

# THE AUSTRALIAN SPIRITUALIST.

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## SPIRITUALISM AND ITS CRITICS.

IN the "Athenæum" for March, there is a spiteful review of Mr. Home's late work on the "Incidents of his life." The writer evidently indited his critique under the influence of strong prejudice, and was probably stimulated to proceed with his work by some motive more powerful than a sincere love of truth. The Editor of the "Athenæum," is a Mr. Hepworth Dixon, who happening to be at Florence, during the time that Mr. Home was staying there, desired to be introduced to the renowned spirit medium, but Mr. Home, for reasons best known to himself, and doubtless of a most substantial character, declined the honor of Mr. Dixon's acquaintance. Since that time the "Athenæum" has looked upon the progress of Spiritualism with a jaundiced eye. Such is the story current amongst the Spiritualists of England, with respect to the secret cause of that bias against Spiritualism displayed so conspicuously in the "Athenæum" on all fitting occasions, that is, whenever the publication of a new work on the subject furnishes the Editor with a peg on which to hang his lucubrations.

The truth or falsehood of this tale in no wise affects our estimate of the worth of the "Athenæum's" critique. We found our opinion exclusively on the critique itself. We have carefully perused Mr. Home's book, and also the "Athenæum's" review of it, and have no hesitation in saying that a more unfair, and more superficial notice of a most interesting book could scarcely have been concocted. The writer is evidently ignorant of the facts of Spiritualism, and steeped to the lips in prejudice and spite. Hence the tone of his critique. The article is valuable solely because it contains extracts from Mr. Home's book, and furnishes Spiritualists with a specimen of the "weakness" that is arrayed against them. One piece of valuable information conveyed by it is, that Dr. Wilkinson, Mr. J. G. Crawford, Mr. T. A. Trollope, Mr. John Jones of Basinghall street, Mr. James Hutchinson of the Stock Exchange, Mr. Cox of the Hotel in Jermyn-street, London, Mr. Coleman, of Bayswater, Mr. and Mrs. Howitt, and Mrs. S. C. Hall, are all Spiritualists. These personages, and thousands of others resident in all parts of the world, have been convinced by personal investigation of the truth of Spiritualism; and they have had the courage to avow their belief in it in defiance of the shallow scribblers who condemn it. The avowal of conviction on such a subject, by such persons, furnishes presumptive evidence of the fact to which that conviction relates. Judging from all that we know of the lives and characters of these personages, we are led to infer that they could neither be very readily imposed on by the cunning of a notable trickster, nor be induced by any motive to willingly endorse a falsehood. The critic, by stating that these persons believe in Spiritualism, exposes his own weakness. In short his article carries its own condemnation on the face of it.

"There is not," says the "Athenæum," "a statement in Mr. Home's book, so presented as to warrant a sensible man in paying attention to it. The book contains its own criticism." This is precisely our opinion of the "Athenæum's" critique. There is not a single argument advanced in it, from first to last, sufficient to warrant a sensible man in paying any attention to it. There is nothing in it but a dreary attempt to be sardonic and humorous on a subject in respect to which humour is out of place. The article is nothing more than a prolonged and contemptible sneer. This is by far the easiest way of opposing Spiritualism. It saves the labour of thinking, and is popular with the masses, and hence constitutes the standard of taste among the beer-loving penny a liners of the London Press.

If any Spiritualist should doubt the unfairness of the "Athenæum" let him refer to the extract detailing what purported to be a manifestation of the presence of Hannah Brittan. The critic styles it a dip into Pandemonium, but omits giving all the associated circumstances, which, had they been given, would have shown the true purport of the manifestation. The object of the manifesting spirit was to convince certain persons of her identity, and certainly no scheme could have been devised better adapted to effect that object than the one she put into operation. Our critic, regarding the whole story with a jaundiced eye, sees nothing of this, or if he does see it disingenuously conceals it. Such want of fealty to truth, such special pleading, is a disgrace to the literature of the age.

The "Athenæum," in common with the rest of the genus, labours under the delusion that the belief of Spiritualists in the facts of Spiritualism rests on the ipse dixit of Mr.



