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BEING A

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THE SPIRIT FAITH IN AMERICA.

From Chambers's Journal for February 9th, 1856.

THE religious life of the Spiritualists consists in holding what they consider as intercourse with disembodied spirits, through various channels. One of the most notable modes, as is well known, is to ask questions, and listen for rapped responses. But there are more direct modes; particularly a kind of random writing proceeding from certain persons while in a peculiar state of reverie. It is not necessary, at this advanced stage of the business, to dwell upon the modes. The numberless converts seem fully assured that they have attained, in various ways, to the privilege of communing with the departed, and obtaining from them that knowledge of 'what they are and we must shortly be', which the poet so earnestly, but so hopelessly desired. On the fact of the communications, they erect the first article of their faith; and 'who,' says Mr. Newton, 'does not *feel* that the realisation, constant and frequent, of the presence of the loved departed ones—those in whose earthly sight the vilest would have been restrained from the commission of any base or unworthy deed, and in whose purified gaze all would shrink from any impure and degrading thought—together with the recognised constant inspection of that great cloud of witnesses who evermore hover above the mortal race course, and through whom the All-seeing Eye ever looks upon humanity—who does not feel that such realisations (and they are more or less brought home to every believer in modern Spiritualism) must have an elevating tendency, more powerful than any other motives that could be brought to bear? We know not the instance where an individual has been made less conscientious, less devout, less humane and charitable, less earnest and pure-minded, by becoming convinced of the reality of spirit-guardianship and spirit-communion. On the contrary, we know of numerous instances, not only

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where open immorality has been abandoned, but where the whole being has been quickened, by a new and most powerful impulse towards the true, the pure, the spiritual, the divine.'

It is an awkward thing regarding these so-called communications, as a basis for a moral or religious system, that they are [?] often of a foolish and misleading character. A man has been counselled to leave his wife; another has been directed to give up his business at New York, and commence travelling through Europe for the propagation of Spiritualism. Sometimes, a group of persons is recommended to take a room for meetings: they do so, and wait for further communications, but do not receive any, or the medium only declaims on some silly idea of his or her own. To check this evil, we see it recommended that the faithful should not prostrate themselves before any authority, but use their reason in 'trying' the spirits. These beings are as various as were those earthly personages whom they represent. Many are mendacious and puerile, while others are of an exalted and intelligent character. And it is not always those who call themselves Washington, Franklin, and Burke, who pronounce most truthfully and instructively; often the best responses come from a spirit who can scarcely give a name; or at the best, an obscure one.

The true Spiritualist, it is said, professes to have no fixed creed, but trusts to find his religion of a progressive nature. The revelations he receives under this correction 'exhibit to him the future spiritual world in all its brightness, beauty, and glory, so far as he can in this state comprehend and conceive it. His imagination and his heart are pleased and instructed. He longs to be in those blessed abodes. . . . He is ready, whenever Divine Providence in its mercy may call him, to lay down his material body with its kindred earth, and take his departure to that happy land which beams before his intellectual sight.' He only 'fears that he may not be ready for the change.' He knows it to be the first and most universal law of that world, that 'everything there appears just according to the state of mind of the individual. He knows that, if he enters that world in an unfit state, he cannot enjoy it.' Hence it is 'his first care to amend that state.' He 'learns that, if he would enter that life, he must keep the commandments.'

Startling as all this may appear, there is really an expression of piety in much that proceeds from the Spiritualists. The deaths of believers are usually headed in Mr Newton's paper, 'Passed on.' Or, under the title of 'Another Guardian Angel for Earth,' we are told that such a person, on such a day, 'entered into the spirit-spheres.' A death-bed scene

is described as follows :—‘As the hour of his dissolution drew nigh, his faith and hope grew stronger and clearer, until at length they formed a triumphal arch, though which he passed to the better home.’ It is tolerably clear, nevertheless, that of the doctrines of the Christian faith, as held in Protestant churches, the Spiritualists adhere to but very little ; and we may reasonably infer, that the orthodox clergy would be more alarmed about the progress of Spiritualism in their borders, if they did not, in common with the great bulk of the community, regard it with ridicule. Mr Newton, however, alleges that he knows ‘some fifteen or twenty clergymen,’ of various Protestant sects, who are convinced of the truth of the spiritual system, and have preached it ; thereby, in some instances, forfeiting their pulpits.

