very anxious to speak to Smith. The spirit, through Foster, the medium, said it wanted to write its

INITIALS IN BLOOD ON FOSTER'S HAND.

Smith laughed at the absurdity of such a proposition, and very reluctantly we all thought no spirit could so write its initials. However, Mr. Foster held forth his hand, his fingers twitched as if electrified by a galvanic battery, and within a minute's time the

LETTERS "C. T. D."

were as visibly traced thereon as if printed there. Smith was very much amazed at this startling manifestation, and immediately he recognized the initials as those of a friend who died several months ago. This dead friend's name Smith had not written on any of the

paper slips, and had not uttered it to any one present. How Foster, who now spelled the full name, could have gained the information, is perhaps beyond human reason to know. Smith said the letters looked like his friend's

HANDWRITING,

and as such he would have recognized them anywhere. After asking questions and receiving satisfactory answers, this spirit departed and the spirit of the first-mentioned friend returned, its presence agitating Mr. Foster, whose sensations we learned were somewhat like those from a galvanic shock. He forthwith wrote the mode and place of his death. Mr. Foster now gave

A PERSONAL DESCRIPTION

of the dead friend, who had light hair, blue eyes, presenting a pale and care-worn appearance. Upon inquiry as to how he so perfectly, and yet so minutely, described dead persons, he informed us that

THE SPIRIT STOOD BEFORE HIM.

He could see its person, every feature and lineament, as well as he could those of the living. While we wondered how all this mystic power was his, we also were forced to acknowledge his descriptions were most wonderfully true, and must be made with some perception of the person so described. Mr. Foster stated he could see a person plainly, and said :

"A WOMAN COMETH, HOLDING A WREATH,

and 'mid its floral beauty circle I see inscribed, in glittering letters, the name 'Maggie.' " And, sure enough, one of the party stated that it was a beautiful little girl who had long been slumbering with the dead, and in recalling those who were in the grave, he had thought of little Maggie. Mr. Foster gave a true description of her appearance ; and the circumstances of her death, with various instances of her life, were detailed with an exactness scarcely less astonishing than true.

A young gentleman, formerly a student of Washington Lee University, wrote on paper the following

"NICKNAMES "

of certain class-mates : "Cophagus," "Taurus," "Tom," "Bob," "Berk," "Doctor," "Pig," "Brother Buckner," and "Ike." One of the number bearing one of these nick-names was dead, and Mr.

Foster was asked to tell the real name of that deceased one. This he did, and also stated which of the nicknames he bore. However much surprised the young man was, he was amazed when Mr. Foster told him that his nickname was

"PIG."

This was quite laughable to us, and yet it was quite satisfactory to all. We shall give our readers interesting, and, we trust, truthful accounts of Mr. Foster's manifestations during his visit here. Whatever the incredulous say, we are inclined to believe him an extraordinary man. Irrespective of any spiritual causality, the method he illustrates so well, of ascertaining events and knowing circumstances beyond the grasp of reason itself, is worth much, and may be productive of much that is useful in the pursuits of life and the inductive researches of science. If true, it deserves investigation, and is susceptible of thorough development. If false, it demands attention, and must be comprehended in order to be successfully combated. Such could be said of all transcendentalism as well as of the humblest truth, however startling the mystic character of the one and obscure the other. Regarding scientific follies, Fontelle says : "It is proper, however, to apply one's self to these inquiries, because we find as we proceed many valuable discoveries of which we were before ignorant." This remark is aptly illustrated in many instances by the researches of scientific men ; among them, Glauber, who, after a vainly long search for the "philosopher's stone," discovered a valuable purging salt which bears his name. So, it is well to give such subjects a serious consideration. Truth is never defiled by, and its purity is not marred by, sincere investigation. Mr. Foster informs us he is able to commune with the dead of antiquity, and this is a test many have believed no medium could stand. At any rate, Mr. Foster will give satisfactory evidence of his power in this respect. He professes merely to act as an agency for communicating with the dead, and he has been the subject of much scientific study.

As I have said before, nearly all the articles from which I have quoted were written by pronounced skeptics, who would have preferred, and usually expected, to write adversely, and if possible expose Mr. Foster. The favorable accounts given show the genuineness of Mr. Foster's great power. Occasionally, however,

he would partially fail, and I have often been present when his seances were far from satisfactory. The failure on such occasions were eagerly reported by the press, and many bitter articles were written attacking him. In fairness to the subject, I think I should give one or two samples on the other side. The following is from the *Boston Globe*, July 29, 1873 :

It is astonishing how this ridiculous imposture, Spiritualism, flourishes, in spite of the damaging exposures of its professional exponents that take place almost daily. It has been in active vogue for years, and yet it has accomplished no single good, or told one valuable truth. It has neither added to our information upon the practical affairs of life, nor advanced one word to the benefit of art, science or literature. Its revelations have been confined to the utterance of commonplace or high-flown transcendentalism, and its performances to silly and useless jugglery. Its media are, without exception, those who make a livelihood out of it. We have never heard of a man or woman of science, of education, or of high social standing, who was possessed of the gifts of a medium. We have waited for years in vain for some disinterested person whose motives were above the shadow of suspicion, who should come forward and show the possession of power similar to that claimed by the professional media, who are in the main ignorant and money-hungry people. It is a profitable business, and to none has it proven more remunerative than to Mr. Foster : but our experience of it, as practiced by him and by many others we have tested, shows it to us as a business barren of either principle or honor, and one which, in view of the outrageous boldness and heartlessness that characterize the huge swindle, should be subjected to that wholesome discipline provided by the law against obtaining money under false pretences.

A correspondent to the above paper writes :

This man Foster has been doing a tremendous business in New York for years, without having been exposed in the least. It was reserved for the *Boston Daily Globe* to throw the first stone at him. Now why not finish him by having him arrested for obtaining money under false pretences? It certainly amounts to that, and you have the proof in your own hands. Finish the good work begun by sending him where he will be of some service to the State, and thereby save hundreds of people from being swindled out of their money, and perhaps save many from becoming the inmates of a lunatic asylum.

Epes Sargent wrote a lengthy reply to the *Globe* article, a portion of which we quote :

The real question at issue, as this writer ought to learn before he again attempts to wield the editorial pen, and "swindle" the public on this great subject, is not whether spirits are at work, but whether certain phenomena, transcending the power of any man in his purely natural state to produce, do actually occur. That they do is an established fact in the minds of thousands of persons in this very city of Boston, to whom the proprietors of the *Globe* look for help in sustaining that paper, either as subscribers or advertisers ; and the writer little dreams how many of his own readers he ignorantly insults when he prates of "the credulity of our citizens," and of this "ridiculous imposture." Such men, forsooth, as Alfred R. Wallace, Lord Brougham, Robert Hare, Mr. Crooks (editor of the *London Quarterly Journal of Science*), the late Robert G. Shaw, the late Nathaniel Bowditch, the Rev. William Mountford, Hermann Fichte (son of Fichte the immortal)—such men as these, and many hundreds more that we might name, our fellow-citizens, neighbors and friends, the victims of a "ridiculous imposture," which it is the province of this immensely sagacious gentleman of the press to puncture and dispel !

And he wants the "authorities" to interfere ! We would like to see the *authorities* that in this nineteenth century, and in this intelligent city of Boston, would dare to yield to the instigation of any swell of a journalist, and attempt to put down Mr. Foster as a swindler ! We hardly think they would remain "authorities" long. The truth of the matter is, the writer in the *Globe* has simply walked into the wrong century. He belongs to a past era. He should have been born in the year 1625, and been present at the hanging of Burroughs and others in Essex County for witchcraft. What a jolly time he would have had of it ! And what a comfort it would be for him to see Mr. Foster, if not strung up on a gallows, yet cutting stone with a state prison gang during the heated term, and, in his leisure moments—most remorseless of inflictions !—compelled to read the editorials of the *Globe* !

From my investigation, I am positive that there are truths of great importance yet to be brought out of what is called spiritual phenomena, although a bad odor seems to follow the very name of Spiritualism, it having

been brought into disgrace by common women and unprincipled men. I yet have hope for the future, and as has been said,

One sometimes gathers gold from miry sands,
And violets oft bloom in darksome places.

A man like Foster should not have been allowed to die so little understood, his power having been so lightly treated by thinking and scientific men! It is true that Profs. Crooks and Wallace have given much attention to the subject, with good results, and the investigation by the Dialectical Society of London for several years accumulated valuable facts. There was also a committee appointed in Russia for investigation, with good results. Also a society in England and in this country, called the Society for Psychical Research, which seem, however, to work slowly, and with small results. The subject seems to me of vital importance, and worthy the attention and investigation of the scientific world. I would suggest commencing at the A B C. I have not a doubt but that raps can be produced through certain mediums, without any kind of trickery. I would suggest first to investigate the rapping, which will not be easy, for the intelligence behind the rap must also be explained.

Speaking of the rapping phenomenon, reminds me of a dinner I attended in Boston. There was quite a large number present, among others, Charles H. Foster, Robert Dale Owen, and the Boston poetess, Lizzie Doten. The dining-hall was large and without carpet, the floor being waxed, as it was also used as a dancing hall. After the covers were removed, it was proposed that we should have a dark seance. In fact the lights

were turned out without consulting Mr. Foster. Had he been consulted, he would probably not have given his consent, being as timid and apparently as afraid of darkness as a child. Two leaves of the dining-table were taken out, intending to shove the table together, to make it somewhat smaller. But the table would not shove. Who has not experienced this difficulty with their dining-table! In this instance, however, I consider it fortunate that the leaves were left out. Many surprising physical manifestations occurred, so startling in their nature that I can hardly believe that they occurred myself! In these accounts of Foster, I have intentionally avoided mentioning the physical manifestations, and have thought it better to confine myself entirely to mental phenomena. The raps, I think, might be regarded as both mental and physical. Numerous questions were asked and answered by Mr. Foster, when suddenly, looking through the aperture which the vacant leaves left in the table, I perceived numerous small lights, like little balls of fire, in size from a large pinhead to that of a pigeon egg. The entire space of the lower part of the table was filled with these electric sparks, and this to me was a wonderful phenomenon. When a question was asked, and the answer was no, which was signified by one rap, one of these sparks, or balls of fire, darted against the side of the table or on the floor, producing the rapping, and disappeared. If the rap was low, a little ball of fire; just in proportion to the loudness of the rap was the size of the ball used. A loud rap evidently required a large ball of fire to explode. Having discovered this first, I called the attention of the others to the fact. This lasted for nearly one hour. When the answer was yes, we could see three little balls

of fire separate themselves from the others, run one after another, strike and disappear. We asked the raps to come as rapidly as possible, which was done, dozens of them racing one after another, with scarcely any intermission. Then we asked the raps to come deliberately, then slow, which was immediately complied with. That night's experience satisfied me forever that there were raps produced through an agency which has not yet been explained satisfactorily.

CHAPTER VIII.

DURING my early association with Mr. Foster, we frequently held conversations on religious beliefs, the churches, and the attitude of clergymen to Spiritualism. Many clergymen called upon him, and he was always pleased to receive them. I proposed that we should insert in our advertisements that all clergymen could have the privilege of investigating this subject through him free of charge. Thereafter we caused notices similar to the following to appear in the leading papers of the cities which we visited :

Mr. C. H. Foster, the medium, is desirous of meeting the clergy of ———, that they may have an opportunity to investigate the phenomena given through him. He will be glad to meet them in his rooms at ———, at any time, and will give them sittings free of charge. It is to be hoped that the clergy will visit Mr. Foster, and witness the manifestations he gives.

Mr. Foster, during the summer, was often invited to Nahant to visit his friend, the Rev. Mr. Mountford, at whose house he frequently met Longfellow. It is probably owing to the communications which Mr. Longfellow received through Mr. Foster that gives the spiritual flavor to many of his verses. For example :

Spirit friends are ever with us,
Whispering, could our ears but hear,
Words of love and hopeful promise :
E'en though dead, they still are near.

The Rev. Mr. Mountford was the author of "Miracles, Past and Present."

As Swedenborg was the great spiritual medium of his day and generation, so, we believe, Charles H. Foster was the great medium of the nineteenth century. A century separates them. Swedenborg died in 1772, and Foster was doing his best work in the decade following 1870. Foster exerted an extensive influence, either for good or evil. If it were for evil, all the more should we investigate it and help to blot it out forever. If for good, we should investigate and do all in our power to perpetuate it.

The following extract from the report of a seance appeared in the *Denver Sunday Mirror* :

It is sufficient to say that all the tests given were of the most critical and exacting character ; yet they were met and solved with a *nonchalance* that fairly startled to the roots of the hair every person present. Early in the evening, and before Foster had arrived, Judge Bond had penciled, "What is the name of my mother?" adding in his positive way, "I *know* that no one in this city but myself can tell, and if he answers correctly he will do what no other medium ever did." As Foster's hand took up the slip he as quickly responded, "Yes, your mother will answer your question. Her name is Almeda." Again, to Gen. Fisk : "A friend is present whose death was sudden. The name is Lee (appearing in red letters on his hand). Do you remember the circumstance? He was shot in Virginia." To all this Gen. Fisk, blanching with consternation, assented, though he had not been thinking of the person referred to. Foster also saw and described two brothers of Col. Stuart (one living and one dead), and recalled other relatives and friends who had "gone before," giving dates, age, names and causes of death with *alarming* particularity. All at once Foster looks around and exclaims abstractedly, "Cousin Hattie! Who is Cousin Hattie?" Then, turning to the writer, adds, "Your dear Cousin Hattie is present, and bids me give you her undying love." Picking up a slip, he tossed it to us, exclaiming, "That is the question you wrote," which it proved to be. "Cousin Hattie," the wife of the late John Pierpont, the poet, being a relative to whom we were warmly attached.

Again, "Aunt Sallie is present," describing her minutely, and recalling to another of the *coterie* (who had certainly not once thought of her during the evening) an esteemed relative long since dead.

Still again to Mrs. Bond, "Your dear friend Lucia is glad to send greeting."

To Gen. Fiske, giving name in full (James A. Fiske), "*He* is your guardian spirit, and is constantly with you."

The reader must understand that in the instances cited, and many others we haven't space for, the spirits named and described so as to be at once recognized were of persons who had neither been inquired after nor even thought of by those present. He not only gave perfectly intelligent and accurate answers to every question that was written, upon almost every conceivable topic, but suggested and depicted the faces, forms, manner and conversation of long deceased friends who had not even been dreamed of by any of the company present.

While in Paris, Mr. Foster was the object of distinguished attention. He was an invited guest of Emperor Napoleon, and had frequent sittings with him and the Empress and members of the imperial household. Among his patrons and friends were the Duke and Duchess Persigny, Duke d'Aumale and others of the nobility. In Belgium he was equally favored, receiving from ex-King Leopold a diamond ring as a token of his regard. In England he was the recipient of numberless personal and social favors.

AUTOGRAPHIC EXCERPTS.

Foster's book of original autographic letters from distinguished personages (although he seemed to set small store by them and gave scores away, including some dozen letters from Dickens and Thackeray) is of rare value. Scattered loosely through a plethoric volume (the seals on their envelopes bearing the crests, bars and shields of dukes, earls, lords, etc.) are plentiful evidences from the nobility of their friendly regard.

Turning over its pages we find such names as the following : Stewart Hobhouse (of the Byron family) Lady McDonald Lockhart (niece of Sir Walter Scott), Ruskin (the famous art critic), Lady Elizabeth Byran, J. Milner Gibson, Thos. Browne, Mrs. Frederick Milbank, Sir Greville Smyth, Lord Napier, T. S. T. Sinclair, Edward Montague Manning, William Howitt, Sir Emerson Tennant, Robert Chambers, and many other celebrities.

These letters contained appointments for interviews, invitations to dinner (among the latter one from an Episcopal bishop), most of them embodying expressions of friendship and good will. We copy an original epistle in the delicate, tremulous handwriting of Lord Bulwer :

35 SPENCER PLACE.

My Dear Foster—Would you fix any hour on Monday next for a seance at your house, between 2 and 5 o'clock. There are two or three persons of some importance whom I should like to bring you.

Yours,

E. BULWER LYTTON.

The letter from Thomas Browne is a full and cordial invitation to dine at his residence. The first of several letters from the philanthropist, Emily Faithful, reads as follows :

Sir—I should like to see you on Saturday alone with one friend, having been interested by Sir Emerson Tennant's account of his visit. Will you write to me, naming your hour. Very truly,

EMILY FAITHFUL.

From another letter soliciting arrangement for an interview with

*** a distinguished party, Sir Henry Rawlinson, Lady Wm. Powlett and Mrs. Wm. Disraeli (the Countess Beaconsfield), wife of the great Tory leader and ex-Minister of State. Lady Powlett is the daughter of the Earl of Lonsdale, etc.

Some of the most beautiful letters in Foster's possession are from the lovely Cary sisters (now passed away), who were pronounced spiritualists and among his warmest personal friends.

He also gave seances to the Duke of Wellington, Lord Palmerston, Edmund Yates, Robert Browning, Tennyson, Rittenback, Dr. Ashburner, Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Johnston, Jay Gould, Tom Scott, Bayard Taylor, George Arnold, N. P. Willis, John Hay, Walt Whitman, J. G. Holland, Dan. E. Sickles, Gen. B. F. Butler, Gen. Sheridan and many others whose names are known in society, literature, science, art and politics.