Home, and the testimony of those who are supposed to be deluded by his tricks. Every Spiritualist is aware that the very reverse takes place. Those who believe in Spiritualism do not pin their faith implicitly and unreasoningly to the statements of any man. Conviction is produced in their minds by the observance of facts which will not admit of explanation on any other hypothesis than the Spiritual one. These facts are observed in private circles, and not unfrequently in the family circle, where all thought of trick or of imposture would be out of the question. It was in this way that conviction was produced in our own minds. Startled on the one hand by the alleged wonders of Spiritualism, and disgusted on the other by the obvious unfairness of sceptics, we appealed to nature, and the result has been a deep and undying conviction that Spiritualism is true, and not only true, but of vast importance to the human race. In our search after truth we found the physical conditions of mediumship very plentifully distributed. We have no doubt that the twentieth or thirtieth part of the population of the globe are spirit media of one sort or other. The means therefore of testing Spiritualism are at hand in almost every family circle, and hence all that is required to enable any twenty truth-loving persons to witness Spiritual manifestations is a simple desire to evoke the phenomena. Should the first meeting prove abortive, the second or third will doubtless be more successful. Hence Spiritualism does not depend upon the exhibitions of paid or public media, but admits of being tested privately, and by every man; and so, being founded in truth, and as much a part of the natural order of things as the Globe itself, or the actions of human beings, it must and will prevail in spite of the shallow scepticism of fools, and the fierce denunciations of slanderers and bigots. Fifty years hence the Anti-spiritual diatribes of the "Athenæum," the "Saturday Review," the "Spectator" and other cognate periodical prints will possibly be raked up from the dust of oblivion as samples of human folly, and as a warning to the sadducees of all future time against condemning that which they have neither the ability nor the wish to examine. Thank heaven the puny efforts of prejudiced minds can never arrest the progress of Spiritual Truth.

In the "Empire," published in Sydney, January 27th, 1863, there is an article on Spiritualism, which deserves a passing notice. The conductors of the "Empire" have always treated the believers in Spiritualism with more fairness than the conductors of many other journals have done. They have allowed Spiritualists to publish reports of circle meetings in the columns of the "Empire," and have thus acted on the maxim of hearing both parties. Their own opinion is broadly insinuated in the following passage.

"Whatever is to be gained by the profession of Spiritualism the object cannot be such as to attract men of any but mediocre abilities and unambitious views. It is hard to say whether pretenders or their dupes are the most numerous. But a slight examination of the subject would convince most people that there are both. There are some who believe because it is convenient or pleasant, or profitable to believe; and there are some who believe because they really think that there is some truth in Spiritualism, or because they cannot discredit the testimony of friends."

"As to those who have any sincere faith in the truth of Spiritualism it may be questioned whether they are able to distinguish between the real and the mythological."

This is childish rant. Spiritualists may not be men of ambitious views, but unquestionably many of them are men of rank in the world of letters. The critics of the "Empire" would look very small indeed if placed in contrast with Wm. and Mary Howit, Mrs. S. C. Hall, Robert Dale Owen, of Indiana, America, Dr. Gully, of Malvern, Mr. Robert Bell, Dr. Williamson and Dr. Ashburner, of London, A. J. Davis, and Judge Edmonds, of New York, Dr. Robertson, of Kent, and scores of other distinguished men and women who have tested Spiritual phenomena and are firm believers in their truth. The mere idea of a half-educated concoctor of political squibs and pasquinades asserting that the above mentioned persons are unable to distinguish between the real and the mythological is simply absurd, and powerfully provocative of laughter.

Equally ridiculous is the account given by the "Empire" of what ought to transpire at a circle meeting. The writer says:—

"But the truth or the falsehood of Spiritualism can be ascertained without trusting to those who may be unable or unwilling to report the truth. The thing can be tried by experiment, and the experiment is so easily performed and so decisive that there is no need to trust anyone. Any two or three or more persons may try it, and judge for themselves. They take their seats round a table in a dim or darkly lighted room. Laying their hands upon the table, and joining finger to finger, so as to form what is called a circle, they sit silent and solemn. After a few moments the table ought to tip, or crack, or turn, or jump, or slide, as if some one were rapping upon it or moving it. The sound or the motion is the sole foundation of Spiritualism. If there be



neither sound or motion then there is nothing—nothing unusual, nothing marvellous. But if there be either, then the sound or the motion is attributed to the presence of spirits. The unbelieving attribute it to the presence of some one who knows how to do it without being seen. Anyhow, he or she who can manage so much can manage all the rest; can either spell out nonsense or tell lies which is all that has yet been done.

Every Spiritualist is aware that the preceding statement is not true. We do not infer the presence of a spirit because we hear raps made on tables, or because tables move, but we infer Spiritual Agency because these raps and tippings and movements of ponderable bodies, symbolise intelligence, and because they occur under circumstances which preclude all chance of imposture. Finally we advise the Scribe in the "Empire" to procure a little knowledge of his subject before he next tries his "prentice hand" on a leader. To every one acquainted with the subject it is as clear as the noon day sun, that he is profoundly ignorant of the subject on which he undertakes to write.