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Such are the things going on at present, and believed in by thousands of persons in the midst of one of the most sharp-witted communities in the world. As far as we can judge, from authenticated reports and testimonies, there is no mockery in it on the part of the professors and witnesses, but, on the contrary, a religious earnestness and sincerity calling for a certain degree of respect. If this be a world of natural law, as most enlightened persons believe it to be, it is impossible that such things can be realities : they can only be some form of delusion or fallacy. We take this ground ; while we have our own ideas as to what the fallacy is. We cannot come to such a view of human testimony, as to suppose it possible that thousands of people can wilfully enter on a certain self-consistent system of deception, which they will support for years without any one confessing or denouncing the trick. The multitude who say they hear and see such and such things, must be impressed with a sense of their reality, or they would never pronounce as they do. Even the sad roll of lunatics said to result from the traffic with spirits, may be accepted as a proof that the practitioners are under serious convictions on the subject. It remains to be inquired, what is the fallacy concerned in the case ? We believe it to be one of a very peculiar and subtle character, arising from a certain mode of operation of the brain, and singularly deceptive in its character and results. This, however, is not the place in which to enter on so difficult a subject. We must content ourselves with having given the public a simple description of one of the queerest of the many queer vagaries for which our Transatlantic brethren are so remarkable.

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1854

[The above estimate of Spiritualism was given while its modern developments

were in their infancy, and before its contagious influences had reached, to any alarming extent, so many distant shores; though at that time, we are told, "that the Spiritualists are persons of all ranks of life, including literary men and judges." That "It is computed to embrace a quarter of a million of believers, including twenty thousand 'mediums,' and has seventeen periodicals devoted to the promulgation of its facts and philosophy." But now that its numbers are so vastly increased in America,—that already, they "have their meeting-houses like other religious communions," that it has spread almost all over the Continent, that even England with all its craft and bravery has failed to resist its entrance amongst us, that many of our clear-headed and well informed men of science and literature have become open converts (besides that innumerable host who are secret converts and only await a convenient season for making a public avowal)—would it not again "be worth while to give some [further] account of this extraordinary movement of the earnest minds in [all quarters] of the world?" Ed.]

SOMNAMBULISM.

An extraordinary instance of Somnambulism occurred in Stamford shortly after midnight on Monday last. Between twelve and one o'clock, Sergeant Harrison, while on duty at the lock-up, observed a person clothed in white walking towards St. Paul's-street. Supposing it to be some one who had assumed a disguise for the purpose of playing a joke, he walked up to the individual, whom he found to be the wife of Mr. J. Oliver, cabinet-maker, having nothing on her but her night dress. She was walking about with her eyes wide open, apparently awake, but in reality in a state of perfect somnambulism. She was taken home, which was close at hand, and her husband was aroused, by whom she was placed in bed. It appears that she got up, walked down stairs, unlocked the front door, and went into the street without either disturbing her husband or arousing herself; nor was she conscious of what had taken place when she awoke in the morning. But the most remarkable feature in the case is that, although she had been unable to walk without crutches or assistance for a year or two, she was, when discovered, walking as well as any other person, and without either the support of the wall or a crutch.—*Stamford Mercury*.

THE SUICIDE IN THE SPIRIT-WORLD.

We were in the company of three or four friends, engaged in conversation on miscellaneous topics, when one of the party, who was very susceptible to spirit-influence, was suddenly and powerfully made aware of the presence of a person to us invisible. The unseen visitor introduced himself as a professional gentleman who had committed suicide in a neighbouring State, two or three years previously,—appealing to ourself for confirmation of the fact that such an event had occurred. We recollected the case, it having been casually brought to our notice at the time of its occurrence, though we knew nothing of the individual or of the cause of the act.

He then proceeded to say that he wished to state to us his experience in the

spirit-world, as a consequence of the rash deed by which he had ended his mortal career. Obtaining permission to do so, he went on to give us one of the most appalling narratives to which our ears ever listened. Our pen, at this late day, can do little justice to the fearful description; but its main features were too deeply imprinted on the memory to be soon obliterated.

He stated that difficulties and embarrassments of various kinds, which he now considered very trivial, had hedged up his earthly path, and having no clear and well-considered ideas of a future life, he came to the cowardly resolve to "shuffle off the mortal coil," thinking thereby to escape a "sea of troubles." But bitterly had he repented this resolve! At first, on awakening to consciousness in the other life, and finding that he was himself, and free as he supposed, from all the trammels of earth, he was overjoyed at the change. But he could not be happy alone. He longed for companionship. He sought the company of former friends, with whom he had associated in the earth-life, expecting to be greeted by them with congratulations and joy. But how keen was his disappointment when he saw that, instead of a joyful welcome, all bent upon him eyes of compassionate sorrow. No words of reproach or denunciation were pronounced; all spoke kindly and tenderly to him; but every tone and every look seemed to say, "You are an intruder here; you have come uncalled; the joys of this sphere belong not to you."

