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# HUMAN NATURE:

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JULY, 1876.

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## OCCULTISM AND ART MAGIC.\*

By M. A. Oxon.

THIS book, put forward for an anonymous author, by Mrs. Emma Hardinge-Britten, is a remarkable addition to the literature of Spiritualism. Opinions will differ as to the qualities for which it is remarkable, and many will go so far, no doubt, as to say that it is remarkable chiefly for its absurdities. Such has been the verdict which has been pronounced by several of my correspondents. One says rudely, "It is a Yankee sell; there is nothing new in it." I can only say there is a great deal that was new to me, and a great deal that I believe to be true; a great deal, moreover, that I believe it to be very necessary for the world to know. Another says, "There is a little—very little in it; most of it is padding." Well; most books do consist largely of padding,—some, perhaps, entirely. Let us have the truth out at any rate. And yet another says, "It is a mere amalgam of Cornelius Agrippa, Van Helmont, and the Occultists, with a little Andrew Jackson Davis. Nothing new at all." Well, is it true?—that is the chief point. And, with some experience of mediæval works on Occultism, I say boldly that the man who can popularise and render them intelligible to ordinary comprehensions, will earn the thanks of those who desire information on the subjects of which they treat. I have spent much time and patient care over Iamblicus, Eugenius Philalethes, Agrippa *et hoc genus omne*, and I frankly say they are not intelligible, and do not repay perusal. The key is wanting. They were designedly written only for the initiated, and they are mere gibberish to the vulgar.

Now, ART-MAGIC is at least intelligible. Whether the reader agrees or not with the theories propounded, he can at any rate

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\* Art-Magic; Or, Mundane, Sub-mundane, and Super-mundane Spiritism. Published by the Author. New York, 1876.



get hold of them, and that is no small gain. That there is in the book much that modern opinion will reject, I have no doubt; but I also believe that there is in it truth which it is very necessary for us to know and act upon. In this belief I propose to set forth some of the doctrines and statements made, and to leave them for the candid consideration of my readers. I profess myself one who is desirous to afford a perfectly candid consideration to any and every view of truth that comes before me. I know that truth is many-sided. I should like to see as many sides of it as I can. I know that Prejudice and Ignorance between them do very much to stifle and crush out unwelcome truth. I wish to fight against Prejudice and Ignorance on the side of Fair-play. I know, too, that much passes current for Truth which is but Folly wearing a mask, and posturing in borrowed robes. I wish to strip off that mask and those robes, and to let daylight in upon the fallacy or fraud.

I know my own ignorance of the subject too well to venture on any theorising. I am but a learner, and my ignorance will be sufficiently palpable to adepts. I only venture to speak because, after some careful study, which few as yet have given to the subject, I am convinced that we who are prying into these mysteries cannot afford to neglect and despise what the Occultists have stored up. And, because they are so obscure, I take advantage of the appearance of a more intelligible work to offer some short analysis of certain of its contents. The book covers far too wide a surface for me to deal with it exhaustively; and I foresee that the author will anathematise me with all those arts in which he is such a proficient for my ignorant and imperfect treatment of his book. But I am prepared for the worst, and beg him to remember that to my readers faults will be less apparent, seeing that nine out of ten of them have no knowledge on the subject. While he may say of me, This dabbler has missed my best points, and omitted most that is really good: my readers will be more likely to say, Enough and more than enough of this mystery; we have had quite as much of it as we can fairly stand. And so I shall be between too fires; which, however, in the cause of Truth, I mean to brave.

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The book is divided into three parts and twenty-three sections.

Part I. deals with preliminary definitions of Matter, Force, Spirit, and the like, and sets forward with considerable elaboration of detail the original notions of the Fall of Spirit from a state of purely spiritual existence to a state of material incarnation. It then deals with the Deity, and the most ancient forms



of worship, that of the Sun-God : and sets forth finally the Kabbalistic notion of the subordinate deities of the universe—the various gradations of spiritual existence which intervene between man and God.

Part II. is concerned with what the author calls Spiritism, but what I prefer to call by its better known name of Spiritualism. If a word were now to be coined it would be easy to devise a better than Spiritualism ; but it is in wide use, and the word substituted is already appropriated by those who adopt the creed of Kardec, with which the author has no sympathy.