#### PHYSICAL MANIFESTATIONS.

Under this heading we intend to reprint the most remarkable accounts of those physical manifestations which are said to have occurred in America, England, and elsewhere, at various times, and under different circumstances. We do this in order that persons resident in New South Wales may have the means of forming a correct estimate of spiritualism. These accounts are not generally accessible, and hence our motive for re-publishing them. We have collected them from a great variety of sources. The following paper we quote from the seventh number of the Yorkshire "Spiritual Telegraph." The writer who gives his initials as J. G. says:—

"Happening to pay a visit to the house of a friend, whose daughter (a young married woman) has, on several occasions, manifested considerable power as a medium, it was agreed upon to try what could be done. Accordingly the young woman, her father, and the writer sat down, and very soon had the table moving in a powerful and singular manner by dragging itself on the floor, jumping off the floor, &c. During the time a young man came in quite of a skeptical character, who being known to the parties, they asked him if the table moved, or, if it did not. He answered the question by a good hearty laugh, and a remark that it did move and so did all other tables occasionally. He was next induced to put his hands on the table, and had no sooner done so than it commenced paying particular attention to him, running towards him, and holding him fast in his seat. Of course this was all nothing to a person determined not to believe, when the thought appeared suddenly to strike him that, by way of a joke, he would ask for the name of a spirit. He did so, and to his surprise, the table tipped out the name of his grandmother who had been dead a great number of years. His laugh, which had been loud and hearty began gradually to subside, and in a more serious manner, he asked if that really were his grandmother, could she tell anything about a certain affair then pending between him and a relative? "A communication of a private character was then given, which, by disclosing certain events unknown to any of the party but the young man, fully proved the presence of a spirit, or some power capable of knowing and telling secrets.

"On another occasion, the same party happening to meet again, and to talk the matter over as of a very singular character, it was agreed to try again, and see what would happen: when, soon after commencing, a heavy square table, with a strong pillar and projecting feet or claws was several times lifted completely off the floor and dropped down again, when on the third or fourth fall it happened to alight on the point of a toe and snapped the whole claw from the stalk or pillar. Another table of considerable size with straight round legs was then supplied, and this, by the hands of the party, and sometimes by the hand of the medium alone being very lightly placed upon it, was made comparatively into a shuttlecock. It promised to give the name of the spirit moving it, which it did by lifting the table bodily about half a foot from the floor and letting it drop again like a bouncing ball at each letter, by which process it spelled out Napoleon. It then gave a short communication by the same means, lifting the table bodily up and letting it drop: sometimes allowing it to remain suspended a little before letting it fall. As some opponents of Spiritualism are of opinion that hands have only influence in moving the table when placed on the edge, the medium's hands was put exactly on the centre of the table, and a hand of each of the others placed on the top. This had just the same effect. The table was lifted a considerable height without any apparent difficulty, proving the test of the skeptics in that case as in all others a complete fallacy. Without any exaggeration the table could not have been lifted from the floor less than fifty or sixty times."

The writer of the narrative states that he could give the names of the parties who were present, but trusts that his solemn affirmation will be sufficient for persons of an honest and honourable character. The narrative itself is so minutely circumstantial as to warrant the inference that the writer believed what he wrote. His statement has none of the characteristics of fiction, nor is it at all like the product of an over-excited fancy. It was evidently written by a plain matter of fact sort of man, in whose mind the practical element predominated over the fanciful and romantic. The facts recorded command our belief. Sound reason will not sanction us in rejecting them. The question therefore which science has to answer is "what moved the table?" Was it muscular pressure unconsciously applied? If so, why did the table move when the hands of the persons were placed on the centre of the table, and why did it move upwards clean off the floor. Faraday's theory utterly breaks down here. No pressure of hands on the surface of a table could possibly raise that table clean off the floor. Pressure could make a table tip at one end, or at one side, or cause it to move slantwise, and also in other ways, but in all such cases some portion of the table must rest upon the ground, thus affording some spot on the surface of the table to serve as a point of resistance to the pressure, or, in other words, as a fulcrum to the leverage applied to the moving body. If the table was moved clean off the floor some external force must have moved it. The only witness acquainted with the facts narrated says that those persons who were present when the table moved did not move it. Is it reasonable for us to contradict him and say that the thing was not done, or, if done was not done in the way that he states it was done? We may call him a liar, charge him with imposture, or affirm that he was deluded, but all such abuse serves merely to pourtray the inveteracy of our prejudices, and the depth of our ignorance.

Dr. F. B. Hatch, of Warsaw, New York, gives an interesting account of some physical manifestations observed by himself on the 23rd of July, 1856 at a circle-meeting in which a Miss Brooks was the medium. The phenomena were chiefly of a musical character, and so peculiar as to scarcely admit of classification. The piano was turned so as that its face should be towards the wall, the



key board being placed in such a position as to prevent the medium from reaching the keys. The first demonstration was what appeared to be an inimitable trembling of the wires. Then followed a storm at sea, wherein every part was most beautifully imitated. The working of the engine, the whistling of the wind, the pelting of the storm against the vessel, the distant and nearer thunder, and the moan of the sea were so beautifully and accurately illustrated as to excite the sentiments of the sublime and majestic to their greatest intensity. It was most truly marvellously executed. Then followed a variety of other pieces, all of which were executed, with greater skill than I had ever had the pleasure of listening to on any instrument. While the various parts were being played upon the piano, a clock, which stood directly over it, commenced striking, and without a moments' intermission struck two hundred and sixty eight times, and was wound up three times while striking.