He felt the justice of the unspoken rebuke. Conscience now awoke from her slumbers. He began to see the fearful wrong he had done himself, by thus anticipating Nature's processes and contravening the laws of God written in his own being. Stung by remorse, he was compelled to flee from the society of the good, and next sought sympathy with those equally criminal with himself. But here, instead of sympathy and condolence, he met with only jeers and ridicule, and fiendish exultation that another had been as foolish and as wicked as themselves. He endeavoured to flee also from their society, but was pursued with taunts and jeers, and shrieks of malicious laughter. Go where he would, and strive as he might to conceal his true character, he was at once recognized as a suicide. Indeed, it ever seemed to him that *the mark of the rope was still about his neck*, proclaiming his shame and guilt to every beholder. And worse, a thousand times worse than all this,—even though he might escape from the torturing observations of others,—even though rocks and mountains were to fall on him and hide him from their sight,—he had found it *utterly impossible to escape from himself!* Ever ringing in the ear of his inner consciousness were the fearful words,—"*You are an intruder! a coward! You have no right to be here!*"

In this awful condition of darkness and terror, of shame and remorse, he had worn away the weeks and months and years which had elapsed since the commission of the rash deed which had plunged him in this night of horrors. Recently a gleam of light had dawned upon his vision. The thought had been awakened that possibly he might do something to save others from so fearful a fate, or to elevate those who had become involved with him in the same crime; and a hope had sprung up, under encouragement from higher beings, that in thus exerting himself *for the good of others* he might in time atone for his error, and

do something to remove that terrible brand which his own hand had placed upon his neck.

This impressive recital, of which we have given but an imperfect idea, was concluded with a most earnest appeal to those present, *under no circumstances whatever to think of suicide as a relief from earthly troubles.* Better, said the invisible messenger, to endure any and all hardships,—to bravely meet and surmount all difficulties, or fall nobly beneath them doing your best,—better to suffer obloquy, contempt, misappreciation, persecution, starvation even, maintaining the integrity of your own soul, *and thus securing the sympathies and compensations of the universe of good,*—than by your own act to rush prematurely upon another state of existence, and thereby cut yourself off from those sympathies and compensations.

This lesson was not only solemn and impressive, from the obvious earnestness of the speaker, but its argument seemed overwhelmingly conclusive. At its close, we inquired of the expected visitor what had drawn him to that company, and why he had urged upon us so unusual a subject. "Because I saw that the lesson was needed!" was the startling reply. Afterwards one who was present, and of whom such a thing would have been least suspected by any friend, confessed to us in private that suicide had been seriously meditated for some days, and that preparations for the deed had been nearly completed,—but that this fearful recital had given him strength sufficient to banish all future thought of it from the mind. That tempted one, then borne down under private griefs which seemed insupportable, thus timely warned and strengthened by a kindly messenger from the invisible realm, is still among us, a happy, trustful, patient and most useful laborer,—thankful, even, for the sufferings which then seemed too great to be borne, but which are now yielding the "peaceful fruits" of a truer life.—*Spiritual Age.*

SPIRITUALISM AND MESMERISM.

The following is extracted from a private letter and we regard it as being too valuable to be interred amongst our pile of correspondence. The writer, after alluding to the service done to the cause by our excellent friend Dr. Ashburner, says:—

"The truth of Mesmerism I have had proved to me by personal experience in several ways since I became a Spiritualist; I will mention a little of my experience therein, though it is only a little, yet it will be sufficient for you to perceive the connection between these

Two Glorious Truths.

"In the beginning of this year, I had occasion to go to a circle, about a mile from Dudley. It was a very cold night, and I caught cold in the left side of my face which pained me very much. I got home as quick as possible and went to bed: it got a little better, and I went to sleep. At 12 o'clock I was awake by the rain; and soon after I heard, as it appeared to me, some one whispering the following words in my ear, "*You tell people to ask for what they want.*" Well, thought I, what does this mean? '*Ask for what you want.*' I suppose it

means that I should pray inwardly to the Father of all goodness that he would relieve me from this pain. I did so, and then another whisper came, saying, "Pass your hand down the side of your face a few times,"—which I did, and the pain ceased.

Since the above, my eldest daughter, who generally has bad health, caught cold, and it settled in her face and gave her a great deal of pain: there appeared, on the side of her face, a hard substance, about the size of a small egg. I felt very sorry for her, and I thought I would try to relieve her by making a few passes to remove the pain; and, while doing so, I felt a tingling at the tips of my fingers, as though I was drawing the pain out. The thought came into my mind that I would sooner have it myself than she should be afflicted with it, for she had enough with her regular complaint and I was better able to bear it than her. That instant I felt a pain in my face, and a substance begun to form itself, which, in the morning, I found to be as large as her's, though the pain was not so bad. My daughter's pain instantly left her, and the substance was gone before the following night from both of us.