Mr. Robert Browning became much interested in Spiritualism, but was apparently somewhat annoyed at his wife's enthusiasm and hasty conversion. He was more of a philosopher. He refers, however, to Mr. Home, and not to Mr. Foster, in his poem, "Mr. Sludge the Medium."

Abraham Lincoln was also a spiritualist, and was intensely interested in the subject; but Mrs. Lincoln went beyond all bounds, and seemed to think that every trifling occurrence had some wonderful spiritual significance.

Usually I think an over-belief causes more discord and unhappiness in a family than an under-belief.

Mr. Foster created quite a sensation in Salt Lake City. The *Morning Tribune* says of him, "Here comes a man who gives people more revelation in ten minutes than they have received through Brigham Young in twenty-five years, and more than they would receive through him in the next thousand years were he to live so long. Is it any wonder that the 'priesthood' feel it necessary to caution their brethren against being carried away by these strong delusions?"

We quote one instance from a seance described in the same paper. Foster said, "Here is one who died a violent death." Raps upon the table followed, and a slip was taken from the mass bearing the name of George Watson. This was pronounced correct by the writer. His manner of death was next inquired for. The spirits were interrogated, but they failed to come to time. "The answer will be written in blood upon my arm," said the medium, and he bared that member to receive the inscription. Placing his left arm upon the table, a violent commotion seized it; he raised it, passed his hand up and down the member, and the word "Fall," in red lines, was distinctly visible. The deceased friend had died from a fall in Kansas City two years previous.

As I look over my Scrap-Book, and read the accounts that were published in the different newspapers and magazines while I was associated with Mr. Foster, I feel a strong desire that they should be re-published. They were usually written by the editors, or capable reporters. I pass by many, but the following, from the *Sacramento Record*, Dec. 8, 1873, impresses me as being so cleverly written that I give it in full :

TWO HOURS WITH THE DISEMBODIED.

WHERE WE WENT AND WHAT WE SAW AND HEARD WHILE THERE—
FACTS IN NUTSHELLS FOR PUBLIC CRACKING.

The mission and duty of the press extends not only to the exposure of error and the upholding of truth, but to the statement of all facts of the day which are at all doubtful, leaving the reader to pass upon questions of theory and merit. Newspapers being the abstract and brief chronicles of the times, as a certain Mr. Shakespeare remarked, and having an eye open to all that is going on, must take equal notice of passing curiosities, whether they be Cardiff giants, Lilliputian

humans, or the spirits of the air. People who travel in the newspaper coach must expect some jolting, for your true journal explores all roads, makes a note of every mile-post, runs in no groove, and has but two words in its creed—truth and news. With some prefatory remarks of this kind, our *chef* thrust a card into our hand on Saturday with some brief directions as to hour and location, and with a rather contemptuous sneer and cynical expression directed us to call on this fellow Foster and see if his show is of any interest to the public. Settling down to our task, we ascertained "this fellow Foster" was the same chap who formed the subject of Leaman's article in the June number of *Scribner's*, entitled "A Seance with Foster"; the same man who woke up John Paul to such a lively criticism in the *New York Tribune*; the man for whom Myers committed suicide at Salt Lake; the man who mystified the gray-beard of that staid sheet, the *Boston Herald*; induced Robert Dale Owen to devote to him a chapter in his "Debatable Land," and was the intimate friend of Bulwer, the romancist, afterward Lord Lytton, who drew from Foster all the weird and mystical which envelopes the "Strange Story," and who made Foster the model for that never to be comprehended character "Margrane" in that singular novel. Determined to be doubly armed with witnesses, we organized a party of gentlemen, unbelievers, shrewd men of the world, up to all the tricks of the table-tipping tribe, and made a raid on the rooms of C. H. Foster, the so-called king pin of all the spiritual mediums, whose reputation in Europe and our own country as the biggest show of the times has preceded him to this coast. Entering the room, we found a full-faced, good-looking, black-haired, black-eyed, dark-moustached, heavy man, tall and well proportioned, aged about 36, and with his hair parted effeminately toward the middle. He was reclining lazily in a great chair, and smoking a half-lighted cigar with the utmost nonchalance. He didn't fill the bill mediumistic at all, but seemed, as he proved to be, a self possessed, impassive, jolly-dog sort of a chap.

Presenting their credentials, which were found O. K., the party seated themselves at a rickety two-leaved table, four persons in all, and the following things, among many others, transpired, which we record exactly as they happened, and leave it to those who have the time and desire to talk about odic forces, psychology, mind-reading, clairvoyance and the other theories offered in explanation of phenomena which confounds the understanding, vexes the curiosity and takes the conceit out of modern necromancers and smart reporters who know "just how the tricks are done." If Foster is a humbug he

ought to be exposed; if he is the possessor of the secret of a new force or science it should be evolved and made public property; if he is what he claims to be, he deserves attention. In any light, there is no reason why this Young American age shouldn't tackle Foster and serve him and his familiar spirits up for the public good.

A.—“What is the extent of your power as a medium, Mr. Foster?”

Foster—“Oh,”—puff—“every”—puff—“thing in the line.”

A.—“Do you see spirits?”

Foster—“Yes; not now, but I shall to-day.”

A.—“And hear them?”

Foster—“Oh, yes I do, that.”

A.—“Well, the test to me of a spirit-presence is evidence of its identity, known alone to it and me.”

Foster—“Yes?” puff, “bother this cigar,” relighting it, “you'll get plenty of that. I haven't anything to do with it. They use me, and have from childhood, as a machine for you folk.”

D.—“I have tipped tables myself, when a boy, for fun.”

Foster—“Many can do that who know nothing of the spiritual world.”

C.—“Boil ahead, Foster; let's see the thing begin.”

Foster reseated himself, having arisen a dozen times to light that cigar, and began to tear paper into slips about the size of the ipecac powders of our youth.

A.—“Who was this man who killed himself at Salt Lake on your account?”

Foster—“Oh, his name was Myers. I'm sure I don't know why he should have done so; perhaps he believed in the spirit world; perhaps—well it's a matter of no consequence to me, I know nothing of it.”

A.—“You're not the man I expected to see,”

Foster—“No? Why, better looking?”

A.—“No, but I expected to find a grave old gray-beard, blue under the eyes, and awfully spiritual.”

Foster—“Well, that's the result of your education. Is there any known reason why spiritual intercourse should render a man less happy? Oh, no! Spirits are pleasant folk, and the last in creation to make you morose and sober-sided. They may make you thoughtful, ought to influence you for good, but, my dear sir, they don't excite fear in the true man.

“Well, gentlemen, are there any spirits you desire to communicate with? If so, write several names on these slips, fold them over and

over, so that it shall be impossible for me to see them, and toss them on the table."

Each did as desired. A. retiring to a corner to write, C. shading his slips with a book, and Foster going to the grate to relight that cigar which was forever going out. Seven slips were prepared, which were thoroughly mixed up by C., and all the party were again seated. The moment we were down raps were heard on the wardrobe in a corner, on a bedstead near at hand, and a gentle tapping on and under the table. The room was small, no one else in it, no closet, the window curtains up, and the place flooded with light.

Foster—"Ah, this is my first sitting to-day. It is a damp and murky day, when, I don't know why, the influences are usually weak, but I feel we are to have plenty of communications. The room is full of the spirit people. You gentlemen are all in harmony."

A.—"Yes, sir, all unbelievers to our backbones and all good friends."

Foster—"That's all right; but you all desire communications, and that's all that is necessary."

The raps came now, thick and fast.

Foster—"Now, spirits, if any desire to communicate, make it manifest."

Rap, rap, rap.

Foster now took the slips from the table and pressed them one by one to his forehead rapidly. As he reached the third one, and before his hand touched it, rap, rap, rap.

Foster—"Ah, is this the one?" Rap, rap, rap. "Sure?" Rap, rap, rap (meaning yes).

Foster seized his pencil. "It is for you, sir," to C.

C. took the alphabet, printed on a bit of card, and pointed to the letters in order, when "Edward" was spelled out by raps, but with great hesitancy and conflicting raps on the "ard."

C.—"I know no Edward."

Foster—"Oh, you marked the wrong letters. Here,"—and seizing his paper he wrote rapidly, "E. B. W." "Those are his initials, and here, this is the full name, E. B. W—t. Is it right, sir?"

C. assured him it was, and that no man in California knew the name but himself, probably.

Foster—"You see what you wrote, 'Edw.' was really 'E. B. W.'"

C.—"When did you die?"

"1857," spelled out by figures, A., who did not know the person, writing it out as it was rapped. Right.

C.—“Now, if you are E. B. W., tell me what was your occupation?”

Foster—“Now I will give you the crucial test—the test with which I intend to confound the members of the Royal Society.”

C. then wrote out a long list of occupations of all grades. Foster took the list and tore off each line, and rolled the paper into small pellets the size of bullets. Meanwhile C. made two pellets of blank paper and slipped them into the pile. All were piled upon the table and mixed up. Foster picked up one with his thumb and index finger, without apparent selection.

“Is this it?” Rap, rap, rap, gently. “Are you sure?” Rap, rap, rap, loud and decided.

He threw the pellet to C. He opened it and read, “President of a bank.”

Foster—“Well?”

C.—“It is right.”

Foster—“This is all bosh about mind-reading; if there is such a thing this test ends it. Here, at these pellets, mind ends, and the spiritual proves itself.”

C. could not but confess that it was double test, for the medium had not only to determine which pellet to pick out, but also to determine the occupation correctly. He was satisfied with the answer, but also wished a further test. Of what bank, now, would be a severer test, for he alone knew. Foster did not know; he had never seen him. D. and A. did not know, never could have known, so he asked.

“President of bank” was designated.

C.—“Well, but of what, where?”

Foster—“Write out a list.”

A list was then written out in this manner, and purposely, and to its form attention is called:

“Branch St. Bk., Ohio.”

“Bank Rensselaer.”

“Bank Terre Haute.”

“Branch St. Bk. Ind., at
Mich. City.”

“Branch St. Bk. Ind.,
Evansville.”

“Bank Albany.”

“Bank of Racine.”

Foster seized the pencil, pressed its point nervously upon the word bank in the last line, his countenance showing intense agitation, his eyes being fixed and lifeless. Slowly the pencil traveled over the last

line, crossing it out, over the next, crossing it out, over the word Evansville, crossing it out, passed around the end of the next line close to "Ind." close under "Mich. City" and around the end of it, and then suddenly erased all above it.

This left the only words unobliterated to read in full :

"Michigan City, Branch of the State Bank of Indiana." Whereas it had been written "Branch of the State Bank of Indiana, at Michigan City." Parts of two lines being thus selected to make the answer.

C.—"That is right, as I wrote it was its corporate or business name, as marked out was the usual way it was spoken of. Each of the twelve branches being usually spoken of first by the name of the town where located."

C.—"What relation are you to me?"

Foster seized a bit of paper and a stub of pencil and with one hand held both under the table, against some part of it, for an instant, and threw it back. A scrawl was seen, a word written backwards. Held to the light we read from the reverse side plainly, "Father." "Right," said C.

Here a spirit calling herself "Mary," the deceased friend of the wife of one of the party, struggled to get a word in edgewise, but the husband couldn't think who she was, and so she retired. The wife says she had a friend Mary deceased, whom she called Mollie, "But these stupid men never remember anything."

At this point Foster called attention to the fact that C. had not opened the slip designated as bearing E. B. W.'s name. It was opened and found to be the proper one.

Foster—"What's that you say?" speaking aside, as if to some unseen presence, "Oh, you do; very well." To D.—"Here is a spirit beside you desires to communicate to you."

D.—"What spirit is it?"

Foster—"You will write, yes?" To the unseen—"Very well, now then"—He seized the pencil and wrote rapidly :

"I am here with you to-day, and glad to be able to speak with you. I am often near you when you are not aware of my presence.

(Signed)

JULIA."

Foster—"Who is Julia, sir?"

D.—"Can't you tell?"

Foster—"Oh, yes." Whereupon he seized one of the folded slips, passed it over his forehead, muttering to the unseen Ella, "Is this it? or this? or this?" rap, rap, rap. "Are you sure?" rap, rap, rap.

"There it is." The slip was opened by D., and thereon appeared the word "Ella."

Foster—"Is that correct?"

D.—"It is; I wrote it."

Foster—"Her full name is—"

D.—"Don't speak it, if you please."

Foster now got up and lit that confounded cigar, while raps were knocking about on all sides, and the thought came to us, will Hornblower be able to rent room 26 at the Orleans when this man goes out? If it isn't full of spirits and ghosts for a year and a day we're a shingle, that's all. As Foster walked back to the table he said there was a strange—a painful influence upon him, of one who had suicided or died by accident.

D. suggested it might be one who was murdered.

Foster—"Well, I should call that accidental. Ah! now the influence is strong upon me"—turning suddenly and seizing D.'s hand, and struggling to speak, his face full of anxiety; "Char—Char—Charles Har—Har—Harg—Hargiv—Hargiv—Charles Hargiv—oh, help me to speak it, sir!"

D.—"Charles Hargiven?"

Foster—"Yes, Charles Hargiven."

D.—"Of what did he die?"

Foster—"Suicide—no, accidental death—suicidal—violent death—accidental death."

D.—"No."

Foster—"Yes, I say, some violent death," motioning to his side, and imitating the stab of a dirk.

D.—"Murder?"

Foster—"Yes, murder."

D.—"That is right. It was years ago, in Australia. Now tell me, if you are Charles Hargiven, what countryman were you?"

Foster—"He says he was an Englishman."

D.—"No, he was not."

Foster—"He called himself such."

D.—"So he did."

D. now took a sheet of paper and wrote twelve nativities in a row, and among others the true one for Charles Hargiven. Foster took his pencil and marked out, as in the case of the bank, all the words but this—"Eurasian."

D.—"Gentlemen, no living being on this continent knew that fact. He was Eurasian—that is, his father was European—English; his

mother Asiatic—East Indian. Such children are called Eurasians; but as his father was English he was in law an Englishman."

Suddenly Foster turned to A.

"Ah, here is a sad face. She comes to give evidence of faith and that she lives. She is here with you. A sweet, sad face, a gentle being in life. Her name is Stella Edgescomb."

A. started as if shot,

"Write to her," said Foster, "she influences me strongly."

A. wrote this question: "Am I living such a life here as you would have commended?"

Foster took the question, closely folded, pressed it to his forehead, threw it on the table, and rapidly wrote or scrawled in a horribly ugly "fist": "You are trying to do the best you can, and I am satisfied with the life you are leading here."

"Hold," said Foster. "What, want to sign it yourself? She says she will sign her own name."

His hand straightened out and the fingers, moving slowly, easily the name Stella Edgescomb in a delicate chirography was traced, which A. with much emotion declared to be the signature of his friend who died years ago in the far East. Immediately Foster designated one of the folded slips, and on it also appeared her name.

C. had written the name of Lewis Saunders, Jr., an old resident of Sacramento, well known here up to 1860-'62, and the head of one of the oldest families of the day. He was a prominent lawyer, and died, in 1863, in San Francisco.

Foster, turning to C., said: "Some one is here to see you. Lewis is his first name. I feel a double influence. Ah, there are two Lewises; yes, two Lewis Saunders, and strange, the elder man is Lewis Saunders, Jr."

C. at this moment remembered that Colonel Saunders had a son Lewis, also deceased, a fact then recalled to his memory for the first time in eight years, and he had not written the son's name on one of the slips, nor had he thought of him.

Foster—"This man is not near to you; he is not a relative; he was merely your business friend."

C.—"Correct. What does he say?"

Foster—"What have you to say, Lewis? He says he is glad to be able to speak to you and testify that the soul is immortal. He says he remembers you kindly." Where Saunders lived and died was then rapped out.

C. then wrote Colonel Saunders a question, folded it, and laid it on the table.

Foster touched it to his brow.

Foster—"He says, yes. The spirit world is about you, around you. Like the earth, life intensified, but yet different in all respects. He would tell you—he fails; he influences me no more."

The question was: "Can you tell me what and where is spirit land?"

Foster requested A. at this point to change his seat, the Stella Edgescomb influence was so strong that she got herself mixed up with the other spirits considerably, like the head of Charles the First in the manuscript of Mr. Dick. A. moved, but propounded other questions to Stella, and got answers seemingly affording a test of identity. A. declared about this time that somebody was lifting up his elbow and hand, and Foster told him that was all right, nothing but Stella fooling around him. A. had no dead sweethearts, and nobody—beg pardon—spirit-fooled around him, though he was willing to be hugged by one for the sake of investigation and truth. D. momentarily anticipated a filmy embrace from Julia, but Ella evidently didn't reciprocate his desire.

Foster at one time seized A.'s hand, exclaiming, "God bless you, my dear boy, my son. I am thankful I at last may speak to you. I want you to know I am your father, who loved you in life and loves you still. I am near to you; a thin veil alone separates us. Good bye. I am your father, Abijah A——."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed A——, "that was my father's name, his tone, his manner, his action."

"And," said Foster, "it was a good influence; he was a man of large veneration."

"Hold!" said Foster, "here is another influence. It writes upon my arm. See, it is for you again, Mr. A——."

He stripped up his coat sleeve, pulled back the white shirt sleeve, drew back the sleeve of the under shirt, exposed the skin of the forearm, rubbed it twice or three times briskly, and lo! there appeared in letters an inch long the initials S. F. C. in pink, or the color of the skin when given a severe blow. "See," said Foster, "S. F. C., that is your friend, S. F. Coleman."