In this case Miss Brooks was the only person in the room whose hands were at liberty, as all others present had joined hands in the back part of the room. If the music was of mortal origin, and the clock was wound up by mortal hands, then two persons must have been present in the apartment—one to play upon the piano, and one to wind up the clock. But how could Miss Brooks play upon an instrument which was set with its front part or keyboard close to the wall? And even supposing she could display the marvellous execution spoken of, how could she wind up the clock, whilst the music was being performed. Difficulties thicken round the hypothesis of imposture. How could a number of intelligent men and women be deceived with respect to plain palpable facts occurring under the observance of their own eyes and ears. If we are to reject the testimony of people under such circumstances we may just as well abandon all historical evidence as worthless, and relapse into the darkness of the middle ages.

The "New England Spiritualist" quoting the "Age of Progress" records a very singular manifestation which occurred in the presence of Dr. Haskell, of Rockford, Illinois; Dr. Brookie, of St. Louis; Mr. Albro, Editor of the "Age of Progress" and others, making a total of thirty-six individuals. The manifestation consisted in the pulling off and putting on again of the coats of two boys, by invisible agency, when the boys were fast bound in their chairs by cords, wound round and round their wrists, and then tied, and woven in and out, and tied again, so that it must occupy from two to five minutes to free the hand of one of them. The account states that:—

"The windows were closed and the lights extinguished, and five seconds did not pass before two of the boys cried out, one after the other: My coat is off, and as they did so the coats were thrown into the laps of some individuals of the circle. The light was instantly struck, and we again examined the hands and ropes. The coats were off but the ropes were on as tight as ever, and in the same complicated knots. Somebody then observed to Johnny [the spirit] that if he would put the coats on again without untying the ropes, they would never doubt again. Johnny made some reply which we did not understand; but soon afterward ordered the windows to be closed and the lights to be extinguished. From the time the light was put out it did not seem to be more than one second before one of the boys cried out: My coat is on: and not more than another second, before the other said the same. The lamp was lighted and we again examined the hands, the ropes and the knots, and all were exactly in the condition that they were in before, excepting that the coats were on and as whole as ever. And we will give our word of honour, that, from the time the light was extinguished, till both coats were on and the light was made again, it was not half a minute."

## THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES, OR THE BEARING OF TESTIMONY ON THE FACTS OF SPIRITUALISM.

DR. HARE was the most famous practical chemist, and electrician of the United States. He was born in Philadelphia in 1781, and died there, May 18th, 1858, of course, aged 77. At the early age of twenty he was a member of the Philadelphia Chemical Society, and he there made his first, and most important discovery, the oxyhydrogen blowpipe, which led to the discovery of the celebrated Drummond Light. By means of this apparatus, he was the first able to render lime, magnesium, iridium, and platinum fusible in any considerable quantity, and perhaps the first to procure calcium in a pure metallic state, and strontium without alloy of mercury. He first announced that steam is not condensable when combined with equal parts of the vapour of Carbon. He invented the valve-cock or gallow screw, by means of which perfectly air-tight communication is made between cavities in separate pieces of apparatus. He made improvements in the Voltaic pile, enabling the American chemists to apply with success the intense powers of extended Voltaic couples long in advance of the general use of similar combinations in Europe. In 1816, he invented the Calorimeter, a form of battery by which a large amount of heat is produced with little intensity. The perfection of these forms of apparatus was acknowledged by Faraday, in 1838, who adopted them in preference to any he could devise (Experimental Researches, 1124, 1132). It was with these batteries that the first application of voltaic electricity to blasting under water was made. This was in 1831, under the personal direction of Dr. Hare. In 1818 Dr. Hare had been appointed Professor of Chemistry in the Medical School of the University of Pennsylvania, and he occupied this post till 1847 with distinguished ability that is for 29 years, when he resigned. The "American Cyclopædia" describes him as "a frequent speaker at public meetings; and in conversation, especially when it assumed an argumentative character, he discoursed with great ability. His external features were in harmony with the strength and massiveness of his intellect. His frame was powerful and remarkable for its muscular development, and his breast was large and finely formed." Judge Edmonds, who knew him, says:—"He was an excellent man, and all who knew him loved him for his purity, simplicity, and candour." He adds that his courage arose from the fact that he did not know what it was to conceal or disguise the truth.



Such was the man who, when Spiritualism forced itself on his attention, received it as a mere delusion of the senses. He read Faraday's explanation, and thought it was convincing. A Mr. Holcomb, of Southwick, Massachusetts, had repeated the experiments of Faraday, and wrote to him to say that they evidently failed; that he had himself seen musical instruments played upon without any hands touching them, and heavy articles moved without any visible cause. Dr. Hare replied that he still concurred with Faraday; but, unlike Faraday, when he was informed of such facts, he determined to test these too. He therefore introduced himself to a lady, a celebrated medium, and watched carefully the phenomena. When he saw tables and other articles moved, and intelligible communications given through raps, he set to work and invented machinery, to cut off all direct communication with the medium and these experiments he carried on for two years with indefatigable industry, and care. The details of them may be seen in his work on Spiritualism, "Experimental Investigation of Spiritual Manifestations." The result was an overwhelming mass of facts, utterly demolishing the Faraday theory. The demonstrations were mathematically correct and precise; first, of a power beyond that of human, or of any known mundane agency; second, of intelligence not derived from minds in the body. Here then was one great step gained: the phenomena were real, and not reconcileable to any physical theory. The next question to satisfy himself upon was whether they proceeded from disembodied spirits. To decide this point, Dr. Hare adopted this plan.