On the 4th of March last she had been having a vapour bath, and for fear she should get uncovered after she got to bed, I sat in the room with her to watch. I took up the *Educator*, a spiritual work which I had, a day or two previous, received from London. While I was looking at it, a voice, in a whisper, told me to make a few passes over my daughter's face. I wondered at this, for I was not a mesmerist, and should not know what to do if she should go into the mesmerist sleep; when the voice came again, and said, "*Go and make the passes.*" I instantly obeyed the invisible agent, and commenced making the passes over her head and face, when, to my great surprise, she closed her eyes and went to sleep. I soon lost sight of her face, for she was enveloped in the nerve-vital fluid, and while I was looking at the fluid, I saw on the pillow, by her side, a shadow, the form of a head and shoulders of a man or woman, and as soon as my eyes rested upon it, it passed over my daughter and I lost it. Instantly three raps came on a table, about a yard or so from me. I then asked if it was a Spirit that made those raps, and it answered by three more raps, meaning Yes. I then asked if it wished to communicate to me through the alphabet, and two raps came, meaning No. I looked towards the table, wondering what to do next; presently I felt as though I was going to fall through the floor; then the clock in the room struck four times and stopped, although the time by the same clock was twenty minutes past eleven. This, to me, was very strange, for it appeared to me as though the Spirit passed from my daughter to the table, and from the table, through me, to the clock, to convince me that it was spirit power. I then went to my daughter and found her still asleep (for to tell you the truth I began to be alarmed). I had heard of reverse passes, therefore I made a few, and she awoke, to my great delight, for I was afraid I could not wake her. I asked her if she had heard the raps &c.; but she said she had not heard them for she had been asleep. This proved to me a connection between Mesmerism and Spiritualism, and I am satisfied that there is some great meaning attached to this, but I have not yet learned what it is. • •

Dudley.

T. Duffell.

SPIRITUALISM IN KEIGHLEY.

On Sunday, July 17th, the Christian Spiritualists held a Love-feast in accordance with a request made by their spirit friends. The audience was pretty numerous and very orderly. Each one seemed to be delighted with the opportunity given for any one to explain where Spiritualism had found them, to whither it had led them, and what are their hopes and the grounds of their hopes for the future. We trust many such meetings will be held.

The members meet to receive communications every Sunday morning at Ten o'clock; and at two in the afternoon, divine service is conducted; generally the discourses are given in the trance state. In the evening, meetings are held at private dwellings. Several meetings are also held during the week—Wednesday evening being specially devoted to obtaining communications &c. At one circle, of which the writer is a member, a communication is being received which seems to bear so immediately upon the present revivals that we are tempted to give it insertion as far as it has been received.

COMMUNICATION.

Onward! still onward, is yet our motto, and must be yours too. The great battle for truth, unclouded by the "isms" and "isms" of earth, as well as the continuous range through the spirit world, is yet incomplete. The great enemy—Self-love,—will indoctrinate itself into every effort that you or we may make for our individual emancipation; and it is only through careful, prayerful watchfulness and perseverance, that we can ever expect to emancipate ourselves. So long as we listen to that tempter's snares, we shall always find ourselves dragged along paths which leads to misery. Thousands of Spirits in the spirit-land are daily discovering their awful mistake: and it is here necessary that I should remark that Spirits in the spirit land often drag along with them many of the inhabitants of the earth sphere; and when they discover the error of their ways, they make a desperate effort to extricate themselves, and by so doing, they not unfrequently create a strange commotion upon earth, a kind of frenzy or fanaticism, which it is easier to muse upon than to describe.

Calm thought, serious judgment, prudent effort, are suddenly swallowed up by the maniac's rage while clamouring for escape.

To give you a picture of the commotions which agitate the spiritual world at the present time, I will liken it to a large concourse of people journeying in pursuit of some sacred or longed for spot; but who, through carelessness, have strayed in a wrong direction; and, in their wanderings, find themselves in a land full of pit-falls; inhabited by wild and ravenous birds and animals. Suddenly they discover their error, and, without a moments consideration as to how, or to whither they must flee, they start off in confusion; intercepting one another by their irregular and misdirected flight. You behold them treading down, or leaving behind, the feeble and helpless, while the efforts of the strong are so foolishly directed that an escape to the path of safety, to any of their number, becomes a matter of accident and not the result of careful serious thought. From a picture of this kind you may, by contemplating it, learn much of what is going on in the spiritual world, and which is now extending in general outbursts from shore

to shore among men in the natural world. Such events must occur in the very nature of things. Wherever danger is apparent, safety will be the result. But it is not in a state of confusion like this that you must look for a calm and well directed effort. If we, for illustration, take a captain with his vessel when skimming the briny ocean; behold him in the midst of danger, and there you see every effort put forth to escape some awful catastrophe; maybe that he is forcing his way in the very opposite direction to that to which he had started and where he intends to land; but it is present danger which calls for the effort; and though good for the moment, yet it is the reverse of his destined course: so it is with these outbursts both in the natural and spiritual world. The alarm is natural and the effort is natural. But it is not to this state of confusion that you must look for guidance; rather ought you to be prepared,—and so ought we, to endeavour to guide all we can out of the confusion.