Spiritualism, mundane, *i.e.*, communion with the spirits of departed human beings; Sub-mundane, *i.e.*, communion with or evocation of Elementary Spirits inferior to man; and Super-mundane, *i.e.*, communion with the highest and most progressed spirits of men, and with Planetary Spirits superior to man—this is the theme. Magic is dealt with at great length as the means by which this communion may be effected by such as are not naturally endowed with the gift which we call mediumship. Its growth and history is sketched from early days in India with the Fakeers and with the Lamas of Thibet—some gruesome and ghastly tales of magical power being introduced—in Egypt—some very interesting facts as to the intention of the Great Pyramid, and the part it played in the old Egyptian mysteries being given—in Judæa, Chaldæa, Greece, and Rome. The Kabbala is dealt with, and the Eleusinian mysteries and old forms of worship are explained.

Part III. recurs more fully to the nature of the spirits who stand on either side of Incarnate man—the Planetary, to whose pure spiritual existence he is progressing, and the Elementary, who look up to him, and wait their turn for Incarnation. The remainder of the part, which possesses less value, or at least less general interest than the others, deals with the formulæ of Magic, and with the relation to it of Magnetism, Psychology, and Clairvoyance. The rules with which the book closes, and especially the warnings given to those who would idly seek into the mysteries of Spiritualism, deserve a far wider circulation, a more careful attention, and a more implicit obedience than they are at all likely to receive.

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SPIRIT, energised by WILL, acting through FORCE, and producing LIFE—this is the starting point. MATTER, ranging from the granite rock up to the most sublimated ether, is the outer garb of Spirit. FORCE, with its attributes of attraction and repulsion, is the life-principle of Being, the “unresting life which charges



every atom of matter, and fits inorganic masses to become organic." "It is *Electricity* in the air; *Magnetism* in the earth; *Galvanism* between different metallic particles; *Life* in plants, animals, and man; the *Aural or Astral Body of Spirits*." SPIRIT is defined to be "the one primordial, uncreated, eternal, infinite Alpha and Omega of being. It may have subsisted independently of Force and Matter, evolving both from itself; but Force and Matter could never have originated Spirit, as its one sole attribute (WILL) comprehends and embraces all others, and is itself the cause of all effects."

Lady Caithness in her late volume, "*Old Truths in a New Light*," relates a conversation which she once had with Professor Agassiz, in the course of which she thus defined or explained her idea of Life. "Life is a manifestation of spirit: its manifestation is movement. I am very simple-minded, and naturally refer everything to God, the Great First Cause. If you ask me what is movement, I should say it is a manifestation of Force, and Force is a manifestation of Will. I can therefore only tell you that my definition of vitality would be movement produced by the will of God" (p. 292).

These statements coincide approximately in themselves, and agree entirely with what is universally stated by intelligent spirits as to the ultimate motive power—viz., WILL.

This WILL ultimates, according to the scheme laid down in *Art Magic* in many subordinate principles, Love, Wisdom, Power; Creation, Preservation, Progress; Life, Death, Regeneration. (The latter term, be it noted, is not used, as Lady Caithness uses it, in the sense of Reincarnation. The author lends no countenance to the dogma of Kardec.)

This then is the Great Trinity of Being, MATTER, FORCE, SPIRIT.

In Spirit all existence originates: Matter creates nothing. "It is only the mould which Spirit uses to externalise ideas for external uses." All new inventions, all new discoveries of the future are in imperishable existence in the realm of Spirit now. To this rule man is no exception. His spirit has been in a state of previous existence before he was born into matter. The FALL OF MAN is the FALL OF SPIRIT.

When Matter had been prepared by the successive births and deaths of myriads of generations of organised beings in the vegetable and animal kingdoms the earth awaited the advent of a nobler creature. It is the story of progressive development told again with a new charm by Mr. Alfred Wallace in his just-published volume, "*The Geographical Distribution of Animals*." After a masterly setting forth of his facts and deductions, Mr. Wallace concludes in favour of "some slow process of develop-



ment" of species from those which have preceded them through vast cycles of time, the very mention of which makes the brain grow dizzy. "The 50,000 or 100,000 years" since the last glacial epoch have wrought changes, few only and insignificant, and the process of evolution must have extended over cycles which the mind of man cannot realise, or, if at all, only dimly, as infinite and eternal.