He had gradually become himself developed as a medium; and sitting down at his own table, he frequently received communications professedly from his father and a deceased sister. One day, on the spirit calling herself his sister presenting herself at his table, as manifested through raps, he told her he wished her to do him a little service. She replied that she would if it were in her power. He was then on a visit at Cape May, about one hundred miles from Philadelphia; and he requested her to go to Philadelphia, and desire Mrs. Gourlay, the medium, to get Dr. Gourlay, her husband to call at a certain bank, and ask the note clerk a question as to the passing through of a bill, and bring him the answer by half past three. The spirit promised, and was absent for half an hour; but had then returned with the answer. Dr. Hare made no other communication to Mrs. Gourlay on the subject; but on his return to Philadelphia, in about a fortnight, he inquired of Mrs. Gourlay if she had received any message from him during his absence. She said yes, and under very extraordinary circumstances. She was receiving a communication from her spirit mother, when the communication suddenly stopped, and Dr. Hare's spirit messenger gave her commission. It was attended to by Dr. Gourlay, and the answer returned to him by the spirit. Dr. Hare then went to the Bank, and ascertained from the note-clerk that Dr. Gourlay called on the day named, asked a question, and received the answer, which had been returned to Dr. Hare by the spirit messenger. Dr. Hare was thus assured that he had had an actual spirit messenger, and was perfectly satisfied. *Howitt's History of the Supernatural.* VOL. 2ND, P.P. 180, 181, 182.

Dr. Hare acted like a sensible man—that is, he submitted the allegations of the Spiritualists to direct and searching investigation. The result was a deep-rooted conviction of the truth of spiritualism, and consequent openness to conviction, with respect of the truth of christianity. He had been a confirmed sceptic relative to the religion of Christ, but became convinced through Spiritualism of its truth. A short time before his death he told Judge Edmonds that he believed in a revelation through Jesus of Nazareth, and was a christian. "A grand answer" says Mr. Howitt "to the *cui bono*."

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#### SPIRITUALISM IN AUSTRALIA.

ABOUT two months ago, a circle meeting was held at the writer's house, in Wollongong, at which two or three media were present. Two of these were rapping, tipping, and writing media, and one was exclusively a rapping medium. The phenomena evoked almost exceeded belief. A great variety of communications were given by tips and raps, in answer to questions asked by the members of the circle. These raps and tips were loud, unmistakeable, and most emphatically demonstrative. The parties present were all friends, and had mutual confidence in each other; and from their position at the table, and the size and weight of the table itself, it was quite clear that none of them could have produced the phenomena witnessed. The table was moved, tipped, and rapped on repeatedly. Intelligent answers to the questions proposed were symbolised by these raps. The table would rise on one end, and would then descend and pound out on the floor the answers to our questions. We asked if the manifesting spirit could raise the table clear from the floor, and received a response in the affirmative. We then requested it to do so, and it complied. First one leg of the table was raised, then another, then the third, lastly the table floated in the air. We have no more doubt that the table floated clear of the floor than we have of the fact of our existence. A boy about fifteen years of age, then jumped upon one end of the table, and the table rose at that end, with the lad on it. We had previously requested the spirit to do this. It was physically impossible for any one of us to have raised the table; we could all see each others' hands; moreover, the writer was standing close to the end of the table on which the lad was sitting, and had a full and clear view of the hands of the only persons who from their position at the table, could possibly have raised it. The room was lighted by a small fire, the candles having been purposely extinguished, not by the media, but



by ourselves, our motive for extinguishing them, arising out of a belief founded on observed facts that darkness was favourable to these physical manifestations. The members of the circle then took hold of each other's hands, and whilst standing round the table, asked the spirit to raise it. To our astonishment, the table, which this time had nothing on it, gradually rose from the floor, maintaining a horizontal position, until the top of it was level with the writer's chin, and after remaining in that position a few seconds, it gradually descended to the floor. To make assurance doubly sure a lady who was one of the circle let go the hand she was holding, and then pushed the table backwards and forwards through the air. The manifestation was complete, and stamped conviction indelibly on every mind in the room.