So long as there is an erring spirit in the spirit world, so long will there continue to be these ruptures on earth.

The more sensual a spirif is in its nature, the easier does it become allied with men in a sensual state: and thus it is that you frequently find the most sensual characters on earth to be most liable to be affected by these outbursts. These are the beings whose affections have been controlled by sensual spirits, and those spirits having discovered their danger, begin to flee for safety and thus operate more effectually for the time, upon man.

What then is our duty in reference to those events? Shall we, like Cain of old, exclaim, Are we our brother's keeper? or, like the priest and Levite, pass by our wounded brethren? Is it not clear that counsel is needed; but how much more clear must it be to you, that before you can see clearly the mote in your brother's eye you must take care that you have no beam in your own? Before you can raise your brethren, you yourselves must be elevated. Before you can lead them with safety, you must first possess yourselves with lamps well trimmed to lighten your path. The blind must not lead the blind or both will be in danger. We have already told you from whom spring these ever recurring outbursts upon earth; we have already, in some measure, described their state, from which will be apparent a multiplicity of wants; and, while we in the spirit world are using our best endeavours to enlighten, to instruct, and to lead aright our fellow beings on this side the grave, we earnestly entreat you to bestow a similar effort for the good of these affected on earth. Seek to comprehend the nature of these upheavings and their tendencies; then bend your efforts to guide and direct the erring into the paths of safety; and, by striving to bless your fellow-man, you will increase your own happiness.

MORE BURNT FINGERS.

The last we hear of our eccentric friend, P. B. RANDOLPH, is; that recently he traveled ten miles on foot to attend a lecture on Spiritualism, by Mrs. Felton, at Pratt's Hollow, N. Y. Mrs. F., in consequence of a delay of the cars, failed to arrive at the appointed hour; when a Methodist clergyman seeing Mr. Randolph

present, and remembering his famous "recantation," urged him to take the stand, with the expectation that he would effectually demolish "the delusion." He reluctantly consented, and proceeded to argue the fact that "Immortality is demonstrated by modern Spiritualism." He was interrupted by the clergyman, who exclaimed, "I thought you had recanted, and here you are preaching up the very thing you denounced in the New York Tribune! I thought you were a convert to Christianity!" Rando replied assuredly that he had not read the *Tribune* upon that subject, and that he was a consistent and true Spiritualist. The clergyman then declared that he was not in the case, the human mind being too weak to receive the communications of the spirits. "I am sorry that I asked you to speak, for you will make more converts than fifty mediums!" was the rejoinder of the clergyman, and probably quite as much *elated* as did the Boston Courier after Mr. H's appearance in this city. We learn the above from a correspondent of the *Banner of Light*.

"EVIL SPIRITS"—HOW SHOULD THEY BE TREATED?

The following quotation is an extract from a late number of *Arthur's Magazine*:

"From the beginning of that insane infatuation, miscalled spiritualism, we have, at intervals, lifted a voice of warning against it, and in terms that no reader could mistake, denounced it as an evil and dangerous thing. We gave to the phenomenon sufficient attention at first, to enable us to decide upon its origin and tendency; and from that time no phase thereof presented itself, which in any way, caused us to waver in opinion. All we heard, saw, and read, was but corroborative of our original conclusion, that evil spirits were operating more intimately on human minds, producing delusion, infatuation and insanity; and that to come, voluntarily, within the sphere of their influence, was one of the most dangerous experiments to which any one could subject himself."

"I would most respectfully ask T. S. Arthur who he imagines these evil spirits to be, about whom he speaks so knowingly? Were they not once his human brethren? And if so, I should like to know, if some of them, perchance, may not have been *his relations*, more or less remote. If not *his*, they must be *some person's*. How many of them does he suppose were once inhabitants of Pennsylvania, or of his own city of "Brotherly Love?" They must have lived *somewhere on earth*, and he, in common with all other Christians, labored and prayed to make them better while here—and a noble work has he done in that direction. Having read his Home Gazette and Home Magazine for many years, and his other writings, I can bear a good testimony to brother Arthur's usefulness in this respect. Why, I would ask him, has the fact of their having passed into the next life occasioned him *suddenly* to lose all sympathy for them? Is he now *afraid* of them? Missionaries often go among heathen so ignorant and degraded, that they risk being murdered and perhaps *eaten*; yet they go *bravely* in the commendable *cause*, of blessing their fellow creatures. Miss Dix went amongst the most *hardened* Penitentiary convicts for their good, with a stout heart, trusting in God. Did *Jesus* fear to encounter the evil spirits of his time, either in or out of the body?