On to the earth so prepared for him—Man already existent, but not yet individualised as the Divine Idea—was born. Angelic in essence, spiritual in substance, he lived in a Paradise suitable to him; pure and innocent, but lacking yet those elements of Love, Wisdom, and Power which are perfected through Incarnation. Hence it is that the Idea of a Fall is absolutely universal, and is found in all religious systems, not so much as a Belief but rather as a memory of the Spirit. The author adduces historical arguments and illustrations, which need not be reproduced here, showing how this belief permeates all forms of faith, and runs through the communications of all progressed and trustworthy Spirits.

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When the author comes to deal with the Nature of God, he summarises from the writings of antiquity the idea drawn from observation of the Solar System—the astronomical idea evolved bit by bit by man's enquiring mind as he rose out of the lethargy of savagery to the dawn of reason. The God whom his awakening perceptions first realised was the SUN-GOD, and his worship was Solar worship. "The fiery Scriptures of the skies" formed the volume of his Inspiration. The path of the Sun in the heavens through the Zodiacal circle, with the changes of atmosphere, climate, and natural productions effected on earth by these progressive changes, formed the slender basis on which was grounded the worship of the Sun-God. The Hindoos, the Egyptians, the Persians, the Chaldaeans, Ethiopians, Phoenicians, all are quoted as believers in the Sun-God—the one central source of Spiritual Light typified by the Great Centre of Light in the Solar System. The same story is to be read in the hieroglyphs of Nineveh and Babylon, amid the ruins of Tadmor, and throughout the relics of Asia Minor—in the religious systems of China and Japan, Java and Ceylon. On the same Sabæan system rests Druidism; and the Astral worship of Egypt is elaborated in the mythology of Greece and Rome. This is the author's statement; and if experts question some of its details there is no doubt as to the antiquity and wide prevalence of the idea of Solar worship. It shares indeed with one other form,



Sex-worship, with which it has become greatly blended in process of time, the honour of being the fundamental principle of the religion of antiquity. The idea has been degraded, changed, mutilated, so that it is hard to recognise it at times, or to assign exact precedence to the one form over the other; but the root is in the combination of these ideas—the Central Spiritual Sun, and the material Incarnation of Spirit. In the one was seen the source of all: in the other the only means of progress.

I have said that the author phrases the Fall of Man as the Fall of Spirit; and it must indeed have seemed a Fall for the pure soul to descend to earth and take on matter through the processes of physical birth. Yet such is the Law of Progress. With the descent of the soul into matter, man is said to become dual, male and female, sex being the dividing line. Spirit becomes materialised, and all its qualities share its fate. Spiritual love becomes material passion; intuition, human reason; boundless perception, vague prescience or still vaguer memory; eternal realities, temporal shadows; and “a creature without parts or passions is changed into one all organs, and swayed by every emotion that ranges from the depths of vice to the heights of virtue.” This is the penalty of Incarnation: the gain is that, its school-time past, the soul enters the spheres of Progress, through which, preserving all the faculties acquired by Incarnation, it journeys on through discipline and purification to perfection. “Every trial and suffering has its meaning, and every passion its use in shaping the rudimental Angel, through remorse and penalty, into ultimate strength and divine proportion.” This is the only means by which Spirit after its Fall can progress, through incarnation and purification by trial and suffering, up to the Angelic state. It is the pilgrimage of the soul to Heaven.