The fire in the meantime was gradually dying out, and as the flame of it became weaker the physical power of the spirit seemed to increase. At length the flame went out altogether and the room was left in complete darkness. Then began the most infernal noise we ever heard. It was not like any sound that could be produced by pounding on a table, but rather resembled the noise that might be produced by lifting the table up bodily from the floor, and then pounding one leg of it on the boards with immense power and rapidity. Most of the persons present, if not all of them appeared, so far as we could judge, to be more or less frightened. A lady, one of the circle, screamed out, and clung to one of the media in her fright, striving at the same time to reach the door. At this time no person's hands were on the table. Previously to this it had made a jump at the writers son, and now it was swept round causing the leg to hit him across the abdomen with force sufficient to knock him down on the sofa. The lad fully endorses this part of the narrative. We did not see the table strike him, as the room was in darkness. At length one of the media caused a match to ignite, the first gleam from which showed the table standing on one leg, in the middle of the floor, whilst all the persons in the room, excepting the writer and the person who ignited the match, were ranged round the room, close to the wall, and as far from the table as circumstances would permit. Immediately that the room was lit, one of the media approached the table, touched it, and then it slowly turned over on its side on the floor. There was something awful in these phenomena, something adapted to make a very powerful impression on all who witnessed them. The effect of them on our own minds was so great, as to cause us to shun dark circles ever since. This may be superstition but we cannot help it.

When the room was lighted we re-formed the circle, and obtained manifestations through a writing medium, from two spirits purporting to be the spirits of one Lamech Beaton and one Evan Howard. It was alleged by the medium that this Evan Howard had manifested himself at a previous circle meeting, and had stated that during his earth-life he had been a Doctor of Medicine, who had either died or else practised his profession (we are not sure which) at Torquay, in Devonshire, England. The substance of the communications received from these spirits, principally from Lamech Beaton, and chiefly in answer to questions put by the writer, was as follows.

Who are you? Lamech Beaton. Can you give us any explanation of the startling physical sounds we have just heard? I was not present, but perceive that all the spirits who have been here to-night have been evil, with the exception of Evan Howard. This answer was repeated several times. Is it wrong to hold communications with evil spirits? Yes: never receive a second communication from them. Do you really mean that evil spirits have visited us? Yes, and attracted by your propensities, which tend to evil. Is it right to worship God? Can you make such an inquiry? Is not the propensity to adore developed in the savage? And you who have the revealed will of Deity ask a question thus. Do you know the reason why I asked such a question? You merely asked in order to test me I am perfectly aware, but I should prefer other questions, hence my reply. Does God answer prayer? All things are ordered by the Almighty;—you pray to him, he answers prayer. Can you give advice as to what we ought to do, in order that we might lead a good life. Abhor self, and trust in Christ, he is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Blessed for evermore. Do you love Christ? Yes. He first loved me. You have the revealed will, study that, and the practice of that, with faith in the atonement will make you all that you should be. Do you believe that the Bible is an inspired book? Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Are you aware of certain discoveries in geology which tend to upset the biblical narrative? I am not, nor do I wish. Can you give us any information as to Byron's state? You wish me to give a dissertation upon Byron's state and character. I am not acquainted with Byron, nor was I ever, but if you wish to know his present state, you must take the word of God, and see in it the doom of thelicentious, adulterous and profane, and then form your own opinion by it. We are sorry to give you so much trouble, but will you tell us whether it is wrong to practise spiritualism? You cannot trouble me—it becomes wrong when you abuse it. How can we abuse it? By prying into futurity, or by seeking to contradict Revelation. You must form your opinions by the standard, the Bible. I will rap and tip the table as a token of good night. The table was then rapped on a number of times and was tipped towards each person present, and the conversation with Lamech Beaton apparently closed.

What purported to be the spirit of Evan Howard also presented itself at this meeting, answered our questions, and gave us some excellent counsel. He advised us not to be conformed to the world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, and to let our lives mirror our christianity. He told us that one of the gentlemen present was the acting medium on that occasion! that he E. H. could not then do much owing to the weakness of the media present; that a certain gentleman in the room was a medium, but was not then influencing the manifestations; that the writer was a negative or developing medium, and that, as by our fruits we were known, so might we judge of the general character of spirits that manifest themselves at circles.

We think it right to state that the medium whose hand was used to convey these communications to us was strongly inclined to methodistic or evangelical views of religion. The state of his mind may have determined the character of the manifestations, or may even have tended to psychologise the spirits that were giving the communications. We only offer this remark as pure conjecture. It is quite clear that the religious views given in this case widely differ from the views enunciated by spirits at other circles. Hence arises the question—which are we to believe? Unquestionably there are difficulties in spiritualism as in every other system of opinions, and amongst these difficulties, the contradictions of spirits are not the least remarkable. Our business however is to record phenomena and such associated facts as may tend to throw light upon them.