Did he not descend to the lower earth to preach to the spirits in prison? Suppose Mr. Pease had feared the drunken rowdies and abandoned desperadoes of the "Five Points," where could have been that immortality of honor in which his name is consecrated for all ages?

This want of sympathy with the degraded and fallen, did not mark Christ's life, nor has it been a characteristic of the most noble and heroic missionaries and martyrs. It was a trait of the self-righteous "scribes and pharisees," whom Jesus often rebuked.

Again we would ask in all earnestness—Who are these evil spirits? Suppose it should be found to be those whose neglected and uncared-for childhood constituted the sin and reproach of the society in which they lived. How much early neglect, and grinding oppression, and cruelty, and injustice, and want of all human sympathy and fellowship, think you, has it taken, to make them what they are? I for one would propose a missionary society for these evil spirits. Let us all *renew our old sympathy* for our evil brethren—which death has so unaccountably and strangely broken. Who will join this benevolent mission? We struggled and prayed for them on earth—why should we curse and abandon them now? Suppose our belief that God had done so, should turn out, upon *further investigation*, to be a *dreadful mistake, after all*—born of our poor human pride and self-conceit?—In what a ridiculous position would it place us before God and the angels, and even in the sight of our erring fellow mortals?

Our intercourse with evil spirits *may* be dangerous and perilous, as Mr. Arthur supposes, but what noble heart, putting his trust in God, would not encounter all this, in a good cause?

This very danger, and pressure of evil spirits about our world, and upon humanity, is it not, if real, a call, "trumpet tongued," from God himself, upon all the good and true of our race, not to permit any further augmentation of their numbers from this life—and to take prompt measures to mitigate the malignity and evil of those already there? Let us face this new danger, like brave, true men, and see how we can avert it. Let us discover our duty in this behalf.

Our American nation has been at great pains and expense to open up intercourse with China and Japan, that we may civilize and enlighten this portion of our race. And, behold, God has permitted an intercourse to be established, at our very doors, with innumerable millions, hitherto separated from us by a dread, impassable gulf. They are brought thus again within the reach of our love, our sympathy, our kind acts, and our useful instruction. This great universal movement *cannot be "disorderly"*—the hand of God is in it for a great purpose. Let us be careful that our pride, or ignorance, or self-love, does not blind and mislead us from the path of duty, under these new and altered circumstances. I was formerly a zealous Swedenborgian, but I now believe all our highest and best interests are identified with, and being carried forward by Modern Spiritualism.

New Brighton, Beaver Co., Penn.

C. H. H.

REVIEW. *Midsummer Mornings' Dream*, By F. Starr.

London: John Wesley & Co., 54, Paternoster Row. E. C. Price 5s.

This work comes before us as a "Revelation" and the author or medium through whom it is given, in his preface, says, "I therefore commend my work

to the world generally (for it affects every mortal being on the face of it)." We are disposed to notice this work, as well as a second volume, entitled "The Vision of Midsummer Mornings' Dream," more at large, for two reasons: First, because the price of those works are beyond the means of many of the working classes; and, secondly, because of their spiritual character.

To our own mind, there is evidence of an overruling providence even in the price of these works. Had they been issued in a cheaper form, it is possible they might have met with adherents, who, without comprehending the grand uses of such marvellous productions, might have fixed on some figurative language employed and thus brought the whole into contempt before they had had that careful perusal by better qualified minds, which, by the list of subscribers, we infer has already taken place. In alluding to their spiritual character we do not wish it to be understood that Mr. Starr claims to be a medium in the sense in which we usually make use of that term, (though we certainly think it very appropriate to him). On the other hand, he in 1856, issued a pamphlet containing many extracts from his works, and by its cheaper form intended to reach the working classes, in which he makes the following allusion to modern Spiritualism. He says,—"I wish it to be understood that I am neither an advocate of nor an apologist for such a species of divination, for to seek such information is to my mind both idolatrous and contaminating," and on another occasion he speaks of it as calculated "if possible to deceive the very elect." We are so much accustomed to such insinuations that we can allow them to pass for what they are worth.

Mr. Starr gives a detailed account of what seems to have no connection with the message he is instructed to bear to his fellowmen, though these details really serve a two-fold purpose. First, they refute a calumny which seems to have been in circulation, viz., that he was laboring under "an over wrought brain" and some went so far as to say it "was neither more nor less than '*delirium tremens*,' occasioned by his manner of living"; and, secondly, they supply the reader with necessary information as to the fitness of the instrument for the work to be accomplished.