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Turn we now to the other Central idea of God and His various Manifestations. The scheme put forward by Kabbalists and Theosophists is this: GOD, the DEMIURGUS, the Central Source of Life and Energy, having in Himself the masculine principle of Power (EN-SOPH) and the feminine principle of Wisdom (SOPHIA), by the union of these produced the LOGOS, or WORD.\* Through the Logos, the Will of God energised, and emanations proceeded from it and eventuated in mighty Spiritual existences

\* Lady Caithness makes the not unnatural mistake of supposing that Wisdom is the masculine and Love the feminine principle in Deity; whereas the true Theosophic division is that given in the text.—*Vide* “Old Truths in a New Light,” p. 453.



who rule the destinies of worlds, and are charged with the missions of the Supreme:— Archangels, Angels, and the “Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, Powers” of the Hebrew Kabbalists, down to Incarnate Man. Below him in the scale were corresponding legions of unprogressed spirits, powerful to tempt and lure to sin and ruin.

“Besides all these were other orders, neither wholly good nor purely evil; neither entirely spiritual nor actually material; creatures of the elements, corresponding, in their state, power, and function, to the different elements in the universe, and filling up all the realms of space with uncounted legions of embryonic and rudimental forms.” These are the **ELEMENTARY SPIRITS**; and, as they are believed by some to play a conspicuous part in producing some of the phenomena of Modern Spiritualism, I will endeavour to state what I learn about them from various available sources—from the present Author, from Lady Caithness, from my American Theosophical friends and correspondents, and from spiritual sources. This I conceive will be a better plan than condensing each opinion separately, especially as there is a strong substantial agreement between authorities. If I mis-state, I am alone responsible; but I see no great difficulty in setting forth what is, in outline, the account of these Beings, and of their interferences with us.

Those of my readers who have followed me through the somewhat difficult path by which I have most imperfectly endeavoured to expound the ancient ideas respecting God and Spirit, will shudder at the prospect of an elaborate disquisition on Inferior grades of Spirit. “Why,” they will ask impatiently, “are we to be bothered about Pucks and Gnomes, and Kobolds? Can’t you leave them alone? We do not know or care anything about these Elementary Spirits!” I am fully aware of it. But as I believe that the Elementaries do interfere with us, I will even complete my story of Spiritual Evolution. I know that most of those who do dive below the surface have little idea of the statements made on this subject, and I am sure that all will be the better for sifting them. There is apparently a quite unintelligible disinclination to face the Truth; the root of which I believe to be fear lest a pet theory should suffer. Now in my opinion it would be a good thing if every pet theory were sifted and submitted to the last analysis. If true, it will not suffer; if false, it ought to die. And if any is inclined to draw back in fear, let me remind him that I shall not create Elementaries by talking about them; and that, if they do exist, it is wise and well that we should know it.

The Author is severe on those “presumptuous and narrow-minded” persons who “assume that there is no other realm of



spiritual being than that occupied by their own familiars," who insist "that no theory can be true or worth studying which has not been spelled out by their rapping spirits, declared in doggerel rhymes through their semi-tranced media, or lisped out in comical broken English by spirits of little Indian maids or big braves, once renowned for eloquence and wisdom, but transformed through mediumistic witchery into imbeciles and buffoons." Truth to tell, we have had far too much of this. Partly out of sheer ignorance of conditions, partly from utter want of precaution in organising our circles, partly from the motives and desires which bring together those who meet, to say nothing of the atmosphere of combined folly and deception which too often prevails, the utterances of the circle-room have usually been remarkable only for rhapsody and shallowness, uttered under cover of some honoured name, association with which only makes the utterances sound more silly. The exceptions to this rule occur precisely where the conditions are watched, and proper care is taken to ward off intruding and unwelcome visitors, whether in the flesh or out of it. Surely it is high time that a disgrace so patent should be removed, and that some attempt should be made to explain and remedy what is on the very threshold a stumbling-block to every inquirer.

Do such beings then, as Elementaries, exist? and can they communicate and hold intercourse with man? Ancient Theosophists and Kabbalists return an affirmative answer to both these questions, and their opinion is embodied in the universal belief of all tribes and countries as seen in their several legends, corroborated, moreover, by the teaching of wise and trustworthy spirits, and by the experience of seers and mediums now-a-days, no less than by the whole tendency of Modern Spiritualism. It is no new fancy, but an ancient and prevalent belief. It is no exploded mediæval legend, but a present and serious fact that Spirits inferior to man can be summoned to his call and be made his servants or his tormentors as he wills.