"Yes," said A., as all gazed on the fading letters, "S. F. Coleman was my brother-in law, dead years ago in Illinois, and that is his writing as I live."

D. now wanted the murdered man Charles to name the man whom he, Charles, had told him, D., he was afraid of, just before he was found dead in the street. D. wrote out a long list of names, and Fos-

ter marked out all but one. It was the right one, the man whom Charles had told D. he believed would kill him, and the man is a resident of high position in Australia. C. here called E. B. W. back, and asked questions which concerned domestic matters, and received strange and startling answers.

A. requested Colonel Saunders to seek for the shade of J. W. Coffroth, but before he could be found the influences left the medium and the seance closed.

In conclusion we have just this to say. The seance was a great pleasure to the party. It was convincing that if Foster is a necromancer, he is the top of the heap. We came away just as we entered, without any decided opinion, except that there was a something we were not able to explain, and didn't care a black pin because we couldn't. We have given an outline of a small part of the interview, for it lasted two hours, but we have presented the points of every test made. What we have recorded is bare fact, unembellished. As an amusement, we were highly delighted with the seance. We have no expression to make as to theories concerning the means used to accomplish what we saw and heard. Whatever the means used, there were no mistakes made. This man is awakening, with others of his class, considerable attention, and from the press deserves fairness in relation of fact, and that he has had in this article.

CHAPTER IX.

WHILE lying on a sofa in an adjoining room, I heard a well-known editor from one of the leading St. Louis dailies tell Mr. Foster that it had been insinuated to him that that young man Bartlett visited the graveyards, took a list of names from the tomb and grave stones, especially those of celebrated people, classified them, procured all the information possible, and in that way gave great assistance to him in giving his seances. The editor said he hardly believed such a report, but thought possibly Mr. Foster might like to hear how his phenomena were accounted for by different persons! Mr. Foster informed the gentleman that Mr. Bartlett would not loan himself to that kind of business. I mention this, as many times since that conversation I have heard similar reports. Certainly a more ridiculous, preposterous and absurd explanation of the Foster phenomena could not be imagined. Foster traveling nearly all over the earth, giving communications in every known and some unknown languages, not having the slightest idea who were to visit him at any time or place, show the utter absurdity of such a conjecture.

The most satisfactory clairvoyant I ever met was a lady physician by the name of Murphy. She first came to my notice while successfully treating a young lady, a relative of the Beecher family. This lady, if I remember, was thrown from a car, the accident causing hip trouble. It was considered a hopeless case. Mrs. Murphy, it is said, however, effected a permanent cure. She seemed to be able to look into the human form as though it were

transparent. It was while interested in her phase of mediumship, or clairvoyance, that by chance I met, on Broadway, a friend by the name of Handy from Kentucky. As he had recently paid a visit to the city, I expressed my surprise at seeing him so soon again. He replied that he had returned for medical treatment. "Why" I said, "you look the embodiment of perfect health. What is the matter?" He replied, "Inflammation of the bladder." I said, "You are the very man I want to see, for you look in perfect health, and certainly no one would suppose you had seen a sick day." He replied that he was a great sufferer from the complaint spoken of, but otherwise he was in good health. He weighed about two hundred and twenty-five pounds, was six feet in height, and a fine specimen of manhood. I said, "Come with me, and be examined by a clairvoyant." He replied, "No sir, I have no faith in them." I replied, "I wish you would do so as a favor to me," explaining that I was interested in a certain lady clairvoyant, and that he looked to be in such perfect health that I should not probably have another opportunity of meeting so fine a test subject. He finally consented. Mrs. Murphy went into a trance, and commencing at his head went down that six feet of manhood, describing the condition of every inch of his body. She located the inflammation, and dictated a prescription. We asked that the prescription be dictated in English. After the interview Mr. Handy told me he came to New York expressly to put himself under the care of Dr. Van Buren, that he had called on him once or twice, and had in his pocket a prescription to be filled. We immediately repaired to the drug store under the Fifth Avenue Hotel. We showed the clerk the prescriptions of Dr. Van Buren and Mrs. Murphy and asked him if they were at all sim-

ilar. He replied that there was so little difference he might say they were the same. I mention this test of clairvoyance, as I consider it the most satisfactory one in my experience. I was informed that a leading physician frequently sent patients to her that she might clairvoyantly diagnose their diseases. Is it not probable that this clairvoyant power might be used to advantage?

Below is a fair summing up of Foster's power, as viewed by the *Alla California*:

AN HOUR WITH FOSTER.

Four journalists spent an hour yesterday afternoon with Charles H. Foster, the spiritual medium. They were skeptical and suspicious. Before going into the room they had each written six or eight names of deceased friends on pieces of paper four inches long and one inch wide, which were then folded over five or six times longitudinally, with the name inside and no mark on the outside to distinguish them. They were all thrown into a hat, and none of the party could, by looking at the outside of any paper, know that he had written it, much less tell the name in it. None of the party had seen the medium before, nor were they introduced to him by name.

We shall not undertake to give a consecutive narrative of what occurred, but only the main facts:

First—Each of the four persons was astonished, far more than he had ever been by any sleight of hand by Hermann, Heller, Anderson, etc.

Second—Many of the manifestations were inexplicable by any laws of mechanics or science mentioned in our books.

Third—In more than a dozen cases Mr. Foster, without opening the folded papers, told the names in them correctly, and in every case mentioned some remarkable fact connected with the deceased person. One was drowned at sea, another shot in battle, another committed suicide, a fourth had died under very painful circumstances, and so on.

Fourth—He gave the name of one deceased friend whose name was not written.

Fifth—He gave no communications from Daniel Webster or other persons not acquaintances of some of the party.

Sixth—He made no mistake worthy of note.

Seventh—In many cases he told not only the name of the deceased, but the person who wrote it.

Eighth—After showing his bare arm with no mark on it, the letters "A. L.," the initials of the name of one of the "spirits," came out in red color on the arm before the eyes of the whole party.

Ninth—Every question asked was answered.

Tenth—Many of the questions were answered by raps on the under side of the table-top. Foster requested us to look under the table to see that there was no trickery about the rapping, but we did not take the trouble. The other "manifestations" were so much more impressive that we felt little interest in the rapping.

Eleventh—Each of the party got answers which he knew to be correct, containing information not known to any other person in the room.

Twelfth—One of the most wonderful manifestations was to get correctly the name of a "spirit" who he said was present, a friend of one of the party, but whose name had not been written.

The writer of this must add, in justice to himself, that in all this he sees no proof of Spiritualism. He admits his inability to explain the facts, but he is unwilling to accept the explanation of anybody else. If Mr. Foster obtains his information from "spirits," it is to be regretted that they do not furnish clear evidence, unquestionable in its character to everybody, of their existence, and of the constitution of the sphere in which they now make their abode.

Another writer in the *Alla*, Dec. 29, 1873, says :

IS IT AN INFERNAL AGENCY?

A late number of the *New York Catholic World*, a magazine edited with much learning and ability, expresses the idea that the so-called spiritual manifestations are made by the agency of Satan, and should therefore be avoided by all persons who are anxious for the welfare of their souls. The truth of the reports of these "manifestations" and the good faith of the mediums are admitted, but the faithful are told that the Church has condemned them, and as all good spirits are in harmony with the Church, the evil spirits alone are working for the spread of the new doctrine. Satan gets the credit of being able to exercise miraculous powers, reveal the secrets of the tomb, and call up the spirits of the dead. This is, we believe, the accepted doctrine of the Catholic Church, and it is also received by many Protestants. Among scientific men generally the opinion is dominant that the "manifestations"

are only cunningly managed tricks, and that most of the favorable reports published of their doings are false. To neither of these theories do we subscribe.

The subject has been forced on our attention by the sensation lately made in our city by the presence and sittings of a renowned medium, Mr. Foster, and also by our personal experiences, some of which have been briefly reported in our local news. Our search for "tests" or proofs of spiritualism has been a failure. There is no scarcity of "mediums" who say they can see and hear spirits; but not one of them has produced satisfactory evidence. Nineteen out of twenty could tell us nothing and show us nothing of any interest. Their speeches in trance, real or pretended, amounted to nothing. But one man we have found who has an abnormal perception which enables him to read the secret thoughts of the living, though he may be, and we presume he is, sincere in saying that he converses with the spirits of the dead. This power is akin if not precisely similar to that of clairvoyance in somnambulic or mesmeric sleep, or the hypnotic condition, — abnormal states of the mind observed long before the spiritual theory came into favor.

[From the *N. Y. Graphic*, Oct. 24, 1874.]

One night a total stranger to Foster called at his rooms and said :

"Foster, I don't believe in your humbug. Now, you never saw or heard of me, and I will bet you twenty dollars that you can't tell my name. I do it to test you."

"T-w-e-n-t-y d-o-l-l-a-r-s," repeated Foster; "twenty dollars that I can't tell your name? Well, sir (putting his hand to his brow), the spirit of your brother Clement tells me that your name is Alexander B. Corcorane."

Mr. Corcorane was astonished, and took out his money to pay the medium, who pushed it back with a laugh.

OLD HICKORY.

"One day," said Mr. Frank Carpenter, whom we met at Mr. Foster's yesterday—"one day a Mrs. Whitney, an utter stranger, came into Foster's room with a lock of coarse hair in her hand. It looked like fine bristles. Holding it up she asked the medium whose hair it was. Foster took it in his hand a moment, pressed it to his brow, and exclaimed : 'By the eternal, this is Andrew Jackson's hair!'"

It turned out that Mrs. Whitney's mother was an intimate friend of General Jackson, and that the bunch of bristles was really an heirloom from the head of Old Hickory himself.

SENATOR ALEXANDER M'CLURE.

One day (and everybody knows the story in Philadelphia) Alexander McClure, the old Greeley leader of Pennsylvania, came into the Continental Hotel with Colonel John B. Forney. Mr. McClure was very sad, for he had received news that his son was drowned at sea.

"What do you think about it, Foster?" asked Colonel Forney.

"Why, sir, the boy is not drowned at all," replied Foster. "He's alive and well, and you'll have a letter from him in a day or two, and then he will come home."

Two days afterwards McClure met Foster, and said, with tears of gratitude: "Why, Foster, you were right. My boy is all safe. I had a letter from him to-day."

[*Golden Era, San Francisco, Sunday, 1873.*]

Foster—"Some one has called for the spirit of a person who died a violent death. His name—his name—now I get it—was _____. He was shot."

B.—"That is a name I called for; but I did not know that he was shot. It was never known what became of him."

Foster—"Let me see. I am carried to the State of Ohio. To the city of Cincinnati. He starts from there and goes to the northern part of the State. He is overtaken and shot."

B.—"Those were precisely the circumstances as far as known."

Foster (to B.)—"A dear little child comes behind you. Her name is _____"

B. stated that the name was that of a little niece who died years ago. He had not written the name, nor had the child occurred to his memory at that time until recalled by Foster.

Foster (to A.)—"The form of a fair young girl now comes behind you. She presents you with two rosebuds. She died in young life from slow decline—consumption. It is Althea."

A. acknowledged such an acquaintance in young life. The picture was vivid, and the impression startling—almost to fancy, for an instant, "the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer swung by seraphim, whose footfalls tinkled on the tufted floor." But then

the illusion might have been nothing else than Foster's incessant cigar smoke. Merely smoke and nothing more.

Foster announced the presence of a spirit which had been called for by one of the company. It was demanded that the spirit indicate where he died to prove his identity. Foster suggested to write down a list of places, including the right locality. The list was written in this form: "Buffalo, Albany, Rochester, New York, Syracuse, Utica, Oswego," and handed to Foster. With scarcely a glance, his pencil circled the last name like a flash, and then leading up the column also encircled "New York," the answer being correctly given, "Oswego, New York." The same test was successfully given when names had been placed on separate strips and rolled up in pellets.

Such are the arts practiced by the so-called spiritual medium, Foster, and such a few of the curious examples casually mentioned of a prolonged exhibition of his powers in the presence of a party of gentlemen who take no stock of a supernatural character, believing nothing beyond the verification of their own senses, even should Elias and the prophets come to tell them, without full ocular demonstration.

These sort of manifestations are dismissed by the ignorant and superstitious as pertaining to the arts of necromancy; by the religious bigot as machinations of the devil; by the advanced adherents of Swedenborgianism they are imagined to proceed from disembodied spirits; and by the philosopher they are believed to pertain to some natural force not yet fathomed by scientific research. The reader can take his choice.

CHAPTER X.

OUTSIDE of the medical profession, I think few people realize the great number of deaths caused by childbirth and cancer. While associated with Mr. Foster, I was constantly surprised to hear him daily give answer to the question, "How did she die?" "Childbirth." "How did so and so die?" "Cancer." At the seances given at the South, nearly all the male spirits who manifested through Mr. Foster were shot, either at home or on the battlefield.

I quote a fragment of a letter which appeared in the *N.Y. Graphic*, from the pen of the husband, I believe, of Madam Blavatsky.

A CONVERT TO SPIRITISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE DAILY GRAPHIC.

The medium, C. Foster being mentioned to me, I decided upon going to visit him. Accordingly I called at his house on Saturday last (November 28), at seven P. M. The medium was not in when I called, and I sat waiting for him alone, without seeing or talking to any one. As soon as he appeared I told him the object of my visit, without mentioning my name; upon which he immediately took a seat at his table, inviting me to do the same. By his instructions I then wrote on several small pieces of paper, which I afterwards rolled into pellets, the names of dead relatives and friends, most of them in the Georgian language. This language is spoken in this country only by two of my friends and myself. The names were the following: Stephen Mourvanoff and Resodeda, my grandparents; Nicolai Tnadje, Bejan Khamashouridsey and Vladimir Nicoladje, the names of my friends in the university, all of them now deceased. To presume that Foster could have known my name or those of my friends would be to presume the most absurd impossibility. He could not have read them

even if, instead of being in closely rolled up pellets, they had been lying open before his eyes, for they were, as I have said before, written in Georgian. He pressed some of them to his forehead, leaving others untouched. Still, the very moment we were seated, the medium said to me the following :

"Bejan Khamashouridsey greets his friend Betanelly," repeating one after the other and as correctly all the Georgian names I had written out. Further, he told me he saw the spirit of an old woman close to me, describing most perfectly my grandmother, and repeating, "Resodeda, Resodeda is here; she kisses her grandson." Arising from his chair Foster embraced and kissed me in the same peculiar way as my grandmother did when alive. I was perfectly dumb-founded, so natural and life-like was the performance of the medium. No one in this country knew anything of my past life, nor did I ever speak to any one about the names of my friends of my youth. I never was a spiritualist, and believed it till recently to be all unmitigated humbug.

M. C. BETANELLY.

November 30, 1874.

430 WALNUT STREET, PHILADELPHIA, PA.

"C." writes the following from Rochester :

Having heard that Mr. Foster had on a number of occasions brought the spirits into requisition to read from closed books, I resolved to apply that test. On Wednesday afternoon, when the weather was remarkably fine, I repaired to the residence of Mr. Foster, 14 North Clinton Street, taking with me a book which I had taken from my library from among a series of thirty-five volumes in an uniform style of binding. I did not know the title of the book when I took it. Seated at the table opposite the medium, in an apartment fully lighted by the sun, I was ready to hear a spirit read from the volume I had brought. The medium announced that it would be necessary first to find a spirit who could read from the book, as all did not seem to possess that power. He requested me to write upon strips of paper the names of a few persons who were dead. I wrote ten or more names and folded each so tightly that it was impossible for the names to be read by mortals without unfolding them. These papers were placed in the centre of the table, and the medium lifted one by one in his fingers until at length he got a response by raps, and said he had found a spirit who would read from my book. He threw the paper to me without opening, and taking a pencil wrote a name, which proved

to be the same as that in the paper he had given me, and was one that I had written in the first place. It was the name of a citizen long known in Rochester, who had been much before the public in life. He had held many important local offices and was twice mayor.

Having thus found a reading spirit, the medium requested me to place my book upon the floor under the table, which I did, taking care, however, to put one foot upon it, which act I did without any direction. I know that the medium had not had his hand upon the book or seen it opened. I resolved that it should remain closed until the experiment was concluded. I know that the book was on the floor under my foot from the time I placed it there till I took it up after the reading.

The medium announced that the spirit was ready to read through him, and he requested me to take down the words as he should repeat them, which I did as follows :

"The night that succeeded was wild and melancholy." The beginning of chapter thirty-first.

The medium directed me to open the book and see if the spirit was correct. I took the book from under my foot upon the floor and opened it. I then first knew the title of the volume I had brought. It was "The Wept of Wish-Ton-Wish," an Indian tale of the Connecticut Valley, written by J. Fenimore Cooper, and was one of a series of thirty-five by the same author. On turning to the thirty-first chapter in this volume, I found that it opened with the sentence above quoted and which the medium had dictated to me to write. The quotation was perfect to a letter.

Now, will somebody explain how this medium could make an exact quotation from a novel published forty years ago, and taken by me by chance from a row of thirty-five of the same series for the purpose for this experiment? This cannot be done by what they call mind-reading, for certainly I did not have the passage in my mind, and did not even know the title of the volume I had taken with me. No mechanical contrivance would be available to perform such an act. At no time during the interview with the medium was this book out of my control. He did not put hand or foot upon it, but I had both upon it.