That Mr. Starr was led by his invisible guide to say and do queer things, is quite true; and that he was cast into a Lunatic Asylum is also true; but here comes the marvel of his productions. He gives us detailed accounts of how he received all his instructions from his invisible guide, and what was the conduct of himself, of the keepers of the Asylum, and of many of the inmates. What is generally considered real lunacy, is one who would be incapable of doing this; yet we happen to know a case in some measure resembling that of Mr. Starr's, having had it from the lips of the individual referred to who informed us (after their release) that what they saw and heard in that state seemed to them as real as any other event in their life, and that they knew how they had been treated and by whom whilst in that state.

But our readers will be ready to ask, How does Mr. Starr establish his claim to possess a "Revelation" to man. We will allow this invisible Spirit to describe its own character.

"*The Voice*" began.—I AM AN INVISIBLE SPIRIT—but stay; dost thou believe in invisible spirits? I have stood by thy side when thou hast with thy lips given utterance to the words, 'I believe, in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things VISIBLE and INVISIBLE;' and yet thou didst not believe in anything thou didst not see. I have heard thee often thus; dost thou now believe in things invisible? but remain still; ere I have done, thou wilt believe, I have no doubt."

(to be continued.)

—O:O—

THE THREE FLOWERS.

A PARABLE.

A white rose grew up by a running stream of pure water. Beneath its feet a cluster of blue violets looked up to the mild maternal heaven. A red rose grew beside them and overshadowed both, for it was sweeter than all. Its pollen floated like the golded sunrise, soft and warm, to melt into their unfolding calixes. The three made one happy family, loving and rejoicing together. Each, contented with its own variety of beauty, flourished in its place. One earth sustained them; one blue sky lovingly overshadowed them; the same sweet air made music, whispering in their leaves.

I heard a little fairy say, "Why cannot you people in the external world learn a lesson from the flowers? All the blossoms cannot be violets, and all the roses cannot be red roses. Why then expect the Lord's children, who as yet are only in natural good, to adopt the wisdom of those who are in spiritual good? And why, again, expect those who are simply in spiritual good to comprehend those things which belong pre-eminently to the celestial? Come, white rose, be good friends with the violets. They grow very near the earth, but they yield a sweet incense, even to the feet that trample upon them. And scorn not, little violet, the white rose, because looking up you see only the green leaves of the calyx. On the other side, which you see not, is the pearly corolla, glistening with shining morning dew. And you, beautiful white rose, recollect that there are other hues of light and other varieties of fragrance beside thine own, for He who made thee white, colored the red rose from His own heart." So I heard the little fairy say.

His tiny wife, whose name was Mignonette, then advanced to me, and she said, "A violet is never one until it is very sweet. When you find a flower in the meadows that has no fragrance, it pretends violet and is but a miserable johnny-jump-up. Queen rose, whether she is white or red, is so sweet that there is not a little wind-spirit but that drinks fragrance from the cup that she holds up to the sunshine or bends to the earth, all streaming with light and fragrance and happy love. Those white and red things that say they are roses, because their leaves look like them and their seed-pods have the same shape, are poppies, and they poison the air."

"Good Mr. Teacher, there are three kinds of Christians, and each is real. They receive and they distribute respectively the goods and truths of the Natural, Spiritual and Celestial Kingdom of the Father, and they will all agree in loving union, as the red rose with its sister white rose and its little brother violet. There are a great many johnny-jump-ups, who think they are violets, and a great many poppies, who would fain call themselves roses. But there's a little bird, whose name is charity. You call his correspondence a humming-bird. He is to be found where the flowers are the sweetest. His wings are all sparkling as if with fairy diamonds and amethysts and rubies. That little bird will help you to discriminate. He drinks his life from the honey of a good man's heart. Where you see the charity birds you will find the fragrant and immortal flowers."—*Herald of Light.*

HEAVENLY DANCES. WORDS TO SPIRIT-MUSIC,

BY JOHN LE GAY BRERETON, M. D.

Earth sees not that heaven is over her spread,
But hugs her own darkness and turns from the Lord ;
In the midst of the cornfield we perish for bread,
We blink at the truths of the Word.

The poor have no refuge but railing at chance,
The rich in their impotence tremble at death ;
While the Spirit, the Word, and the Universe dance,
Like a pulse to the life-giving breath.

And angels in heaven whose music and mirth,
Are changed into tears for the soul-killing strife,
That freezes their gifts as they fall to the earth,
From the jubilant fountain of life,

Can weep, only weep, for the rich and the poor
Who seek not, and know not, and love not each other ;
Whilst Christ pleads in vain at each care-guarded door,
For they know not the meaning of *brother*.