On Wednesday, 6th May, 1833, a circle meeting was held at the writer's house in Wollongong. Two young men were present both of whom were writing and tipping media. A spirit purporting to be the spirit of one Clara Jones manifested her presence by tipping on her name. She was instantly requested to go away. One of the young men present recognised her peculiar mode of manifesting, and informed us of her character. Clara Jones had previously visited circles at which this young man had been present, and had given the Spiritualists some trouble by telling them lies, and giving them ridiculous and comical communications. The spirit purporting to be Lamech Beaton, then presented itself in the usual way, that is by tipping and moving the table. This spirit wrote through the hand of one of the media the following answers to questions.



Are you Lamech Beatson? Yes. A question being asked relating to the future the reply was, you must leave the future to God. Are the spirits of the deceased children of Mr. and Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ ever near them and with them? You may be sure that if we are with you who did not know you on the earth those who love you hover near. Was the dream which Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ had on a previous night of Spiritual Origin? No. Can you give us any instructions with respect to Spiritual Photography? To this question the reply was another question, namely—Have you all decided on the truth of Spiritualism? If so I will answer. We replied in the affirmative, and then the spirit wrote, "place your hand on the camera." What do you mean by telling us to place our hands on the camera? Put your hands on the place where you wish the spirit to be. We are still unable to understand you: do you mean the place where the mortal sitter is posed? No: The focus. You mean the shield? Yes.

The room was then darkened, and the following phenomena occurred. The table rapped out answers to any questions asked, and rapped out these with great force. The table would rise on two of its legs, and would then descend on the floor with sufficient force to make the whole house jar. The raps and thumps of the legs on the floor might have been heard fully 300 yards off. In fact the demonstrations became so violent at one time that being afraid the spirit would break the table, we requested it to be more gentle in its operations. A gentleman present asked for a manifestation from George Dunn, and something purporting to be the spirit of George Dunn accordingly came, and manifested itself in his customary rollicking manner.

We think it right to record all facts which may in anywise tend to elucidate the mystery that enshrouds these phenomena, and hence feel bound to say that during the whole time these thumping and violent spirits were present, we felt a dim and instinctive consciousness of being in the presence of something evil. We asked are you, George Dunn, Evil? Yes. Will you spell out a word that will convey to our minds an idea of your present state? In answer the raps spelled out unutterably jolly. Fancying that this was meant in irony I asked, are you happy? No. Are you doomed to misery for ever? Yes. Are you doomed to misery by your maker? Yes. What for? For denying Christ? Yes. We then determined upon holding no further communication with this spirit.

Whilst the foregoing questions were being asked and answered the following phenomena were elicited.

At our own request the table rose from the floor and floated in the air. To put the matter beyond all doubt, we took hold of each other's hands. The table rose from the floor so that the top of it was on a level with our breasts, and remained suspended in that position several seconds. The table was pushed by one of the circle and moved as freely as a body might be supposed to move in air. There could be no mistake about this. The writer asked the spirit to give this test of its presence and power. The event occurred in our own house where there was no apparatus. It was impossible for any person present to have raised the table without being detected. The moon was shining into the room so brightly that any strong muscular effort made by any one in the circle could have been seen. The first time the table rose, our hands were all resting on the top of it, and the second time it rose we were holding each other's hands, and standing up round the table. Added to these considerations is the fact that we were all friends, well known to each other, utterly unskilled in conjuring, trickery, or imposture of any kind, and consequently disposed to regard each other as faithful and reliable witnesses. It is almost needless to add that while memory holds her seat within the book and volume of the writer's brain, the events of that night can never be erased from the record.

As soon as the light was brought in the spirit of Lamech Beatson again manifested his presence and wrote out through the hand of the medium "You have been holding communication with bad spirits; if you do so your mediumship will cease."

L. BEATSON.

Shortly afterwards the sitting terminated.

On Saturday evening the 9th of May, 1863, a tipping medium and the writer sat down to a small table and soon obtained manifestations of the presence of a spirit. We inquired the name of the invisible communicant, and the table in reply tipped out the letters, Henrique King. We were some time before we could make this name out, because the letters as taken down, ran thus, Henriquiking. At length we hit upon the name Henrique King, and upon asking if we were right the table tipped in the affirmative. We asked Henrique King to give us a communication, and the table straightway tipped six times. Not understanding the meaning of the six tips we asked the spirit to spell out a word which would explain the matter. The alphabet was then repeated and the word "Alphabet" was spelled out. The six tips therefore were a demand for the alphabet to be called over. The following communication was then tipped out. "Develope him as a writing medium." Aware that at a circle meeting at which we were not present, it had been announced that the writer was a developing medium, I supposed the exhortation to develop my friend as a writing medium was addressed to myself, and therefore I asked how I was to do it. I was told to make magnetic passes over his hand. I did so, and never shall I forget the thrill which pervaded my entire frame, as some strange abnormal influence seemingly seized my arms, and apparently streamed out of my fingers and hands. Shortly afterwards the young man's hand began to write, and a series of communications were given of a purely personal nature, and of a most interesting character to those concerned. The spirit then announced its willingness to meet us on the following Monday and converse with us. It acknowledged the great truths of christianity, declared that it believed in Christ, assured us of an immortal life after the death of the body, and confirmed the statement made by Lamech Beatson at a previous circle meeting by saying that the spirits that circle had been communicating with were very bad ones.