It has been already said that man holds the central place in the scheme of Spiritual evolution, having above him the vast grades and orders of Souls and Planetary Spirits, to whose pure state he is progressing, and having below him the rudimental forms of Spirit, who are being developed step by step up to his superior state.

It has been said, too, that Spirit is the great universal fact, underlying all creation from the granite rock, through all the development of vegetable and animal nature up to the brightest Seraph that stands nearest to the Supreme. It has its home everywhere, permeating the material world of effect, and operating in the world of cause at present invisible to our veiled



eyes. It throngs the refined and pure ether that surrounds each world, and which is to it as the Astral Spirit or Spirit body to man, and which Theosophists call "The Astral Light." It dwells no less in "the dens and caves of the earth," and has its counterpart as much in the moss, the rose, the animal, and the bird, as in the perfected Human Being; for it is the formative principle by virtue of which he and all things "live, and move, and have their being."

The very Elements are full of Spirit-forms, "Beings, by reason of their semi-spiritual nature, invisible to man, and because of the gross tincture of matter in their composition, unable to discern any orders of being but themselves, except through rare and exceptional rifts in their atmospheric surroundings," just as exceptional men can see at times and commune with the denizens of the upper spheres. These Beings "are endowed with graduated degrees of intelligence, and have bodies subject to the laws of birth, growth, change, and death." From being invisible to man (except through rare or prepared conditions), they were termed Spirits; from being embryonic, rudimentary, and attached only to certain fragments of the universe, they were called Elementaries. Not yet having progressed up to the state when the particle of the Divine Soul is given—viz., the State of Human Incarnation, they are not immortal, though they have all the cleverness and intelligence of a highly-organised animal, at least in their higher grades. Being in process of development they obey the universal law by which that is secured—viz., by death and consequent transition from one state to another. Their concrete, self-conscious principle of being is not sufficiently individualised to retain recollection and identity at death, but the spiritual essence is gathered up and passes into a more advanced form of being, until, by a process of spiritual evolution from the most rudimentary form of spirit, exactly analogous to that promulgated in the material sphere by Darwin, it becomes fit for Incarnation with its gifts of Individuality and Immortality. Each successive birth purifies and elevates: each death is a rung in the ladder of evolution, until the Elementary is incarnated as Man—a Self-Conscious Individuality with a spark of the Divine Soul within him, an heir of Immortality.

All the grades of moral development corresponding to material progress are found among these Beings, some of them being "little more than animal or vegetable existences with strong and powerful instincts in the special realms of nature to which they belong, but incapable of reason, reflection, or self-knowledge." Others, again, are acquainted with and aspire to man's state, hope for continued existence, and delight in man's society. They gravitate to him of necessity and naturally, and are ready



to perform his will, or minister even to his unconscious desires, if he maintain his place over them; or to tease, and vex, and drag him down, if he place himself in their power, by summoning and requiring of them service which they should not render. "Man rules potentially over all lower existences than himself; but woe to him who, by seeking counsel or assistance from lower grades of being, binds himself to them . . . they will become his parasites and associates, and as their instincts are strong in the particular direction of their nature, they are powerful to disturb, annoy, and prompt to evil, and avail themselves of the contact induced by man's invitation to drag him down to their own level."

These rudimentary Beings vary much in moral as well as in mental and physical state. The highest grades model themselves on man, and may even temporarily present themselves in his form, obedient to his unconscious will, and presenting in palpably "materialised" shape his unspoken wishes, with ready obedience and patient watchfulness,—the touching watchfulness of the higher animals who have lived much with man and have drunk in his atmosphere—but the lower kinds are spiteful, malicious, troublesome, and vexing. Hence the aimless noises, the trying disturbances, the obsessions and possessions, that so annoy some persons. Elementary Spirits on low grades, or disembodied souls dragged down to their level, are responsible for this: just as the higher Elementaries are the kindly servants and guides of those to whom it delights them to attach themselves. To this class are referred the Tutelary Spirits attached to certain families, who manifest themselves, frequently in animal form, at time of some crisis in the family history; the "little men" of miners' stories: the Banshee of Ireland, and many like legends which, however exaggerated, have in them a germ of truth.