Give, give ! and the bountiful Spirit of love
Shall scatter the dolorous legions of self,
And thine be the limitless heavens above
For the pestilent prison of self.

And care of thy heart shall no longer corrode,
Each day shall bring forth its own flower and fruit,
For Christ shall come in and shall bless thy abode,
And nourish thy life at the root.

And love shall make labour a thing of delight,
Thou shall sing at thy work like a child at its play,
And angels shall gladden thy vision by night,
And attend thee with music by day.

For the Spirit, the Word and the universe dance,
But here there is sorrow, and silence, and dearth.
Look up, and thy deserts shall bloom in his glance,
For the Lord is descending, O Earth.

Invisible to outward sight,
The dear departed stand,
Attired in robes of shining light—
A calm and radiant band.—HARRIS.

SPIRIT THOUGHTS ON A "NEW BORN."

Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you, that in heaven their Angels do always behold the face of my father, which is in heaven."—

OUR DIVINE SAVIOUR.

Welcome, dear stranger, welcome as a pledge
Of tender love, both mortal and immortal—
Yet is thy presence a great mystery !
For from what sphere doth thy bright spirit come,
And who hath breathed with loving power divine
Into thy little self, "*the breath of Life*" ?
Art thou from those bright lands of Eon spheres,
Those ponderous Globes that roll in distant space ;
Embryo Worlds that ages hence shall bloom
In ripened splendour, whose unfinished shores
Hold in their wombs the gradual quick'ning souls
The heavenly seeds, dropt by the great Creator
Into these mortal beds ?—a little while
They flourish in their helpless innocence,
Binding the parents hearts with chains of love
Soft, yet so strong in their endearing ties,
They in their parting drag the soul away—
"And yet their mission ended they must go."
It may be they are sent to bind the hearts
Of two estranged ones in a firmer knot,
Which being done, the weak and fragile Babe,
Too sensitive and pure to brave the world,
Flees like a Dove, finding no resting place
Of bush, or shady Tree, in the wild waste
Of troubled waters of this sin drowned earth
With weary wings, to its expectant Ark.
Or else in mercy they are snatched away
By jealous love, who will not idols brook.
Stern lessons to their sorrowing parents here,
To place their joys in heaven instead of earth :
These are the infant happy cherubim,
Who with their purple wings of softest down
Tipped with the rose's blush and fringed with gold,
Do minister the praise and prayers of saints
As daily incense in the Courts of Heaven :
Or if they are allowed to stay below
And act their part on this world's mortal stage,
To here begin their deathless destinies,
And fill hereafter higher planes of life
(Swelling the ranks of principalities,
Dominions, powers, and all the angelic host)
A tiny bud, sweet emblem of themselves,
Is kept behind to flourish in the bud,
Of the Almighty's garden of young souls ;

The Saviour fondly watching by their growth,
 How they progress in faithful righteousness.
 His tender care e'en in the mother's womb,
 Preserves them from all ills, and so through life,
 Unless they scorn his love and practise wrong
 As soon as they are able, then their Flower
 Will droop, and if all good is rooted out,
 Will fade away and bloom no more in Heaven.
 But if they keep still faithful to their God,
 And practise virtue, love, and holiness;
 Then, when their time is come, the Saviour plucks
 Their emblem-flower and makes of it a crown,
 Which seen by death, who waits to do his will,
 Is known to be the mandate to go forth
 And bring that spirit to his master's home.
 How busy now the "ministers" of heaven
 Gathering from out that countless brilliant throng
 Its heavenly "kith and kin"—with songs of joy
 Tuning their golden harps with melody,
 They flock unto the everlasting gates.
 The "*New Born*" spirit trembling stands without
 Until its passport has by death been signed;
 When it is welcomed by rejoicing friends,
 Carried in triumph to the revered sires—
 The august elders, who around the throne
 With Fathers Abraham, Isaac, Jacob stand
 In posts of honor near the Trinity—
 The mild and gentle Saviour calls with love,
 The trembling faithful spirit to himself,
 And crowns him with his emblematic flowers,
 Which throughout all eternity doth bloom,
 While as he rises to still higher spheres
 Of excellence, so do his Robes and Crown
 Keep pace with him, in all bright loveliness.

J. B.

RECEIVED, and shall appear shortly, "Good or Evil Spirit Agency," "What is Spiritualism," "Spiritualism in France," and No. xvii by a "Truth Seeker," containing a biographical sketch of "Edward Irving."

Also "The Revival Movement," containing an extract from the Rev. W. M'Ilwaine's Sermon on "the extraordinary revival movement."

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