On the following Monday evening, we met about half-past seven o'clock, when Henrique King came and told us by tips not to sit until eight o'clock. We desisted, but reformed the circle at eight o'clock. He again announced his presence, but informed us that evil spirits were present obstructing him, that he could not communicate, as he wished then, but that he would meet us some other time. We have not heard from him since.

## ANSWERS TO THE OBJECTIONS USUALLY URGED AGAINST SPIRITUALISM.

**OBJECTION.**—The phenomena called spiritual are traceable to the action of psychologic laws, and are therefore explicable upon psychologic principles. It is absurd to suppose that they are produced by spiritual agents, especially as they admit of explanation on a hypothesis in accordance with the known laws and constitution of the human mind.



ANSWER.—This objection underlies, in one form or other a very large proportion of the honest scepticism of the age with respect to the truth of the spiritual hypothesis. The candid inquirer should ever bear in mind that the hypothesis of the spiritualists is essentially distinct from the facts which seemingly warrant it. The facts are proved by the testimony of the senses, but the senses are wholly unable to prove the truth of the hypothesis. The facts may be true, and yet the hypothesis be wrong. A clear understanding of the nature of the facts, and also of that of the hypothesis will make this perfectly plain to even the dullest understanding. When people are sitting round a table, or round anything else, forming what is called a spiritual circle, with the intention of evoking spiritual phenomena, raps are heard, and these raps symbolise words and sentences, which said words and sentences are found to be pertinent answers to the questions asked. Sometimes the communication is given by the table, chair, or other instrument used tipping up at one side, or at one end, when the letters forming the communication are either pronounced by the voice, or pointed at on a card. Sometimes the hand of the medium is influenced to write, and the alleged spiritual communications are then written out through the hand. Sometimes the letters of the communication are denoted by taps made upon the person of some member of the circle, and sometimes these taps are made in succession on the persons of several of the parties present in the room. We have had these taps, made upon one of our knees, and also upon one of the buttons upon our shirt front. We felt them in the one case and heard them in the other plainly and distinctly, and believed that they were symbolical of thought and intelligence. Spirit presence and power become manifested in a great variety of other ways, which need not be enumerated, as the foregoing is sufficient to give the reader a clear understanding of the nature of the facts which have to be accounted for. The hypothesis adopted by the Spiritualists and which they conceive to be absolutely necessary in order to account for them is—that the phenomena are produced by Supramundane agents, who adopt these means of conversing with men in the flesh, apparently for the purpose of convincing mortals of the certainty of a future life, or perhaps for other purposes not known to man. All Spiritualists adopt this hypothesis in one shape or another. The reader will perceive that it is one of those general propositions which may be heartily embraced by persons who differ widely from each other in regard to a multitude of cognate and associated facts and opinions. Hence some of the Spiritualists believe that the alleged manifestations are produced by diabolic action, that is, that the spirits who communicate are devils; while others assert that "Spiritual manifestations" come from the *real* action of the spirits of the dead. The latter is the prevailing belief, and the one which appears to us to be sustained by an overwhelming mass of evidence. There are Heathen Spiritualists, and Christian Spiritualists, and Infidel Spiritualists, each of whom interpret facts in the light of their own predominant theoretical opinions. They are all, however, agreed as to the truth of the general proposition which attributes the phenomena of Spiritualism to Spiritual Agency. It is against that proposition that the objection we are considering is levelled. We say that the raps heard at circle meetings are produced by spirits; the objector says that they are explicable upon well known psychological principles. Well what is psychology? Simply soul-knowledge. But what knowledge have we of the faculties of the soul which would enable us to say that the soul can, or that the soul does make raps upon furniture? Come forth ye wise men of the world—ye newspaper scribblers, writers of shallow reviews, spiritual paralytics, and revilers of the spiritual world generally; rub up your metaphysics; wade through the ponderous tomes of Locke, and Reid, and Brown; search the volumes of Cudworth, Stewart, Hume, Clarke, Butler, and scores of other metaphysical writers; add to the knowledge acquired from reading your own experience, and then show us how human souls can produce raps upon a table, without being conscious of the action, and without employing any material apparatus. We ask for one solitary experimental proof of the cardinal fact which is taken for granted by the objector, and we hold that until that proof be furnished, the objection is valueless. If the soul can produce rappings, whilst it forms a portion of what is called a spiritual circle, why are such circles often fruitless of results? Why are there any failures? Why do the very same souls which, according to the objection, make the rappings on one occasion, fail altogether to make them on another? On the hypothesis that rappings are produced by spiritual intelligences, over whom the members of the circle have no direct and irresistible control, circle-failures are every way explicable; but, on the hypothesis assumed by the objector, these failures are most mysterious, and cannot be accounted for. Hence the objector by seeking to get rid of one mystery plunges into another a thousand times greater.

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