To them, again, and to their influence, combined with that of the lower disembodied spirits of men, are referred the waves or storms of abnormal spiritual influence which sweep over the earth at times, in outbursts of Fanaticism, and of wild mediumistic development (as among the *Convulsionnaires*, and in the New England Witchcraft period). The afflicted at such times show a marked tendency to imitate the movements and cries of animals, barking, and climbing, and crawling in a shocking and unaccountable manner. Such an outbreak occurred "in Mora, Sweden, and Scotland during the 17th century, and at Morzine during the 19th," and many others will be familiar to those who have made a study of these phenomena.

These, briefly indicated and most imperfectly put, with no intention to exhaust or elaborate, are some of the statements made by Occultists. I have heard it frequently objected to them



that they are new and unheard of, while others answer that objection by another—viz., that they are mediæval legends or barbarous fancies, survivals of savagery. Most assuredly, the belief in the existence of an order of spirits inferior to man is no affair of yesterday. It is found in the sacred books of Hermes, and in the Vedas of India. It is stated in the revelation of Lao Kiun in China, is found in Chaldæan Scripture, and is taught at large by Zoroaster. The Kabbala is the authority on which rests much of what I have here written. Iamblichus elaborates it; and Lady Caithness quotes the respectable authority of St. Jerome in his "Life of St. Paul, the Hermit," for the same belief, and adds her own personal testimony to the fact of the existence of Elementary Spirits.

Nay, what man who has devoted time and pains to looking into the question of intercourse with the invisible world, has not come to know that the grades of spirit are as various, and its presentations as multiform as those of matter, while the consciousness steals on him bit by bit that, were his eyes opened, he would become conscious of infinite ramifications which would paralyse and appal his brain? Be he the Adept who has purchased his knowledge through Initiation and Study, the Magician who has gained it by severe processes of conflict with occult forces in Nature, or the Medium, born with that "freedom" of spirit which others must laboriously purchase, he cannot dominate spirit without knowing that it must and does range far beyond the narrow bounds of the disembodied spirits of humanity, countless as they may be, and without feeling more and more that a worm is as likely an authority on Cosmogony as he is on the myriad forms and Protean manifestations of Spirit. So long as his eyes are shut to fact, so long as he is the mere sport of the familiar, the unquestioning recipient of what comes first, he may and will find that Spirit moulds itself in the shape desired, and comes to him as a disembodied friend. This is that law by which the lower spirits respond to our unspoken thoughts, and a knowledge of it explains much that now seems so unintelligible. The Elementary has no originative power, but gets its ideas from its master, as a dog does, and carries them into effect without thought of harm. Having no moral consciousness, it knows no sin in doing man's conscious or unconscious bidding. As soon as man knows his power, exercises his will, and selects his spiritual company, he will learn that Spirit pervades space, lives in and permeates matter, and is, in its lower, far more than in its higher, forms, the slave and servant of Man, who is the Microcosm, the Lord of inferior spirit by virtue of the in-breathing of the Divine Soul.

The thing is both new and old, for it has the continuous testi-



mony of the ages and of those minds in them who are qualified by knowledge and experience to speak on the matter. The question is not, "How old or how new, but how true is this? how far do these inferior spirits vex men now?" and how far can the confessed follies of Modern Spiritualism be traced to their action? Do not let me be misunderstood. In speaking as I do of the blots that are apparent in Spiritualism, I do not for one moment forget or ignore the beauties that adorn it, nor the debt that we owe to its revelation. It has already done much to bring home to a waiting age the conviction of perpetuated existence that it needs. In the very first letter that I, then a very new investigator, published on the subject, I felt impelled to say, "Spiritualism is the Gospel of God to an age that needs it." Since then I have seen very much, and read more of all its various phases, and experience does not impel me to modify that statement in the least. I believe it to be God's answer to man's half-conscious cry for something on which he may stay himself. The cry for new truth invariably precedes new Revelation, and this is no exception. Already it has stirred the world no little, and since such movements are cumulative, it must before long stir it still more. Evidence of disembodied or of invisible intelligence external to man governing a force unknown as yet to science, is a step in advance of previous generations that should give ours a conspicuous place in history. An approach, however tentative to a reconciliation between Religion and Science on the platform of Demonstrable Fact, should make men who love God and their brethren thankful. And I see no reason to doubt that what has done so much will go on "conquering and to conquer" in the time to come.