Some who will not admit that this feat was performed by an invisible spirit, may think that the writer was in collusion with the medium to deceive the public. If you be of the latter, Mr. Editor, please exercise your prerogative and consign this manuscript to the waste basket, and let that portion of the public who will not make inquiry for themselves wait for a more reliable witness than one who has been a skeptic

about spiritual matters for more than forty years, and who might have remained so forever but for the inquiry he has made in the few days just past.

I remember one evening calling with Mr. Foster upon Mrs. S., who had recently moved into unfurnished apartments. Mrs. S. said to Mr. Foster: "Please give us some physical manifestations. My parlor is just the place, heavy blankets being over the windows, to keep out the glare of the sun. One small wooden table is the only furniture. Let us take in three chairs, sit around the table, and see what will transpire." "No," replied Mr. Foster, describing at the same time how unpleasant it was for him to sit in the dark. Mrs. S. persisted, "Do, please, just this once." Finally Mr. Foster consented under these conditions: the table was to be placed under the chandelier, we three should take hold of hands around the table, matches should be placed on the table, Mrs. S. agreeing to light the gas the moment Mr. Foster so requested. We sat in silence a moment, when Mr. Foster said the spirit of M., whom we all had known in life, was there. Mr. Foster said that he saw the spirit perfectly, and that she said if we would keep quiet she would dance, and that the noise from the heels of her shoes on the bare floor would give the tone and the character of the dance. She did so. It was a success. Within a few moments Foster said, "Light the gas." He was dripping with perspiration, which showed his peculiar nervous condition during physical manifestations. We had not moved from our positions, nor unclasped our hands. After a short rest, the medium recuperated, and we turned off the gas the second time. Mr. Foster then said the spirits told him they would cool the room (it being a hot summer's night). Immediately waves of

wind rushed through the room, so cool that it seemed as though they came direct from an iceberg. M. immediately returned and finished the dance. Whenever I think of that night, I can distinctly hear the clitter-clatter of the spirit dancers' shoes.

[Written for *The Troy Whig*.]

Out of twenty-two slips, responses were received from seventeen of the names written on them, and the slips were handed over to be opened with no mistake made. But stranger still, the names were given of several persons who had not been thought of. I had written the name, for instance, of Mr. M., a good-natured gentleman who was thrice married during his lifetime. This gentleman was announced. "He is here," said Mr. Foster, "and Jenny is with him." Jenny it appears was the name of the last wife, who preceded him to the "other shore"; but none of us knew it until our "memory was refreshed" by the information received.

"Mrs. K——," said Mr. Foster to one of the ladies with me, "I see a beautiful little spirit standing near you—a little blonde, with golden hair; she is the spirit you now mourn. That is the one, he added, handing Mrs. K. a slip. She says her name is ——" (speaking it in full). As a stronger test, Mrs. K. asked if the child would tell her the name of a certain little song which her papa used to sing to her to make her laugh. "Yes," said Mr. Foster, as the raps were heard, and the request was made that it should be written out through the medium. "She says she can not write," replied Mr. Foster, "she is too little. But, never mind, uncle Robert is with her and he will write it for her." The name of the song (a very unusual one) was immediately written out by Mr. Foster, and "Uncle Robert" was instantly recognized by Mrs. K. as a relative whose name had not been put down on any of the slips, and who had been dead about twenty years. Mr. Foster then looked up to the lady and asked: "What was the matter with the little one's throat? She puts her hand up to it so," describing a gesture of discomfort that the child used frequently to make during the last months of her life, on account of a weakness in the throat following a severe attack of whooping cough.

Mrs. K—— received another marvelous test of Mr. Foster's strange power, whatever it should be called. "I see," he said to her, "a beautiful spirit—not beautiful in face, but beautiful in nature—and she

bears a wreath of fresh flowers. She died recently, and she gives me her name as ——" (giving it in full). Mrs. K—— instantly recalled a friend, known in Troy to but one family circle, a young lady who died at a distance about six weeks ago, and to whose sister Mrs. K—— had sent flowers of the kind named to be placed upon the casket. The young lady was called upon to name the place where she died—a small and distant village in another State, and the name was given correctly. I then reminded Mrs. K—— that she wished to question her friend about an engagement of marriage with a person who had talked with unpleasant freedom of the matter after her death with great earnestness. "But she tells me," said he, "that she was *not* engaged to that man, and she wants you to write and tell her mother and sister so"—thus naming the two persons who had been most grieved by the report referred to, but whom the medium certainly never heard of. To make this test more perfect still, I asked Mr. Foster if the name of the young man referred to could be given. Three raps came, and Mrs. K—— was asked to write down six or seven names, among them the right one, roll them up in little pellets, and throw them down on the table. She did so, and Mr. Foster's pencil snapped one of them out to her, which she opened and pronounced correct. "But," said he, with a smile, "your friend says that you haven't spelled the name quite right," and a change was made which none of us knew to be needed until after the seance was over and the correction inquired into. Mrs. K—— *had misspelled the name.*

After various other communications, Mr. Foster looked up and asked, "Who is this jolly spirit?" and he threw over a slip to me, requesting me to open it. It was the one on which I had written the suggestion that I should like to have some "jolly fellow," smarter than myself, give the sitting a better direction than I had marked out—a thing that had been done so palpably that I had spoken of it several times, although with no thought or remembrance of the written request I had made.

"Well," continued Mr. Foster, "who is the smartest spirit? Is it this one—this one—this one?" No answer came, and one of the ladies with me—a keen wit—exclaimed, "Modesty forbids." Three loud raps sounded on the table, and the "medium" laughed. "That's it precisely," said he; "the raps won't come, but they point me to this paper. This is the smartest spirit here." I opened the slip, and found on it the name of one of the most genial, learned and distinguished men that ever lived, a person who, it was claimed, appeared to me at my first sitting with Mr. Foster, and whose name I had writ-

ten down in the second instance, but with no thought whatever of the striking use that was made of it.

Well, this is what I know about Foster—a few *facts*. The “gentle reader” of the *Whig* may draw his own conclusions. There I can’t help him.

[*From The Troy Press, March 6, 1875.*]

In simple ways Mr. Foster designated fifteen other persons according to my folded slips and described them accurately, whenever he desired to do so. He made almost a mental photograph of one of my relatives—an aunt who died fifteen years ago, and whose memory has been especially dear to me. After he had given the shape of her face, her apparent age, the color of her hair, and a sad, thoughtful expression that especially characterized her face, I added: “She had brown eyes.” Mr. Foster instantly looked up, as if into her face, and said, “No; hazel eyes.” I afterwards learned that he was right and I wrong about it. So he had not merely been reading my thoughts—“mind-reading,” as the term is.

But I can’t stop to go over all these things. I’ll mention one more. I put on one of my slips the name of a young lady whom I last saw a dozen years ago and never heard from afterwards. She had the consumption, I supposed, at the time, and I could not believe her to be still alive, though I had never been informed of her death. Mr. Foster gave me her name, described her accurately, designated the place where I had last seen her (a distant and inconspicuous one), and declared that he saw her standing by my side, with a bouquet of white flowers in her hand. When I bade her good-bye, twelve years ago, as I now remember, an incident I had entirely forgotten, the young lady had just taken a bouquet of white flowers from a piano on which it stood, and was holding them in her hand.

[*From The Cleveland Herald, Jan. 5, 1876.*]

“This person died from an accident,” asserted the medium positively; “did any of you write the name of a person who died from an accident?”

For a short time no one replied, and the reporter thought that Foster had been caught. At length Mr. Brown stated that he had, now he came to think of it, written the name of such a person.

“Write a question,” requested the medium.

Brown did so, and Foster pressed the folded paper to his forehead

as before, and commenced to write rapidly. The following communication was received :

"DEAR BROWN : I am glad to make myself known to you at this time. I am very happy in my present condition, and would state to you that my death occurred from the accident I received, being thrown from a carriage.
ELIZA A. BROWN."

"Is that correct ?" asked the medium.

The reply came that it was in every respect, but the answer was not needed, as the astonishment on Brown's face was of itself a sufficient indication.

Brown then wrote another question and received a satisfactory reply.

Foster now addressed himself again to the German reporter. "Your grandfather on your father's side comes to you ; he is one of your guardian spirits." He then turned once more to Mr. Brown and said, "There are three others with Eliza Brown in the spirit world ; your dear father who loves you, your mother and your sister."

Mr. Brown, whose face had become quite pale, acknowledged that those were the only dear relatives of his who had died.

Foster next picked up one of the slips of paper that the *Herald* representative had written on just after entering the apartment, and pronounced the name thereon to be that of a person who was living. The reporter unfolded it and found it was really the name of the living man he had written in expectation of possibly fooling the medium.

CHAPTER XL

MR. FOSTER was advertised and known the world over as a *test* medium. He was willing to be submitted to the most crucial tests without any conditions or paraphernalia ; willing to give his seances on bare floors, with uncovered tables ; willing to go to any house, studio or hotel. I do not wish to assert that upon all and every occasion he met with great success ; but that he was willing to have his power tested in any way which might be proposed by intelligent men and women. He felt grieved and disappointed that scientific men did not avail themselves of the opportunity to investigate the phenomena which were continually manifested through him. He gave several sittings to Prof. Agassiz, and expressed an earnest hope that he would become interested in the phenomena, and give his views to the public. Mr. Foster said upon one occasion: "Some day I hope a scientific man like Tyndall will take hold of me, live with me, submit me to every test, and then give his impressions to the world. After that I might be better understood."

John Ashburner, M. D., a member of the Royal Irish Academy, is a conspicuous authority in the scientific world. In his "Notes and Studies in the Philosophy of Animal Magnetism and Spiritualism" he has many references to Mr. Foster, and among other things says :

When Charles Foster was in London, in 1863, he was often in my house, and numerous friends had opportunities of witnessing the phenomena which occurred in his presence. It is not necessary to enlarge

this volume by a long list of names. It may, however, be stated that many of them were persons of rank and consideration in the higher walks of London society. The second morning that Mr. Foster called upon me was about two weeks after his arrival in England. Accidentally, at the same time, arrived at my door Lady C. H., and her aunt, the wife of the Rev. A. E. I urged them to come in, and placed them on chairs at the sides of my dining table. Their names had not been mentioned. Mr. Foster having retired to the further extremity of the room, so as not to be able to see what the ladies wrote, I induced them each to write upon separate slips of paper six names of friends who had departed this world. These they folded into pellets, which were placed together. Mr. Foster coming back to the table, immediately picked up a pellet, and addressed himself to Mrs. A. E. "Alice," he said, which made the lady start, and ask how he knew her name. He replied, "Your cousin, John Whitney, whose name you wrote on that little piece of paper, stands by your side, and desires me to say that he often watches over you and reads your thoughts, which are always pure and good." Then he turned towards me and said, "Alice's uncle is smiling benignantly, as he is looking towards you. He says you and he were very intimate friends." I said, "I should like to know the name of my friend," and Mr. Foster instantly replied, "Gaven. His Christian name will appear on my right arm." The arm was bared, and there appeared in red letters fully one inch and a quarter long, the name "William" raised on the skin of his arm. Certainly, William Gaven was my dear old friend, and the uncle of the lady whose name is Alice.

On one occasion, the Honorable Mrs. W. C. and her sister-in-law desired to try some experiments in my *dunker-kammer*, a room the Baron von Reichenbach had taught me how to darken properly for experiments on the od force and the odic light emanating from living organized bodies. This room afforded opportunities for marvelous manifestations. When the light was excluded, the two ladies were seated on one side of a heavy rose-wood octagonal table with drawers, weighing at least seventy or eighty pounds. Mr. Foster and I were on chairs opposite to them. Suddenly a great alarm seized Mr. Foster; he grasped my right hand, and beseeched me not to quit my hold of him, for he said there was no knowledge where the spirits might convey him. I held his hand, and he was floated in the air towards the ceiling. At one time Mrs. W. C. felt a substance on her head, and putting up her hands, discovered a pair of boots above her head. At last Mr. Foster's aerial voyage ceased, and a new phenomenon pre-

sented itself. Some busts, as large as life, resting upon book-cupboards seven feet high, were taken from their places. One was suddenly put upon Mrs. W. C.'s lap ; others, on my obtaining a light, were found on the table. I removed these to a corner of the room, and put out the light. Then, the table was lifted into the air, and remained there for some seconds. Then, it gently descended into the place it had before occupied, with the difference that the top was turned downwards, and rested on the carpet. And more to the same effect.

The utter simplicity of Mr. Foster's *modus operandi* is also in his favor. He has no paraphernalia—absolutely none. No cabinet, with a little aperture in front and the dark behind, no dimly lighted room, no ropes, or instruments, or contrivances of any kind. The sunlight is welcome in the daytime, and the full blaze of the gas in the evening. An ordinary table, a supply of writing paper and a few pencils constitute his entire stock in trade. Legerdemain which demands no more elaborate contrivances than these must have supreme reliance on its own ingenuity.

Mr. Ashburner's account recalls to my mind the following : About 12 o' clock one summer night, we met Oregon Wilson and one or two friends on Broadway. Mr. Wilson, as usual, was in a lively frame of mind, and insisted upon our going to his studio to look at some new curios, which he said were of great value. This, however, was only a pretext, as his real object was to induce Mr. Foster to give some physical manifestations. Mr. Foster was quite friendly with him, and he had often tried to persuade Mr. Foster to give him and his friends a dark seance ; but Mr. Foster had always refused. We had been in the studio a few moments only when Mr. Wilson turned off the gas without giving any warning, and we were in utter darkness. What occurred that night will not be forgotten by any of us, for it seemed for a few moments as though the world had come to an end ; that the building had been blown up by dynamite, or that an

earthquake was upon us ! It seemed as though everything in the studio would be broken and ruined. Even I was frightened, for it seemed as though there was danger of being hurt. We simultaneously said, "Wilson, light the gas," and when the gas was lighted, we found only a few things disarranged ; and it is a mystery to this day how to account for the *hurlubrelu*. Poor Foster was faint. He could hardly stand, was pale as death, and there was a cold perspiration on his forehead. Wilson was not disturbed. He laughed heartily, seemed to think it a good joke, and said to Foster, "That is first-rate, old man, better than I supposed you could do.

What a shaking-up ! Charlie, how did you do it ?" Walking home Foster seemed to feel very bad. He said people had no right to treat him that way, and that no one not having the peculiar power which he had could understand the mental and physical suffering that he went through during an experience such as he had just had at the studio. He did not blame Wilson, as Wilson only meant it as a joke, but that to him it was a very serious matter.

I know positively that no amount of money would induce Mr. Foster to sit in the dark for the purpose of producing physical manifestations. He did not wish to stand the pressure, and while we might say his reason was not afraid, his heart was.

Is it not possible that we all have an undeveloped power which we might call the sixth sense, which has only been cultivated in a few ? Could we not by a course of study develop this sense so that it might average with the other five ? Is not the Mind as yet an unknown god ? We certainly have but little comprehension of our own individual minds. Our thoughts

at times almost frighten us with their newness and mysteries. Well did the great philosopher say, "Know thyself." Would it not be well to give more time and study to the capacities and wonders of the human mind? Would it not be well for the universities to give this subject more attention? Might they not have new classes formed devoted to the cultivation of the sixth sense, which might bring forth explanations which would be revelations to the world. Possibly this is the "missing link," the five senses being woefully incomplete without the sixth.

We quote a word from Washington :

Foster stands pre-eminent as a worker of marvels. There is no doubt that he represents an unknown force, which displays itself in messages from the dead and queer revelations sometimes in the lives of the questioners. He has stood the test of some of the keenest and most analytical minds in Rome, London, Paris, New York, Melbourne and San Francisco. The tests are entirely mental and utterly removed from the possibility of aid by paraphernalia or machinery. Professor Huxley, Stuart Mill, Victor Emmanuel, the King of Italy have sought this "bird or prophet," shade or devil, and have gone away more puzzled than when they came. Whatever it may be, psychology, magnetism, spirits of health or goblins damned, Foster is a curious study to those interested in abstruse studies and supernatural phenomena.

We dropped in upon him last Thursday night, to find two ex-congressmen, both distinguished lawyers, about entering upon an investigation. These gentlemen have national reputations as investigators, and are not only profoundly versed in the law, but add to that information a shrewd knowledge of human nature. They opened with Foster as they would have done with the late District government, had that organization been before them. That is, Foster was regarded as a trickster and mountebank, and they were there to expose him. Foster, recognizing the situation, calmly put himself in the hands of the enemy. He left the room while the names were being written, and throughout the seance submitted to their cautious proceedings.

We are not at liberty to give the details of this interesting trial, for the affair soon passed from mere test fit for publication to personal matters too sacred and confidential for print. It was interesting to witness

the hard skepticism of these shrewd minds weaken and disappear before the startling facts that could not be disposed of upon other grounds than that claimed by spiritualists. Of all classes, that of the bar is the best qualified for such investigation. The training and culture given the legal mind by the law, of evidence facilitate sifting the true from the false, and enable their possessor to recognize a fact whenever presented. At the end of two hours' searching inquiry one of these eminent men said, as he threw himself back in his chair, "I cannot understand this. It is the most remarkable event that ever occurred to me." And the other added, "Well, I give it up—it is past my comprehension."