It is for that very reason that I would have it purged of all that can make it hurtful or retard its progress. It is for that reason that I venture to ask those who have the ears of men to call on them to see what Spiritualism is, and what it might be. I would point out, so far as may be in my power, that the blots are human while the face is Divine; or, if that be too sweeping, that human power may at least do much to cleanse away that which now makes us ashamed. To this end a knowledge of the communicating spirit—a power of discerning spirits—is one of the first essentials. Let us use every means of learning what is the nature and what are the powers of spirit that acts invisibly to us. Were the ancients all wrong, and are the moderns all right? That will not be affirmed by any who reads the signs writ broad across the face of Modern Spiritualism. Then let us tabulate their knowledge, and adapt it to our own needs. Let us learn of them without prejudice, and read them without favour; despising no form of enlightenment though it do come



from the "dark ages." (A pretty piece of nineteenth century modesty it is to call any ages *dark* as respects spiritual things!) Let us look into the recesses of our own spirits, and strive to learn their secret powers.

The bogie MAGIC frightens most. But why? A Medium is one who is controlled by spirits,—of what kind he seldom knows. A Magician is one who selects his spiritual company, and while amenable to the guidance of the higher spirits, controls and keeps in order those whom God has subordinated to him. There is no cause for fear in that! Far more, surely, in inviting, without power to check their presence, all who may choose to come, careless that by so doing we must give entry to those most ready to take advantage, those precisely who, being below man's spiritual state, can grant him no boon that he ought to ask. And let us learn if we can the conditions under which we may safely hold communion with those of our kind with whom it is safest, without fear of hurting ourselves or encouraging spiritual anarchy by unlicensed or unwise meddling. And if at first our success be negative rather than positive, let us remember that it is something to know "how *not* to do it." Patient experiment in the future will teach us both what to do and what to avoid in dealing with our unseen correspondents; and, no less important knowledge, what manner of persons our mediums ought to be if they would become the channels through which can flow a pure and unpolluted message.

Those who occupied the place of the mediums of old—and let it be insisted on that a magician is simply one who has *acquired and trained* the powers which the medium *has naturally but has not trained*, and that it is as reasonable to object to a born artist taking drawing-lessons as to blame a medium for studying Occultism—were scrupulously careful to fit themselves for the intercourse with spirits which they sought; for they knew full well that it depended on themselves whether they ruled the Elementaries whom they summoned or were dominated by them. They knew that all depended on a trained will acting rapidly and decisively through a properly prepared and healthy body. With this before their eyes—and with as rigid an attention to the fact as the lion-tamer would pay before venturing into the den—they found that all the phenomena produced by disembodied spirits can be effected by the still embodied human will, either alone and unaided or with the help of inferior spirits who are naturally at its command. But those were days in which spiritual things were regarded in their true light, when man thought no care or trouble too much to fit himself to master the hidden mysteries of Nature: the "dark ages" when men penetrated deep below



the surface, on which now it is the fashion to spend all time and labour.

In these days Adepts who had won the gifts that God gives to worthy and aspiring souls were the guardians of Truth, pledged to keep it whole and undefiled, to communicate it to worthy Postulants only, and to protect it from being trampled under foot by those who would see in it no beauty that they should desire it. Now we have changed all that; and what have we gained? Nothing; but we have lost Esoteric Knowledge and spread a pall of Cimmerian darkness over all. Priests and people are alike in the dark; and there is no guide to the wandering Seeker after Truth.

To compass the secrets of nature in these old days, and to claim his divine birth-right, the Aspirant prepared himself by ABSTINENCE, not only from excess of food and wine, but from indulgence of all the bodily appetites.

He sought spiritual exaltation in PRAYER: not the mere syllabled formality of prescribed supplication, but the inner communion of spirit with the spirit. Prepared by abstinence, he communed with his Guardian, and lifted up his soul to its Creator.