We consider the following fairly good tests :

To one answer I was told the party would attach her own signature. This was done in a style of writing wholly unlike that of the body of the communication which the medium had written. It was a peculiar signature and closely resembled that of the party who has been dead about ten years.

I closed the interview after some further tests and went away confounded, if not convinced. Being naturally materialistic in my views, I was not as well prepared to receive this as a demonstration of spirits as one would be who had always recognized a spiritual existence.

In reflecting subsequently upon the interview above described, I was not content to leave the matter in that shape, but resolved to make another visit to Mr. Foster and apply further tests made with more deliberation. Accordingly I prepared a number of questions addressed to a friend—a well-known citizen who died two years ago. These questions were written as before, and so concealed that they could not be read without unrolling the paper on which they were written. The questions were so framed that a person not familiar with the subjects could not answer them intelligently though permitted to read them, as this medium was not. The deceased citizen was called up, and the questions were answered as he only could have answered them.

After my first interview, I was told by a citizen to whom I related the facts that this medium was only a mind-reader (whatever that may be), and that he read the papers by knowing what was in my mind. To test this, I requested a friend to prepare a question in writing and put it in a sealed envelope, which he did. I presented it to Mr. Foster, not myself knowing the contents of the envelope. Without seeing the contents of the envelope the medium gave a correct answer, which involved the giving of names of two well-known deceased

citizens. I first saw or knew what the question was when I received the answer. This was a complete refutation of the idea that the medium read the question in my mind, for it was not there.

Other things transpired at these interviews which, to say the least, surprised me; but I have given perhaps quite as much as your readers will care to see. You are quite at liberty to give my name to any person who cares to learn from me more than I have stated. It seems to me that if a person cares to make a test of mediumistic powers the presence of Mr. Foster affords an excellent opportunity. I understand that he will remain in town a few days in a quiet way to interview such as may call upon him. C.

Before going into the room we wrote on a slip of paper, which we put into our pocket, the name of a near relative who had died within six months—a lady; but fearing that Mr. Foster might possibly have heard of the occurrence, and could anticipate our purpose, we wrote the lady's name as he could by no possibility have ever known or heard it—that is, we wrote the maiden name, which she had borne forty years ago, and which was known to not more than three or four persons in this part of the country. We had folded this name in and in the slip, to make sure it could not be seen without considerable time and trouble in opening it. We had scarcely thrown this slip down on the table in front of Mr. Foster, with what we supposed to be the rather sarcastic remark that it would do for him to begin on, when he said: "Mr. — the spirit of an old lady is here. It is your mother. She will control my hand and write the name (though it doesn't seem to be her own) which you have folded inside that piece of paper. Ah, yes," added Mr. Foster, as he finished the communication, "I understand; it was her maiden name." The message was signed correctly, in accordance with the slip, and moreover it conveyed a request which, although very peculiar, and one that no medium would be likely to think of, was precisely the thing that she would most of all things desire to have gratified.

We considered this a pretty good beginning for our sitting with Mr. Foster; but, to try him still more severely, we asked if he could give us the names of other spirits present, *without our writing them on the slips at all*. He instantly replied that he could; that the room was full of spirits belonging to our mother's side of the family, and that some of them had the power—not very frequent in his case—to cause strong "physical manifestations" in connection with the mental tests which we were receiving. At this moment, one end of the heavy sofa

at the side of the room jumped up two or three inches and moved out toward our table. "Your Uncle John is here," said Mr. Foster—"your mother's brother, who died many years ago. He gives his name (although you do not know him), because you have heard your mother speak of him, and it affords you a test of the impossibility of the medium's having any knowledge of him, except as you verify it yourself. It was not he, however, who moved the sofa; that was your uncle, Washington M——. He was murdered at the south fifty years ago, he tells me, in the old slavery days, and that is the reason your family could never get a satisfactory account of his death."

How in the world Mr. C. H. Foster obtained the information here given, we don't pretend to say. But he stated the facts correctly, though the spirits supposed to be present had certainly not been on the earth since he was born, were not in our own mind before "putting in their appearance" at the sitting, and had been almost forgotten by us even in name. Their very grave-stones, indeed, had probably been out of sight for a quarter of a century.

Following these "manipulations," several other members of the same branch of the family were heard from in the same remarkable way—without even the slips of paper to give a clue to them and *they could not have been known or heard of by Mr. Foster—that is certain.*

We referred to a lad who accompanied us in calling upon Mr. Foster. During the seance, it was suggested that he step across the room, and write the name of some young friend of his who had died. He did so, and when the folded slip was placed on the table, three raps indicated that the spirit corresponding to the name was present. "Yes," said Mr. Foster, "it is little ——. She is your cousin, who loved you very dearly, and is very glad you came here. She points to that rocking-chair in the corner, behind me, and says she will go and sit in it. If she can, she will make it rock."

At this point we of course looked at the chair, but so many other "signs and wonders" crowded upon us that in a moment we had forgotten all about it, when suddenly the lad looked up in amazement, and pointed to the distant rocking-chair, which surely enough was rocking away vigorously. When the fact was noticed and acknowledged, raps came in all parts of the room, and the sofa jumped out of place once more, as if in confirmation of our acknowledgment,

CHAPTER XII.

WE left San Francisco on the steamer MacGregor, February 2, 1874, en route for Melbourne, Australia. Our first stop was at Honolulu, where we landed late at night on Feb. 11. The city was very dark. The perfume of flowers was remarkably fragrant along the drive to the hotel, and a pleasant contrast to the odor of salt water, which we had been inhaling for the last nine days.

As our schedule time gave us only one day in Honolulu, we arose early the next morning to improve our opportunity of seeing the city. The picture from our window was most delightful, and it seemed for the moment that we had been dropped in the midst of the Garden of Eden, so beautiful were the flowers, trees and shrubbery presented to our view. After a tropical breakfast of fruit and fish, we started on a drive to the Palla. The views along the way were grand, and as we ascended the hill of the Palla, we found the scenery equal to that of Switzerland. It is said that in olden times criminals were forced over these towering rocks into the sea, to expiate their crimes. We stopped at Queen Emma's garden, on our return, and brought back many fresh flowers to decorate the steamer. Returning to the city about four o'clock, we noticed the court-yard was crowded with people, both native and foreign. Inquiring the cause of the excitement, we were told it was election day, and that the result of the election would soon be announced from the balcony of the court-

house. The candidates were King Kalakaua and Queen Emma. The natives of Honolulu were almost unanimous in their preference for Queen Emma, while King Kalakaua was the preference in the majority of the adjacent islands. We entered the court-yard and stood with the crowd, awaiting the announcement. In a few moments one of the members came out on the porch, and in a short speech said that King Kalakaua was elected. Immediately the scene was appalling! The native Kanakas seemed to have expected this result, for underneath their coats were concealed all kinds of missiles, which they hurled at the speaker's head. All was confusion and terror. There was a riot. Expecting trouble, the court-house had been securely fastened, but heavy rails were taken from the fence, and used to break in the doors, and we witnessed what is termed the "*gutting*" of a building. For a moment one might imagine they were in a Calvinistic hell; these Kanaka blacks looked like infuriated devils. They rushed madly into the court-house, took several of the members by force, and hurled them through the windows—sash, glass and mangled bodies falling upon the ground together. The one or two who were not killed by the fall were immediately beaten to death by the angry natives. The court-house was entirely emptied. After the members were disposed of, through the windows came the law books, state papers, records and furniture. The building was *gulled*. As soon as the riot broke out, word was sent to the American and British war ships. The soldiers responded in double-quick. They were heartily cheered as they came into the court-yard, but it was too late—all was over. The majority of the voters for the king were lying dead in

the court-yard, shaded by the tropical trees. So ended an eventful day in Honolulu, which began with so much pleasure, surrounded with such beautiful scenery, sunshine and flowers—ending in shadow and showing the terrible result of unrestrained passion in the lower grades of man.

Our next landing was at the Feejee Islands, and I continue to diverge from the main topic of Spiritualism, to give a few *rambling thoughts*.

I have noticed a number of articles in the daily press recently upon cannibalism. It seems to be a mania with some writers to originate—entirely in their own brains—the most fictitious stories about cannibalism—picturing the savage in a wild, ferocious state of madness for human flesh! I have had some experience as a traveller among those termed savage tribes, and on this voyage our vessel, the MacGregor, stopped for, the first time, and up to that date, it was the only steamer that had ever landed at a place called Kandavra, Feejee Islands. It was thought by the manager of this line of steamers that it would be profitable to make a landing there each trip, taking on a goodly supply of fine fruits—bananas, oranges, lemons, etc. The experiment, however, proved to be a failure; for, as we were sailing slowly out, we suddenly ran on a coral reef. We remained on this reef for about one week, and finally abandoning the MacGregor were taken on board of another vessel.

While living on the reef, I went ashore each day, accompanied by a Feejee, who came down from the city of Levaka to act as guide and interpreter to our captain. We visited a Feejee village, about four miles inland, daily, which afforded us an opportunity to study what would naturally be supposed to be as

barbarous a race as inhabited the earth. The interpreter told us that these natives had never seen a white man. They had never in any way received any enlightenment nor association from people we term civilized. They came aboard our steamer in great numbers, but would not touch our food. A more gentle, loving, peaceable race of people, I have never met. Their clothing consisted of a band of leaves around their loins. I often watched the young girls walking along the hillside, with their arms around each other's waists. Many other like indications were noticeable, showing that their natural instincts were affectionate and good; and, strange to say, the women were *virtuous*, the penalty for unchastity being death. Think of it!

They used a kind of wine, which I think was called *guava*. Their mode of manufacturing *guava* might not be quite as civilized a process as our modes of manufacturing gin or beer—and was as follows: Imagine a picturesque hut, made of clay, grass, branches and leaves, in the centre of which is placed a large cocoanut bowl with a half dozen dusky maidens from twelve to eighteen years of age sitting around it all busily chewing a root—looking much as our girls do when chewing gum—and expectorating in the bowl. When a sufficient amount is thus produced, it is ready for use. It is not exactly an opiate, nor a liquor, but a cross between the two. It produces sleep, is considered by them a sacred drink, and is used at their religious ceremonies. As I wish some excuse for acknowledging that I tasted the beverage, I will say the interpreter told me that they would be much offended if I refused it; and, as it is my custom to refuse nothing new (or old) that is offered me to drink, I accepted on this occasion.

An Englishman, who was a Feejee planter, was one of the passengers on our steamer. He had lived in the Feejee Islands a number of years, knew the different tribes, their history, peculiarities, etc. I expressed my surprise to find this Feejee tribe, which I had had the privilege of mingling with, and studying its character, such a pleasing, kind and moral people, apparently averaging in intelligence with people in general. He told me that the stories about cannibalism were untrue. They were all exaggerations. I said to him there must be some fire where there is so much smoke. He said yes, that was true, and that through years of study and investigation, and living among these unknown tribes, he had found, he thought, the truth from whence came the untruth. He explained it in this way: The savages have wars, and it was not unusual during a prolonged fight, when no provisions were at hand, no fruit or fish, occasionally, under pressure of intense hunger, the body of a dead enemy was *cooked and eaten*. As during, the siege at Paris, the French ate rats, cats and dogs, and under similar trying circumstances many white men have also devoured *human flesh*. After investigating this subject of cannibalism, looking into it as I have had the opportunity in the Feejee Islands, Africa, and many other countries, I have come to the conclusion that it is mostly mythical.

One of the peculiarities about the Feejee Islands was the absence of animal life. It may be well known to some people, but it was a great surprise to me that not an animal of any description had ever been seen on the islands. Is it natural then that such a people would crave animal food, a people who had never tasted it? They live on fruit and fish. They wrap the fish in leaves, bury it in the earth, build a fire over it,

and when it is cooked and the leaves removed it looks as tempting as a fish cooked on Manhattan Island.

Nothing is more vividly impressed upon my mind than the picture of that Feejee village ; and, although I have visited the principal cities of the world, the little Feejee village, with its simple life and peculiarities, is ever bringing pleasure to my thoughts. It was as though taken back almost to the beginning of the world, and it was wonderful to watch their primitive ways, and to see how they procure such a variety of articles that resembled those used in European countries.

The first Feejee young "gentleman" whom I saw sat in the doorway of a picturesque hut, smoking what looked like a cigarette. He smoked as gracefully as a Spaniard. I found upon inquiry that he was not smoking tobacco, but a leaf which resembled it somewhat, the name of which I have forgotten. They roll this wild cigarette dexterously.

The top of the first hut I entered was covered with bananas, which were hung there to ripen. A young mother was lying on the matted floor. She was rocking the cradle of her little twenty-four-hour old Feejee son. The cradle was made from a single leaf, a heavy vein running through the centre, which enabled it to be rocked with ease. It looked very much like the old-fashioned low cradle of our childhood. The leaf was so shaped by the Creator as to hold the native babes of the woods—nature's cradle.

Coral necklaces there, as here, adorned the necks of the females. If they wanted a string, either to carry fish or to use for any other purpose, it seemed as natural for them to go to a little sapling, rip off the bark and give it a twist, as for us to procure it from a ball of twine. Their cooking utensils and articles used about

the huts were interesting, and it was a study to observe how all these different articles corresponded to the same articles used in what we term the civilized, or moneyed, nations.

They seemed to be very fond of music. One song I well remember. From what they told me I judge it was a national song which they had all adopted, and would correspond, I suppose, to our "Star Spangled Banner," or the "Marseillaise" of the French. The little village seemed a miniature world, showing that whatever vibrated in the great communities of the earth was also there, and that after all there is not a great difference between that little family living in the far away Feejee Islands and the families who live in London or Berlin.

My recollection of the people of that Feejee village is most restful and pleasing. They were nature's happy family. They seemed to have no weariness. There was not a sick person in the village—old age being the only cause of death. Peace and good will prevailed; and, as the twilight fell upon them, it seemed like a benediction from God.

I was impressed with a leading editorial in one of our New York journals, some days since, which read as follows.

After years of toil and the sacrifice of many lives Central Africa is still completely at the mercy of the Arab slave-traders and the savage native chiefs.

It is military force which subdues barbarism; it is commerce which arms force for that work. The schoolmaster and the missionary can accomplish nothing until the soldier, hired by trade, has prepared the way for them.

Civilized nations have their trading stations already established along the African coasts. Instigated by greed they will push their frontiers steadily further into the country, in a race with each other for the possession of the fairest provinces. In the interest of trade they will

prick back savagery with the bayonet, binding their conquests with lines of roadway. That's the way in which this continent was secured for civilization. The pall of barbarism cannot be lifted. It must be rolled back by advancing trade. If savagery submits it shares the benefits of the conquest. If it refuses to submit it is crushed by the strong hand. It has been so in all ages and countries. It will be so in all ages and countries. It will be so in Africa.

"The Arab slave traders"—are the Arabs as a race such a terrible set of men as Europeans paint them? Has not the Arab race passed as high an examination for bravery, intellect and religion as other races? One Arab at least will live eternally—Mahomet. How about the slaves whom we have freed? Would not the money have been better spent in educating them—the Africans of our country—than in trying to educate and convert the Africans of Africa? Advocating "military force" to "subdue" barbarism—we hear so much about barbarism, the heathen, the savages, the uncivilized. I have travelled through the Oriental countries, and have tried to study the different races of mankind, and I consider humanity as one family. I believe there is as much civilization in Egypt, China, Japan, and other countries, as there is in Europe and America. It is a question whether the foreign soldiers which are sent to Africa are sent in the interest of morality and religion. It looks as though they went more for gain—for ivory and for gold.

Does it not show a good deal of conceit among Europeans and Americans, to be constantly talking and writing of their civilization, religion and morality. Picking up one of our prominent newspapers, I find the first article, with the following headlines :

"They call these nobles!—eighty aristocratic Englishmen charged with foul crimes.—Lord Arthur Somerset and Lord Ronald Gower among the accused.—They are saved from arrest by the British Home Office and

allowed to flee to the Continent—Henry Labouchere exposes them and calls for their immediate punishment—A terrible scandal !”

In another column I read, for some wrong or fancied wrong a woman shot five bullets into the body of a citizen of high standing. In other columns I see exposed the different frauds in the city government. In fact, the whole paper is a record of crime and depravity. “Physician heal thyself.”

The Orientals do not build their houses so high as we do, their mode of life is different from ours, but I think if we could speak the language of these “savage chiefs,” and commune with them, we would find as kind hearts, as big souls, as much character and integrity, as among their lighter-skinned brethren. Far-away countries have been vilified—ridiculous and exaggerated stories are told of them. I hope some step may be taken soon for a World Congress, so that the West may learn of the East, and the East of the West ; and if that time should come, the amount of Eastern wisdom that would be showered down for the benefit of the West, in my estimation, would be surprising ! The human family ought to mingle, and know each other better. Is it not time that the sword was put by, and in its stead arbitration, goodness of soul and intelligence rule the world ? Are not the real barbarians the soldiers and the people who sustain them ? The European nations certainly do not receive their thirst for war and bloodshed from Christ’s teachings. If we cannot carry what we consider our advantages, and our civilization, into the heart of Africa save by the sword, by the ravages of war and *rum*, then I should say leave Africa to her own people, for I believe the Creator will take care of His children, finding better ways to educate them—whether they be black or white.

CHAPTER XIII.

WE left our stranded steamer, the MacGregor, on the coral-reef, at Kandavu, and were taken on board the steamer Tartar. We were compelled to go *via* Auckland, New Zealand, where we remained one day. Mr. Foster purchased a book there containing a wonderful collection of pressed ferns. New Zealand is noted for its great variety of ferns.

We arrived in Melbourne, *via* Sydney, March 13, 1874. It seemed to us the "jumping off place"—the antipodes. We were ten thousand miles from home, strangers in a strange land, not knowing an individual, and without a letter of introduction! I thought, "Can Foster give seances to these strangers which will be as satisfactory as to the people at home? Will their spirit friends come as freely and answer as correctly? Will these startling phenomena come and astonish people here as in other places?"

We found pleasant apartments at the Old White Hart Hotel, and as we had no machinery to arrange, we were ready for business at once; but how to procure it, coming as we did unheralded? We felt sure that to interest the press was the first step to be taken, so I started at once for the newspaper offices. The newspapers had impressed us as fine specimens of journalism; the editorials showing marked ability. Any city might be proud of a paper like the *Australasian*. I consulted with Mr. Neal, who was accredited as being the best writer on that paper, and found him as cold

as an iceberg, a deep thinker and a profound student, but not especially interested in Spiritualism. He had not heard of Mr. Foster, but after showing him some newspaper notices, and discussing the question very thoroughly, he finally consented to attend a seance. From this conversation I was sure he did not think the readers of the *Australasian* would be very much interested in articles on the subject of Spiritualism. I went from there to the *Melbourne Age* and several other newspaper offices, with about the same experience and results. I arranged for a seance at two o'clock on the third day after our arrival, to be given to representatives of the leading papers of Melbourne. As the time approached for the gentlemen to arrive, I felt somewhat nervous, for they were unusually skeptical, and I felt assured by their manner that they would make no excuse for failure; and if Mr. Foster did not strike them as with a thunderbolt, we should be crushed at the start. Never did Mr. Foster give a sitting to a more unsympathetic company. If there had been a dynamite explosion in the rooms, I do not think they would have given an extra wink. Foster worked hard, and after a seance of several hours the men left, leaving us chilled with their cold politeness. We discussed the seance, and were in doubt whether it would prove a failure or a success. Some exceptionally fine tests were given, but they seemed to make so little impression that we could not but feel disappointed. We must patiently wait for the morning papers. We were pleased with the result. The articles which appeared the next morning were seriously and well written, and we were gratified that they did not consider it necessary to make fun of that which they could not explain.

The following article by Mr. Syme, editor of the

Melbourne *Daily Age*, is a fair sample of the many able articles which appeared in the Melbourne press :

AN HOUR WITH A MEDIUM.

Ask not to what doctors I apply,
Sworn to no master, of no sect am I ;
As drives the storm, at any door I knock,
And house with Montague now, or now with
Locke.

I have always accustomed myself to look upon these four lines of Pope as giving a tolerably fair representation of my general condition of mind when brought into contact with any of the metaphysical controversies of the day. If it is inconsistent with the idea of stability and steadfastness, it is at any rate suggestive of perfect freedom from prepossession, partiality, prejudice, or bias. And to this extent I think that I may plead it as a justification for the task of inquiring into the pretensions of Spiritualism. I had never taken part at a seance, and had never even had the patience to wait upon a table till it rapped. Gallio careth for none of these things, is the feeling that instinctively takes hold of me at the approach of subjects that I feel to be hopelessly inaccessible to the ordinary processes of reason and intelligence. But at the invitation of my friend, whom I shall call Scrutator for the rest of this narrative, and who had arranged for a private interview or exhibition by the kindness of Mr. Foster, I roused myself from my natural incuriosity, and went to that gentleman's residence on Saturday evening, where I witnessed the experiments that I now propose to recount, as nearly as possible as they happened. A well-known clergyman was to have accompanied us, but something or other prevented him from keeping his appointment. When we arrived at Mr. Foster's door, I and Scrutator, the first thing that struck us was the announcement of his name on the brass-plate.—“Mr. Foster, Medium.” Here we were at once, in the presence of the first novelty—mediumship reduced, or elevated, to a profession. “Literally, a dealer in spirits,” I said, “a telegraphist, who will send a message to your grandmother in Hades for a less sum than you would have to pay to communicate with your friend in London or Paris.”

Are these commodities
To be imported from the skies,
And vended here among the rabble
For staple goods and warrantable ?

Scrutator made no reply, being one of Carlyle's monosyllabic men, but I suspect he was beginning to realize Gulliver's feelings on his first introduction to the isle of Glubbudrib, where his Highness the Governor ordered him to call up whatever persons he chose to name among all the dead from the beginning of the world, and command them to answer any questions he should think fit to ask. His silence was not broken till we were ushered into the sitting-room by Mr. Foster's agent, who told us that that gentleman was somewhere on the premises, and would shortly attend upon us. We had time to make a few observations before he entered. The room was a small one, and so was the parlor separated from it by the passage, in which the operations took place. Both were lighted up by gasaliers from the centre of the ceiling, and the doors of both were open. The table was strewn with books more or less relating to Spiritualism, and I had just begun to look into a short biographic notice of Mr. Foster when that gentleman appeared at the door, with a heavily loaded pipe at his lips. Scrutator had made his acquaintance before. I had not, and when I was introduced as the friend of Scrutator, no name was mentioned. Mr. Foster received us apparently without any of the showman in his manner, and resuming his smoke entered freely into conversation. He was disappointed with Melbourne from a medium point of view, and was surprised at the comparative lack of interest shown in spiritualistic inquiries. "In San Francisco there were a hundred professional mediums at least, and in New York there might be a thousand. Throughout the States the organization is as complete as that of any other established form of faith." A question of faith Mr. Foster said he did not regard it. "I am simply endowed with a peculiar power. You may call it clairvoyance, or clair-audience, or anything you please. I know this, but I know nothing more. I do not desire to proselytize, or to propagate a creed, for I have not formulated my consciousness into a creed for myself." "What is the result of the power as far as your consciousness is concerned? What is it that you do, or think you do?" "I hold direct personal communication with the spirits of the dead. I don't say with all spirits, but with those with whom I am *en rapport*. I literally and actually know what they say to me," he added, in reply to a gesture of incredulity from Scrutator. "That is to say, you believe you do?" I interrupted. "But do you know what the act of belief in the popular sense prefigures. Montaigne's classification represents the ordinary believer" — "I am a reader of Montaigne," he interjected. "Most people believe that they believe, not knowing what it is to believe," I con-

tinued. "That is Montaigne's description, you know. Dr. Cairns, for instance, believes that he believes in the miraculous conversion of water into wine. Bishop Goold, just above him, believes that he believes in the transformation of the sacramental wine into blood; but you wouldn't class the mental operation in their case with mine," I said. "For instance, when I say that I believe that table is there before me." "My belief is your belief," he replied. "I am intellectually convinced in what I believe, because I hear and see the objects I believe in, just as you see that table." I referred to the alleged manifestations which took place a week or two ago at Sandhurst. A lock of hair, among other things, said to be brought out of a grave, and placed upon the operating table. "Do you believe that?" "I do not believe it in the same sense that I believe in what I experience myself. I should require to see the lock of hair coming through the window, or down that chimney yonder, and placed upon the table, before I could believe it. But observe (he went on), I don't say it didn't happen or couldn't happen. I don't know what may happen to-morrow, what new discovery might be made in physics in the next hour. Morse couldn't get anybody to believe that he could, by means of the little instrument he had made, send a message from New York to Washington in a few minutes. I can't explain what the power is, but I know by proofs that my reason assents to that I possess it, or that it possesses me, and therefore I don't think it is right or philosophical to doubt a thing because I can't tell what it is." I thought of the answer that Hudibras got from the necromancer Sidrophel—

Quoth Sidrophel, it is no part
Of prudence to cry down an art,
And what it may perform deny,
Because you understand not why,

The conversation was carried on for a little time longer, during which we discussed the various theories that had been hazarded in explanation of the phenomena of Spiritualism, second-sight, mesmerism, unconscious cerebration, and so on. Mr. Foster was of course familiar with them all, but he disclaimed anything more than a mere theoretical knowledge of them. Mesmerism he considered to be quite inadequate to account for the things done, such as levitation of heavy bodies; and unconscious cerebration he could not understand, for "how is it possible that I could think your thoughts when your thoughts do not exist as thoughts to yourself? A thought is inconceivable apart from consciousness. A thought is the result of vibra-

tion or motion in the cells of your brain; and you say that that vibration has been communicated to mine, and so I think or perceive what you are thinking or perceiving. But how can that be said to happen before the vibration in your brain takes place? Is thinking an indolent process as well as an active one, an unconscious process as well as a conscious one?" "You look upon Spiritualism as you look upon mesmerism or phrenology, I suppose, as the opening of a new chapter in the study of the human mind, in psychology in fact a first step, not a final discovery; a means, not an end." "Precisely," he replied, "as disclosing the germs of a connection between mind in its mortal and mind in its immortal stage or condition." It is unnecessary to recapitulate the conversation any further. It is very clear that Mr. Foster's confidence in his own powers was not a mere passive belief, but a strong, rational, I may almost say rationalistic, conviction. He had reasoned himself into it, from the ample evidence that had been supplied to his senses; and I could not help recalling Lord Amberley's remark, in the current number of the *Fortnightly Review*, that at any rate the spiritualist of Mr. Foster's type has stronger ground for his creed, if it can be called one, than most other credalists have for theirs. But in spite of the preparation which I had undergone, I confess that I rose on Mr. Foster's hint to go into the parlor opposite, where the performances were about to take place, with my native disposition to resist any impressions from the supernatural completely uncowed. I had very much the feeling prefigured in Horace's verse—

Quodcumque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi,

and when I took my seat at the large oval table, it was in anything but a mood to be imposed upon. Scrutator sat nearly opposite to me, and at the head, with his back to the chimney-piece (which was securely boarded up), sat the medium. He took his seat readily, and at once asked us if we had any test questions we would like to put.

Scrutator had prepared himself with a few, for he probably knew the trade of the necromancer, and the tricks of his trade, how

His business is to pump and wheedle,
And men with their own keys unriddle
And make them to themselves give answers.

I can most unreservedly state, however, that there was no attempt whatever on the part of Mr. Foster to try these stale dodges upon either of his visitors on the present occasion. There was a card with the alphabet printed on it before Scrutator, and a black lead-pencil and a piece of blank

writing paper were also in reach of us both. Distinct raps, or I should say taps, were heard on the carpeted floor in the corner about five feet off almost as soon as Mr. Foster had taken his seat. "Take the paper," he said to each of us, "and write any names you like upon it, names of persons you knew, dead or alive, or of fictitious characters, any you please. Tear them apart, and wrap them tightly up, and fling them before you." We did as directed. "Now point with the pencil to each, as you hear the raps, and if the spirit of the person whose name is touched is present, the raps given will indicate it." Again we obeyed. "Now, open the papers yourselves, look at the names, and I will ask the spirits to spell them, letter by letter, on the card." Scrutator was first. As the word was spelled out, I wrote it down as well as himself. "Is that the name on your card?" asked the medium. "It is," said Scrutator. "And on yours, sir?" "It is," I answered. "Mr. S.," immediately began the medium, his face suddenly suffusing with blood, but without the slightest apparent conscious effort, "your brother and your father are here"—and here the curious thing was, that the medium repeated names which had not even been written as yet. He seemed to be propelled onward by some inner force, which actually made him anticipate what we were going to write, and give the answers before we put the questions on paper. Thus, when Scrutator asked his relative to tell him what profession he had been in the flesh, Mr. Foster directed him to write down a list of trades and professions, which he did, such as miner, barrister, surgeon, dentist, and so forth. "He is telling me," ejaculated Mr. Foster, "before he tells you," and he wrote down something on a piece of paper before him, before Scrutator had finished the list. The titles were then torn off and screwed up as before, and the spirit began to rap them out by the alphabet—"Surgeon." "That's right," nodded Scrutator. "See here," said the medium, handing up a piece of paper on which he had written two minutes before at least, and sure enough the word "surgeon" was on it. "Give me a proof of your existence," wrote Scrutator, keeping the question as before in his own hand. The answer was quite coherent, and wound up—"This should be sufficient proof of my existence,"—the very words that were on the paper. The raps meantime removed at our request to different parts of the room, close to our hands on one occasion. So far it was still possible at any rate to explain the phenomena by unconscious cerebration. Scrutator's brain might be perused like a map by the medium, who might have repeated what he saw or felt there. Another test was now adopted accordingly. Scrutator had in his pocket a book carefully wrapped

up, which had been placed there by a friend before he left home, and the title and subject of which had been strictly concealed from him. He did not know what it was about. Now if Mr. Foster could tell this, it is clear that he could not get the information from Scrutator. "What book have I in my pocket," the latter asked. No reply. "What is the subject," asked Mr. Foster, "can you tell?" And he immediately took a pencil and wrote down "Politics." Still, the name of the author was not given, nor the title of the book. "They cannot see it," said Mr. Foster. Accordingly it was taken out of Scrutator's pocket with some disappointment. It turned out to be a volume entitled *Political Portraits*, republished from the *London Daily News*, without any author's name. "Let me place my hand on it," said Mr. Foster, reaching across the table, "and I will ask the spirit to mention some word in it, since that is Scrutator's wish." In a moment there came an order, rapped out as follows—"Turn to page 120, top of the page—'Masters say.'" We took up the book, a new one, turned to the page indicated, cut it open, and there were the very words standing first, "Masters say."

Now, granting that Mr. Foster works usually by unconscious cerebration, or second sight, that is no explanation of the mystery in the present case. For the words were dictated to me, and I wrote them down without Mr. Foster's interference in any way, by word or deed. And, besides this, Scrutator himself did not know them, and had never read the book.

I do not care about relating in detail what happened in my own case. The spirit with whom I was put in communication was that of a lady who lived a life of co-existence with me on earth, such as Shelley pre-figured in his *Epipsychidion*, and the two questions which I indited to her, unseen by Mr. Foster, were reproduced word for word in her answer. Mr. Foster himself was much excited in delivering the answer, which he said he "heard" being dictated to him, and involuntarily clasped my hand. "She suffered," he said, "here, here," pointing to both his lungs; "but she died bravely and peacefully, like a flower closing itself amid its own perfumes." Curiously enough, the last words of the lady, who died of consumption, were, "I smell roses," and ceased instantaneously. Mr. Foster took a piece of paper and a pencil in the palm of his hand, thrust it quickly under the table, and withdrew it again, when her name was found to be written upon it; but I did not place much stress upon this.

He brought the seance to a close by placing his hand flat on the table before me, and informing Scrutator that his brother would write the

initials of his name upon it. Soon some red lines appeared upon the back of it, Mr. Foster flinching from what he called the electric spark, and the outline of the first letter could be traced clearly enough on the skin, the second being more indistinct. Both faded slowly away; and we rose to go, not having time to discuss stigmata.

"And what did you think of it?" inquires the reader, forgetting that it would be just as reasonable to ask me what I think of any of the phenomena of vegetation, of the growth of the crystal, or the cabbage, or my own body, with its various senses of hearing, seeing, tasting. That Mr. Foster should hear what he alleges to be spirits whispering is not more wonderful than that he should hear me address him, or that I should hear him. Experience has familiarized me with the one phenomena and not the other. That is all the difference. Of course it is a great difference so far as my faculties of belief are concerned, but I have no right to decide the possible limits of another man's experience, and consequently of another man's belief, by my own. It may be that Mr. Foster does obtain his information from a source not within the reach of other mortals, without the special organic conditions for obtaining it. I have not the requisite organization, as far as I know, and therefore I do not believe in spirit communications, as Mr. Foster apparently does. But because I do not believe it does not follow that I may not believe that Mr. Foster may entertain the sincerest and strongest convictions to that effect. I certainly could not detect the slightest misgivings in his attitude towards the question, and I am sure that he did not use any what are vulgarly known as tricks to obtain the results that he presented me with. Those results may be really what they are represented to be, or it may be only that Mr. Foster thinks them to be real. It is not much help to the general observer, I grant, but perhaps I am stating the preponderating impression left on my mind by them, when I say that my conclusion is that of Lord Amberley that "there is something in it," or as Pope more neatly puts it, that, "It is not either wholly false, or wholly true."

CHAPTER XIV.

We quote the following extracts from the *Australasian* which, though honestly written, were not favorable to Spiritualism.

Undoubtedly, it may be said that Mr. Foster may be genuinely a believer in what he says, and that he really holds that the answers are given to him by spirits. In reply to this, I can only say that there is absolutely nothing in these phenomena that I witnessed that is in the smallest degree suggestive of spirit causation. I do not only say that they do not prove the theory, I say they do not give it the slightest color. There is not a single fact in itself that betrays the working of any outside influence. There is not a single difficulty that is removed by the adoption of so purely hypothetical a cause. To see how entirely imaginary it is, just observe the assumptions that it involves. We do not know that there are spirits. If there are, we know nothing of their nature, their powers, their modes of working. We do not know that they could produce such phenomena as these. If the ordinary definition of a spirit be taken as a starting point, we know that they could not. But here, to explain a difficulty, there is first the assumption that we are surrounded by spirits; next that these can be commanded, but only by certain people and in a certain way; next that they are conscious of our thoughts; next that they can read, can distinguish one piece of paper from another, and can and do convey all this knowledge to the mind of the medium. How do they read, how do they see without eyes, speak without voice, hear without senses, understand without the physical organ of thought? There is no answer to these and to a hundred other questions, and yet numbers of people assume that these "medium" phenomena are readily and simply explained by the theory of spirit influence. To so many minds a difficulty is "explained" when it is pushed one step further off, although by doing so it is multiplied a thousandfold. Considering, therefore, the utterly imaginary nature of this hypothesis, and the fact that it is absolutely destitute of *a priori* rational probability, or a *posteriori*

support, I repeat that the answer of the medium, in holding the "spirits" accountable for his highly questionable form of procedure, is either nonsensical superstition or conscious evasion. Either explanation abundantly justifies the refusal of science to regard these phenomena as being, in their present shape, at all entitled to demand recognition or experimental investigation.

But still, with all this, I adhere to my belief that some of these manifestations were perfectly genuine and unaccountable, save upon very dark explanations. For my own part, I am quite content to leave them unaccounted for. In a world where there is so much mystery, so much unknown, so much unsolved and unsolvable, there is nothing that should disturb one's mental equilibrium if these strange phenomena remain unsolved too. If ever their explanation is reached, I believe it will be found in the pathology rather than in the physiology of the mind. When all is said, these matters are curious rather as being abnormal than as being at all suggestive of any fruitful results. Certain morbid conditions, joined with a complete stagnation of all intellectual activity, appear in these "mediums" to have produced an extreme sensibility to impressions, akin to the extraordinary quickness of sensations sometimes occasioned by bodily disease. But these conditions and the strange faculty they develop have never involved anything of the slightest benefit to anybody, save the easy life and affluence they often secure to the medium. They are hardly ever found untainted by trickery or unassociated with conscious or unconscious deceit. They have been used as the foundation of one of the grossest forms of superstition that the world ever knew—of a religion that has sprung from the very gutters of modern life. Except, perhaps, to scientific students of mental pathology there is nothing in this business to encourage the hope of any result being reached by investigation that would be at all worth reaching. And even such students have a right to say to those who demand an inquiry, "First get rid of the elements of trickery and superstition, of the professional charlatanry by which your phenomena are now vitiated and rendered suspicious, and then you may be able to present a case as much deserving examination as many other cases of mental and physical aberration and abnormal development that are yet very imperfectly explored. This might be the answer of scientific men, but to men of the world, who judge things merely on the principle of utility, a much shorter answer will serve. They will hold it sufficient that this matter has done, and is doing, a great deal of mischief, and has never done, and is not likely to do, the smallest good—that it is dangerous and doubtful, and void of all use

to humanity, to warrant them in refusing to trifle with it as an amusement, or to give it any consideration as a thing of serious concern.

What others had to say :

MR. FOSTER, THE MEDIUM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "AGE."

SIR,—I see by the public prints that somebody has discovered that the American medium, Mr. Foster, if not the devil himself, is nevertheless

Some pettifogging fiend,
Some under-doorkeeper's fiend's fiend,
That undertakes to understand,
And juggles at the second hand,

and that some of the professors of the art have smoked him, and are going to spoil his game, and tell us all about it. Seriously, if the jugglery is to be worth the paper it is printed upon, it must account for the following group of facts among others which occurred at his seances:

(1) A gentleman received from the medium's lips the description of a little girl whom he said he saw in the room—fair hair, blue eyes, and so on. "Have you any relative answering to the image?" asked the medium. His sitter collected his thoughts and recalled the picture of a child he had lost several years previously, whose features he at once recognized in Mr. Foster's delineation.

(2) Another male sitter received by request the *fac-simile* of his dead brother's signature. It was not correct, he said. On comparing it with the original when he went home, however, he found it to correspond in every particular.

(3) Two gentlemen and two ladies were at the table; they were strangers to each other. "Has any one in the room lost a relative who was lame or deformed?" After a moment's pause, "I have," said one of the ladies, "and I shall be glad, too, if you can tell me the particulars of his death." "He says he was killed from falling off his horse." "Quite right," said the lady, with some agitation. "His body was found in the bush, and his horse returned home without him, and curiously enough he was deformed from a blow on the spine in early life."

Now, these are only three samples of a series of communications which I either heard directly or indirectly. On not one of the occa-

sions referred to were they put down on paper at all, and the questions which emanated from the medium, and which led up to the communications, were spontaneous, in the first and last instance. Clearly then, any attempt to explain them by the hypothesis of transparent paper or any of the common machinery of the juggler, is perfectly futile, and the revelations which we are told to expect will not repay the trouble of reading.

I see that the *Argus* puts forward the old familiar suggestion of brain-reading or mental transfer; or, as we know it by another name, unconscious cerebration. But if this theory satisfactorily accounts for the phenomena of Fosterism, it would have exploded long ago. There is just this objection to it. It explains nothing. On the contrary, it needs explanation itself. There is no evidence of the medium going out of his mind on receiving impressions from another person. He talks, and laughs, and smokes, and exhibits not a single abnormal-symptom, such as we have a right to expect under the extraordinary condition of functional disorder through which his brain is supposed to be passing. Besides this, if it is all done by brain-reading, how is it that failures occur so often—mistakes in trifling details, which are not unfrequently immediately corrected. If Mr. Foster could read the thoughts that are passing through my brain, as the external eye can read the letters in a book before it, it would be just as easy for him to read them correctly as not. But again: How is it that he sometimes suggests thoughts to me, rather than take them from me, as where he relates a circumstance or an appearance of which I was not thinking. There is a metaphysical figment, called latent thought; but if Mr. Foster's brain is for the time being a mere reproduction of the state of my own, the thought would be latent in his as well as mine. However, it is not my intention to be drawn into a controversy, in which I take but a very apathetic interest in its present stage. What discoveries in mental science it foreshadows it is difficult to even conjecture. I should be as willing to accept the promised revelations of trickery as anybody; but the worst of it is they have been made so often before, and the explanation is invariably found to cover but a very small part, and that part a very unimportant one, of the entire group of phenomena which the so-called spiritual medium has been ascertained to have the power of causing to be manifested, and of which the proofs are as strong and incontrovertible—not more so, but not less—as those of Holy Writ.

MATERIALIST.

SIR,—As some of my brethren have been making Mr. Foster (the medium) the text for their sermons, I thought he must have excited sufficient interest in clerical circles to justify my taking advantage of an unexpected invitation from a friend to pay him a visit yesterday. I found him in the midst of his luggage, packed for the voyage, but at the solicitation of my friend he immediately asked us (three in number) to be seated. I certainly never saw a human conjurer armed with less preparation for his tricks. He was smoking with little or no intermission the whole time, and was twice interrupted by a call to luncheon. We were handed the usual slips of blank paper, which I can vouch for were not transparent, and we wrote a variety of names upon them in the usual way. The rapping meantime commenced, and Mr. Foster told us he had been dining out a day or two ago in the company of a Minister and ex-Minister of the Crown, when the whole house took to rapping in the most extraordinary style. He says he cannot explain it; but I may here point out that the raps are utterly fatal to the unconscious cerebration theory. For they are external to the medium, at a distance of several feet from him, and they it is which indicate the answers to the questions on the papers more frequently than not, showing that, if the medium is really the speaking agent, he must also be the rapping agent. He must rap by unconscious cerebration, as well as speak by it. But to my experiment, or rather to one of them. I had written the name of a deceased friend, whose death-bed I had attended. Mr. Foster, almost in the midst of giving replies to the questions put by my companions at the table, turned his attention to me, wrote down the name of my friend correctly; and in answer to the question, What he died of? suddenly interrupted, "Stay, this spirit will enter and possess me," and instantaneously his whole body was seized with quivering convulsions, the eyes were introverted, the face swelled, and the mouth and hands were spasmodically agitated. Another change, and there sat before me the counterpart of the figure of my departed friend, stricken down with complete paralysis, just as he was on his death-bed. The transformation was so life-like, if I may use the expression, that I fancied I could detect the very features and physiognomical changes that passed across the visage of my dying friend. The kind of paralysis was exactly represented, with the palsied hand extended to me to shake, as in the case of the original. Mr. Foster recovered himself when I touched it, and he said in reply to one of my companions that he had completely lost his own identity during the fit, and felt like waves of water flowing all over his body, from the crown downwards. I will not refer to the other experiments

that were made in our presence, such as indicating the names of places where the persons whose names were written on the paper died, or the manner of their deaths; but I have no hesitation in putting on record my conviction that there was no jugglery, legerdemain, or conjuring, or any conceivable approach to it. Mr. Foster fails now and then to give the correct replies, but he generally corrects himself, and he is perfectly undisturbed by his failures. Indeed, his manner is all frankness and candor, and no one who has five minutes' interview with him can doubt but that he is possessed of some strange power denied to the majority of human organisms, and that he himself conscientiously believes that he holds communication with the spirit world. It is, in fact, his religion, and I am not surprised that he should resent the attempts that I am told have been made to induce him to mix himself up with wagers and bets. Knowingly, he says, he will never prostitute his power, whatever it may be. But am rather surprised that none of the scientific men who have visited him, the doctors especially, have favored the public with none of their theories of the phenomena.

CLERICUS.

I quote the closing lines of quite a lengthy article sent to the *Argus*:

I was, and am, convinced of the truth of spirit intercourse; it is as much a truth now as it was in the dawn of Christianity—when Paul was converted by spirit agency, or Peter released from prison by the same means.

I am well aware of the odium attaching to the word "spiritualism," and the insulting and opprobrious epithets applied to those who think that the resources of nature, and nature's God, are still equal to the production of new editions of her former works—nevertheless, I feel it my duty, as a lover of truth, whether popular or unpopular, new or old, to testify to what I have seen, and give my reasons for feeling absolutely certain that life does not end with death, and that the attributes of the infinite spirit are not exhausted by the production of merely earthly organisms, but find a field of expansion worthy of the God of Nature in the eternal unfoldment and development of the creatures of His love.

I am convinced this subject will yet attract a large share of the attention of thinkers, philosophers and philanthropists, and as a means towards that end I respectfully solicit the insertion of this letter.

I enclose my card, and remain, sir, yours, etc.,

A LADY.

I also quote the closing lines of another interesting letter :

If all these well attested cases are myths, then there is no dependence to be placed on human testimony; then Napoleon and Nelson were myths, and the history of the Thirty Years War a romance. It has been argued that most of the persons selected by spirits as mediums are generally not of a class either as to intelligence, appearance, or social position to command respect or belief, and that many of the spirits summoned by them would not in the flesh, by any means, have chosen these mediums as boon companions, or even have held communications with them. But having in memory a certain person of the Old Testament, I cannot but recollect—"That an ass spoke once," and if I remember right, the man who rode him, might have done worse than listen. I have only to add that the writing said to be done by the spirit of Henry Ford, I now enclose for your inspection, and am

Yours obediently, T. B. S. CARWITHEN.

Chiltern, Aus., 25 April, 1874.

A portion of a letter written to the *Federal Standard* :

I then wrote down on five different slips, five different names of deceased persons, that of my father in Greek characters, that of my brother Theodore, and that of a dear friend of mine, John Winder, in German characters, that of my grandmother, and last, that of Gen. Washington, in English letters. The first to make his appearance was my friend John Winder, the pellet on which his name was written in German being thrown to me by Mr. Foster with the remark, "That is Winder." I then asked Mr. Foster to tell me if my friend Winder had ever been near me since his death, and where his present abode was; to which I received the following communication dictated to Foster by the spirit of my friend: that he was much of his time with me, and watching over me, that he was glad to be able to talk with me today, that he would make himself known at my own house, if I would form a circle there, and that he was in the fifth sphere in the spirit world. This message itself did not surprise me very much, but the raps and knocks which occurred all over the room during its delivery from the supposed spirit to Mr. Foster (raps similar to those heard in a telegraph office) did astonish me not a little, and it took me some time before I was satisfied that they were not produced by the feet of the medium. The next question I asked was to tell me how many years it was since my friend John Winder was dead. In an-

swer to this question Mr. Foster requested me to observe the back of his hand, saying that the spirit of John Winder would write on it the correct number of years which elapsed since his death. Here Mr. Foster placed his left hand on the middle of the table, and in the course of about ten seconds the number 14 appeared in red characters quite distinctly on the back of Foster's hand. This phenomenon, called by Mr. Foster the stigmata test, astonished us all very much, and was twice repeated during the seance. The number of years, 14, was perfectly correct, a fact which I did not myself know at the time I put the question, but which I ascertained when I came back to Chiltern by a reference to my diary. I must make a pause here, and ask how Mr. Foster could give me this information, if he did not receive it from a source outside of the circle, as there was nobody present in the circle that knew the exact number of years. And then again the red stigmata, how were they written on the back of Mr. Foster's hand? I must confess the writing of the number 14 on the back of the medium's hand did not astonish me as much as the correct statement of the time which had elapsed since the death of my friend, John Winder; for I am sure no superhuman agency wrote the message on his hand, but he knew it in his mind before it appeared in red letters, and he only projected the number mentally by a suffusion of blood (not dissimilar to the blush on the cheeks of a bashful girl) on the back of his hand. All readers of spiritualistic literature must be acquainted with the stigmata (blood punctures) sometimes produced on the hands and feet of religious ecstasies in consequence of prolonged and intense contemplation of the passion of Christ, which contemplation at last terminates in the oozing out of blood in the corresponding spots of their extremities in the shape of nail wounds. In my opinion, therefore, the appearance of the stigmata in both cases is the effect of a powerful concentration of the mind upon a particular portion of the cutaneous integuments.

As already mentioned, one of the 20 or 25 pellets of paper on the table before the medium contained the Christian and surname of my deceased father in Greek characters, which he singled out at once, professing, however, his inability to read it, but making it out afterwards with some difficulty by listening to a sound which he alleged to hear to his left which resembled, according to Mr. Foster's statement, the pronunciation of Martin Rohner, the real name of my father. I then desired Mr. Foster to state to me the trade, profession or occupation of my father when living. In compliance with Mr. Foster's request I wrote down on a piece of paper in a vertical column some six

or seven different trades and professions, butcher and surgeon being two of them. Foster's first reply was that my father had been a butcher. On my telling him that he was wrong, Mr. Foster took a piece of paper (this paper is now in my possession), laid a lead pencil across it, and, placing it between the thumb and forefinger of his right hand, held it under the table; and now occurred something which made a stronger impression on my mind than any occurrence in the whole course of my existence ever did. Being a strong believer in things above board, I at once objected to the proceeding, but on obtaining immediate permission to look under the table to see what was going on there, I saw some invisible power, force, or influence, call it what you please, draw the piece of paper gently and slowly from between his thumb and forefinger, leaving the pencil in his hand. Up to this time I could see nothing written upon the paper, which after leaving the hand of the medium fluttered about like a butterfly under the table for a space of five or six seconds, and eventually fell on the instep of my right foot at a distance of about four feet from Mr. Foster's seat. After I picked up the paper I found traced in the middle of it an illegible scrawl which I was unable to decipher. Handing it over to the medium he held it up against the light of the window, and read out "Surgeon." "Your father was a surgeon," he said, adding significantly that the spirits are sometimes fond of *jeux de mots*, which originally led him to interpret the profession of my father to have been that of a butcher instead of a surgeon. Although I have no objection to spirits being fond of plays on words, I must confess that, in this instance, I could not discover anything very elevated or *spirited* in the vulgar assimilation of the profession of a surgeon with that of a butcher. Without attempting to offer any comment on this last and most wonderful exhibition of magic, spiritism, or spiritualism (call it what you like), I leave the subject in the hands of my sagacious readers, and beg to sign myself,

Yours, etc.,

C. W. ROHNER, M. D.

Chiltern, 11 April, 1874.

The following from the Melbourne *Argus*, I am quite sure was written by Mr. Charles Bright. He is a man who improved his opportunities and has lived up to his name. We found him strikingly bright; a writer, a philosopher and a gentleman. Mr. Foster and myself were especially indebted to him and his wife for courtesies extended to us.

MR. FOSTER, THE MEDIUM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "ARGUS."

SIR,—If the conversation of Collins Street may be taken as a criterion of success there can be little doubt of the fact that Mr. Foster has, by the exhibition of the power he possesses—be that power what it may—fairly astonished a large number of our leading citizens. Almost every one has a fresh tale of wonder to relate. As Mr. Foster finishes his seances on this side of the line to-morrow, and on Monday takes his departure for San Francisco, leaving crowds of eagerly offered guineas uncollected, perhaps you may not object to open your columns to a slight discussion of his performances. Be he charlatan or veritable marvel, he can reap no profit now from any notice you may consent to accord him.

In order that I may not gain the public ear unfairly, permit me to say that before Mr. Foster's arrival in Melbourne I had investigated so-called Spiritualism sufficiently to feel convinced that there was matter in it to repay investigation. I also knew Mr. Foster by repute. I had read of him in Robert Dale Owen's admirable book, *The Debatable Land*; in Epes Sargent's *Planchette*, an abridgment of which has been published by Mr. George Robertson; in the (London) *Spiritual Magazine*, and in various American papers.

But the testimony of others—practical, common-sense business men, previously disposed to treat this subject with indifference, if not contempt—it is this I desire to call into court. I know of one gentleman, who I venture to assert would be selected by general consent as an umpire in a difficult arbitration case more eagerly perhaps than any one else in the community, whose clearness of intellect and perspicacity are almost universally admitted—what was his experience with our curious visitor? Previous to setting out on his novel search after the occult,

wrote on slips of paper twelve different names, one on each slip. Enclosing these severally in twelve envelopes of superlative density, and sealing the same, he betook himself to the now famous cottage in Spring Street. He left it in less than half an hour, pondering on many things; for although he himself could not have told one envelope from another to save his life, the medium gave him responses to four out of the twelve, and in one case wrote the hidden name correctly on the outside of the packet before the seal was broken. To another inquirer, also clear-headed and practical, and occupying a prominent position on the Melbourne press, the following incident, among many extraor

dinary ones, occurred. A departed relative purported to inform him that he would make manifest his initials on the hand of the medium in the style he wrote them in his life. The hand was held out and the initials shortly appeared. At a glance, the inquirer said, "Those are the initials, sure enough, but not written in the way my relative shaped them." When he returned home, he found that his assertion was erroneous, and that the initials as disclosed on Mr. Foster's hand were correct. Another investigator, so practical hitherto as to be regarded among his acquaintances as an embodiment of hard-headedness, received along with the name of his father a communication so characteristic as to utterly confound him, while the name of another departed relative appeared at full length on the medium's arm. Yet another incident of the many which have come to my knowledge, and can be readily substantiated. At Scott's Hotel one day a gentleman was offering to bet £50 that he would secretly write two names and enclose them in envelopes, sealed, and that Foster would be unable to divulge them. There were four others present, and one of them agreed to take up the challenge, so far as the cost of a sitting for the five extended. The names were written and secured as proposed, and the party adjourned to the trysting spot. Before they had been in the room long, the names were proclaimed by the medium, and the challenger yielded up his five guineas. I might go on multiplying instances of this description. A well-known Melbourne *litterateur*, a thorough-paced skeptic, received through Mr. Foster's hand the autograph signature of a dead relative. Another gentleman—a native of Germany—was favored with several messages in a quaint German character. I would conclude the list with the narration of just one experience of my own. I had taken a friend to see Mr. Foster, and was sitting a little apart, watching, when loud raps came, apparently near me, and Mr. Foster, turning to me said, "Here is an elderly lady, who announces herself as your mother. She will give her Christian and maiden name." And both were correctly written. Then, without stopping, he wrote another name and handed it to me, informing me it was that of an aunt of mine. Again correct. He then said if I cared to put a question I could. I took a slip of paper, and holding it in my hand on a card, carefully concealed from other eyes than my own, wrote, "Have you seen —?" giving the name of a cousin of mine, her son. I folded the paper and handed it towards him. As soon as he touched it, and before it left my hand, he rejoined, "She says she has seen —, and what is more, he is here now. He is standing behind your chair." And after a moment's pause he added, "He was killed." I said, "Yes.

How?" and was told to point privately to the letters of the alphabet on a card and the reply would be rapped out. I pointed and raps came at the letters DROW—at which moment Mr. Foster, who could not have seen what I was doing, put his hand suddenly on his side and exclaimed, "What a pain! He was killed by a fall. And I have a vision of water—a fall in water," the truth being that my cousin hurt his side in plunging into the St. George's Baths, Liverpool, and was drowned before it was suspected that he was doing more than indulging in a prolonged dive.

I am aware that many have visited Mr. Foster and failed to obtain evidence of anything more than clever guessing or conjuring—but the failures, so far as I can learn, have been few compared with the successes. As applicable to both, I may quote what Mr. Crooks says on this subject in his able article in the January number of the *Quarterly Journal of Science*:

"There is a wide difference between the tricks of a professional conjurer, surrounded by his apparatus, and aided by any number of concealed assistants and confederates, deceiving the senses by clever sleight-of-hand on his own platform, and the phenomena occurring in the presence of Mr. Home, which take place in the light, in a private room that almost up to the commencement of the seance has been occupied as a living room, and surrounded by private friends of my own, who not only will not countenance the slightest deception, but who are watching narrowly everything that takes place. . . . I have met with several cases of imposture, some very ingenious, others so palpable that no person who has witnessed the genuine phenomena could be taken in by them. An inquirer into the subject finding one of these cases at his first initiation is disgusted with what he detects at once to be an imposture, and he not unnaturally gives vent to his feelings, privately or in print, by a sweeping denunciation of the whole genus "medium." Again, with a thoroughly genuine medium, the first phenomena which are observed are generally slight movements of the table, and faint taps under the medium's hands or feet. These, of course, are quite easy to be imitated by the medium or any one at the table. If, as sometimes occurs nothing else takes place, the skeptical observer goes away with the firm impression that his superior acuteness detected cheating on the part of the medium, who was consequently afraid to proceed with any more tricks in *his* presence. He, too, writes to the newspapers, exposing the whole imposture, and probably indulges in moral sentiments about the sad spectacle of persons apparently intelligent, being taken in by imposture which he detected at once."

Of one thing I am confident--no one who has enjoyed an ordinarily successful sitting with Mr. Foster can have left him under the impression that he was merely an adroit conjuror. His powers extend far beyond that *metier*. In what do they consist? Admitting them to be abnormal and occult, is his own testimony that he sees spirit forms and hears spirit voices to be passed as valueless, especially when we remember that an English savant and F. R. S. declares he has had phantom forms presented before his eyes and felt phantom hands dissolving in his grasp? If the prodigy be called brain-reading or clairvoyance, how shall we account for the writing on the skin, or the raps, these latter not peculiar to Mr. Foster, but heard in many a private parlor in this city? I know that these things may, as Mr. Crooks points out, be imitated by jugglery; I have read the books which affect to expose them as tricks; but I know also that the genuine and the delusive may be divided without much difficulty by a commonly shrewd investigator. At what conclusion are we to arrive then? Is it true that death is but a change of existence, and that the after-life is a natural one, like, but superior to this life, subject to laws and limitations as is this, and capable under certain conditions, human and superhuman, of revealing itself to the denizens of earth? And as there are men and women, how or why we know not, who are gifted as poets, musicians, or painters, so may there be others, now and throughout the ages, gifted with organisms capable of being operated upon by spirit intelligence and force? Let who will dogmatize. I simply ask. "What is the testimony?"—Yours, &c.,

INVESTIGATOR.

Melbourne, May 1.

CHAPTER XV

THE people of Australia at first apparently took but little interest either in Spiritualism or Mr. Foster, but there was soon a decided interest in both. Mr. Foster was besieged by a multitude, all his time was engaged many days ahead, and he finally had to leave without giving seances to many who applied. The members of the Melbourne Club became very much interested, as did the mayor, the members of parliament, and the best society. Mr. Brown, a brewer, was especially kind to Mr. Foster, and placed his carriage at our disposal. He also gave Mr. Foster valuable assistance in collecting a variety of birds and animals, which Mr. Foster brought to America, and presented to the Essex Institute Museum, at his home in Salem, Mass. The collection embraced 201 specimens, including among the mammals, skins of the kangaroo, a dingo or native dog, an Australian bear, a Tasmanian devil, a kangaroo rat, a wambat and a duck-bill. The specimens of birds were mostly of the larger species, and those often seen in America. They included hawks, owls, ducks and an almost full set of parrots and pigeons. He also brought several articles of native workmanship, and a good collection of such fishes as were indigenous to the Australian waters. This collection is still on exhibition in Salem.

Melbourne has many fine public buildings, the Library being an especially pleasant place to visit. The libra-

rian, Marcus Clark, was a man of genius, modest and courteous. He was a writer, and apparently discouraged that his writings were not more appreciated. He did much literary work, and had dramatized "The Scarlet Letter," which proved a failure. As we were about to sail from Melbourne, he presented us with a book, remarking that it might help to while away a few hours on our long voyage. On the title page we read "His Natural Life, by Marcus Clark." "Why, you are the author?" I said. He modestly replied, "Yes,"—nothing more. One sultry morning after several days at sea I thought of Clark's book, and commenced reading it. I soon became enthused, and after reading it for an hour or two, I said to Mr. Foster, "This is one of the most wonderful books of the nineteenth century. It is equal to any novel I ever read. I wish I could go back and thank Clark and encourage him, for he has written a great book. and it must be so acknowledged." Upon my return I loaned it to Mrs. Stephen Fiske, who extensively reviewed it for the *St. Louis Republican*, and afterwards used it for the foundation of her play, "Philip Herne." I also loaned the book to George H. Butler, who was at that time writing for the Washington press. I asked him what he thought of it. He said it would not be popular. I asked him why. He said it would not sell in good society, because the hero was a bastard. I said, "Did you not find it interesting?" "Interesting! One night upon retiring I thought I would look it over for a few moments. I read it all night, and finished it just as the sun was rising!"

I then called on Harper Brothers, and told them that I thought I had brought a very valuable novel from Australia, and requested them to republish it, if after reading it they were of my opinion, and send a check through

me to Marcus Clark. After keeping the book for three weeks they returned it, stating that they were of my opinion that it was an interesting novel, but they strongly objected to re-publishing any works. Some months afterwards I saw advertised : "A Startling Novel, His Natural Life, by Marcus Clark, published by Harper Brothers." I thought it very strange, and immediately called upon them for an explanation. They said they did not use my volume, that a copy had been sent them from London, with favorable criticisms from the London press, and also remembering my enthusiasm, they had concluded to publish it. They gave me a check for seventy-five dollars, which I forwarded to Mr. Clark. The check seemed small, but of course they were not legally bound to make any remittance. A few months afterwards we heard of the suicide of Marcus Clark.

I take pleasure in mentioning another friend, who, although small of stature, was not deficient in mind. He was a very lovable character, kind and unselfish, endearing himself to every one who knew him. He might be termed the pet of Melbourne. His name was Willie Neal, and he was the son of Mr. Neal of the *Australasian*. God bless him !

As the time drew near for our vessel to sail, we were literally besieged by would-be investigators, many telegrams coming from the interior requesting us to remain over. Arriving at Sydney, to our surprise we found nearly one hundred people waiting for seances, as they had ascertained that Mr. Foster would be compelled to remain one day in Sydney. As we wished to devote some hours to sight-seeing, view the celebrated harbor, and visit Sydney's celebrated parks, we compromised the matter by giving sittings to twenty or thirty at one time. Every precaution was taken by

the sitters, one person having all the questions written with invisible ink. But Mr. Foster was equal to all emergencies, and had a power which rarely failed him. He landed in Australia, a stranger, unknown. In two months he sailed away leaving many friends—known, written and talked about in every city and village in Australia. We sailed on the steamship *City of Adelaide*, May 9, 1874, and arrived in San Francisco June 16. Mr. Foster gave seances at the Grand Hotel for several weeks, after which we returned to New York City. I then returned to my former business, and only occasionally had the opportunity of seeing Mr. Foster afterwards.

Mr. Foster married twice, his last wife's death having preceded his by several years. He was the father of a boy baby by his last wife. He named him Louis Gottschalk. In less than a year, however, his little dimples faded away, and his blue eyes closed, never to open again on earth.

One summer day, in the early eighties, Mr. Foster and I took a long walk. He told me he was completely tired out, had pains in his head, and thought he had overworked, that in a few days he was going to his home in Salem, where he should remain quiet, and take a long and much needed rest. In a few weeks from that time, I heard of his severe illness, which proved to be an attack of brain fever. He became delirious, and after the fever left him, although health came back to his body, his mind remained diseased. By the physician's advice, he was removed to the Danvers Insane Asylum, where he was thoroughly examined, and pronounced to have softening of the brain, and was thought to be incurable. I went to Salem, and accompanied by Mr. Foster's father, Joshua L. Foster, we drove to Danvers and spent the day with Charles. He

recognized me, and at first seemed as rational as ever, but would occasionally wander into some imaginary and ridiculous fancies. He commenced to tell me about a woman from Marblehead, who came over to Salem to throw hot water on him, and other like ridiculous thoughts seemed to flood his brain at times. A little common-sense talk would bring him back, and he would say that he knew it was foolish, and for half or three-quarters of an hour he would talk as rational and seem as sane as ever. He was harmless and gentle as a child, and in a few months was taken to his aunt's home in Salem, where he was tenderly cared for, and had the best nursing and medical treatment.

My last visit to him was depressing. It was sad to see a man who had been gifted with almost superhuman power so completely subjugated, weak and helpless. He seemed to have no desire beyond sitting in his rocking chair by the open window, the grapevines shading him from the sun. Willing to quietly sit there day after day, with a far-away look, and desiring to converse with no one. I said, "Charlie, how do you feel? Tell me exactly how you feel?" He replied, "Oh, George, I am so tired, so tired! I need rest. I long for rest. I am simply worn out." I said, "Do you ever crave any wine or liquor?" He said, "No, I only care for water when I am thirsty. I have no desire to drink anything else." I said, "You used to be such an inveterate smoker. You seem never to smoke now." He said that desire had also left him, that he should never smoke again. I inquired about his power. He said he had lost all ambition, and did not care to exert himself. He was quite sure, however, if he were to sit at the table, that his old power would come back,

but he had no desire to do so, as he felt that his work was done so far as this world was concerned. He only awaited the end, longing for perfect rest. His case was certainly very peculiar. Occasionally he would brighten up, and seemed to enjoy talking with me, but most of the time I am quite sure it fatigued him, and that he preferred being left entirely alone. He lingered in this condition on the border-land for many months, finally stepping over on Dec. 15, 1885, aged 52 years, 2 months, and 20 days.

A friend writes : " Four years before his death he was stricken with brain fever and since that time the curtain of his life has been drawn and his once strong and brilliant mind was clouded forever. He has passed to that spirit land that he seemed to know so much of, and communed with so often. Loving hands performed every tender office, and smoothed his pillow till life's fitful fever ended. The drapery of his couch is wrapped about him, and he now rests in pleasant dreams."

" At 2 o'clock on the afternoon of Thursday, Dec. 17, an assemblage of friends which filled the house at 14 Williams Street, where he died, convened to offer the last tokens of respect to the memory of the deceased. Among those present were Rev. Fielder Israel, ex-Alderman John B. Bettis of Salem, Abbott Walker of Hamilton, John R. Bassett, Caleb Buffum (under whose direction the details of the funeral were arranged and carried out), Luther Colby of the *Banner of Light*, and others. The remains were disposed in a handsome casket of black walnut ; a large floral pillow of rare flowers, bearing the suggestive word ' Rest,' was bestowed at the head of the casket ; the silver plate which bore his name and age was partly encircled by a beau-

tiful floral cresent, and floral wreaths and other offerings were to be seen in profusion.

“Rev. George S. Hosmer, Unitarian, read selections from the Scriptures, and followed them with an eloquent address. He also read the following letter from Rev. S. C. Beane, the former pastor of the Unitarian society.

SALEM, Dec. 16, 1885.

Dear Miss Foster—I am sorry that I cannot, by my presence at his funeral, testify my appreciation of Charles H. Foster. He was a remarkable man—one of the most remarkable men of his generation. I stood with wonder before his great gifts.

Whatever one's theory might be, in his presence the reality of a future life seemed to possess and command even the habitually indifferent. To thousands of thoughtful men and women on both sides of the Atlantic, including the most intelligent and the highest in social station, he has been as a voice from the eternal world. He used his gifts faithfully and sincerely, and had a reverence and felt an obligation for them.

In the many years that I have known him, I have felt that he was trying to the best of his will and might to make his wonderful powers give honest testimony to the great problem of human destiny.

A more generous and kindly man I have never known.

Every life has its darker side, but among our friend's imperfections there was not a hard heart or a selfish and niggard spirit.

Let us be sure that the little glimpses he thought he had of the world of immortal souls is now become an open and satisfying vision.

Always your friend, S. C. BEANE.

“W. J. Colville then delivered a beautiful and most impressive invocation which must have brought the minds of all who heard it into close communion with higher realms of spiritual being; the invocation was followed by an address of singular power and pathos, in which many of the leading traits of Mr. Foster's character and many of his phases of mediumship were most appropriately referred to. In substance the speaker spoke as follows: The life of Charles H. Foster is a most valuable and interesting psychological study; he

was an unusual man, as his gifts were unusual; he was extremely sensitive to his every surrounding, and might fitly be compared to an Æolian harp, which responds at once to every breeze. Such natures are peculiarly apt to suffer and go astray, while they are with equal readiness made responsive to the highest and holiest influences. They cannot be judged by ordinary standards; they belong to the exception, not to the rule, and were they not thus singular they could not do the special work they were born to accomplish.

“Charles H. Foster was a medium for such varied manifestations of spirit power that almost every one who went into his presence received something peculiarly applicable to his own condition. His facility in describing spirit-forms and giving tests of spirit-identity was truly marvelous. He was lionized everywhere; class distinctions in England were all forgotten at the approach of that stupendous mystery of spirit-telegraph which made the learned nobleman bow in the presence of a power mightier than rank, wealth, and even death.

“Mr. Foster's last hours were beautiful to remember; a calm followed the tempest; the skies cleared; the music of the spheres sounded in his ears; spirit friends, kind and wise, clustered round his bed, and welcomed him with open arms into their fairer state of being. On entering the spirit-world with health, youth and mental vigor more than renewed, he commences a work beyond all that in his palmiest days could ever have been accomplished through him in the body. All the spirits who had been helped by communicating through him, all the mortals who had been blessed through his mediumship, threw upon him the healing balm of grateful thought; and borne aloft on pinions of loving recog-

nition, he passes to a home in comparison with which all earthly dwellings look poor indeed.

“His interment occurred at Harmony Grove Cemetery, Salem, Mass.”

THE END.