To aid him in concentration he spent his time in solitary SECLUSION. Alone with the world of Spirit, with no breath of lower air to disturb the pure Astral currents that surrounded him, he grew out of the material into sympathy and union with Spirit.

His body was prepared by frequent ABLUTIONS for a free transmission by evaporation and absorption of that Astral fluid which is the element to be used. And in that state he was, in many cases, submitted to the infusion of the influence of an Adept by the process of ANIMAL MAGNETISM.

In DIM LIGHT, for material light is antagonistic to Astral Light, as all those who meet in circle soon find out, though few know why, he concentrated his WILL, and, thus prepared, achieved the result for which he had made a long and laborious preparation.

Now, what does all this mean? It means that a man whose mind is firmly, tenaciously fixed on a certain object, has taken every precaution to secure its highest and most potent state—the *mens sana in corpore sano*—by rigid discipline of the body, and by careful isolation from all possibility of contamination. In short, he lived as much in the spiritual world, and as little in the material as possible. By such means success is gained, gained after years of probation, at the close of a lifetime of concentrated purpose. What fastings! what lonely cryings and prayers! what concentration of will! what singleness and purity of life!



and what uselessness as a citizen and as a denizen of earth as men count usefulness. There is no fear that the race of Magicians will be largely recruited from a generation of luxurious triflers, or material money-hunters, or even *dilettanti* dabblers in Spiritualism, in an age that is given over to material ends and aims, and that counts the worth of a thing to be precisely what it will fetch in the market.

But short of this, much may be learned from ancient practice whereby to improve the conditions of our séances. Given the medium duly prepared it is incumbent to see that the circle is properly organised. In public gatherings, those only should be allowed access to the purest and most sensitive mediums who have passed through experience of the ruder physical phenomena with a coarser and less sensitive instrument. All sensitives cannot stand rude handling; the best shrink back from the cold blasts of scarcely-veiled mistrust or open suspicion; phenomena cease, and a single such observer paralyses and stops everything. Mediums should be carefully classified, and those who have physical powers, which can stand hard tests, should be taught to cultivate them so, that phenomena, which occur regularly in darkness, can be commanded with equal regularity in full light. It is merely a matter of time and practice. To them let the sceptic go, and with them let him stop till his mind is satisfied, and he can bring a less chilling mental atmosphere to other investigations.

In circles for the higher development of communion with spirits superior to man, pains must be taken to exclude the earth-bound and Elementary Spirits altogether, or at least to hold them in check. To this end perfect harmony should prevail, helped by all external appliances—sweet odours, flowers, music; all that can elevate and refine the mind and soothe the external senses. The eyes should fall only on the beautiful, and the atmosphere should be materially and spiritually *pure*. This cannot be when discussion or difference of opinion enters, when the gathering is heterogeneous, intended to gratify curiosity or to while away an idle hour. The room should be set apart for its use, and be treated as “holy ground,” as far as possible removed from secular uses. The same means which prepare the medium should also be used (so far as may be) to purify the circle. None should come but with “clean hands and clean hearts,” not over full of food, but in peace and harmony of body and mind. The light should be dim, for astral light, which is the element used, is neutralised by natural light. In no case, however, save in family gatherings of closest friends, should perfect darkness be allowed, not because it is not the most typical condition, especially for the evolution of physical



phenomena, and also for the conservation of the medium's powers, but because it has been, is, and must be liable, to gross abuse. The more the pity! The present Author, moreover, recommends "a large circle beneath the table, sufficient to insulate all the sitters assembled, and prevent even their garments from touching the ground; to be formed of glass." It seems likely that this might be useful.

But when all has been said, it is quite plain that the best conditions cannot be obtained by those whose daily work in life leads them into contact with men, harasses the mind, wears out the body, and sets the nervous system in a tingle. Nor by those who regard life as a field of enjoyment, and phenomenal Spiritualism as something to gape at: any more than by those who bring with them a dogmatic mind which is determined to pick a hole in everything; least of all, perhaps, by those in whom the flesh is not subdued by the spirit, and who have not learned what a perfectly equilibrated mind and body means. We are, as far as possible, removed from those conditions of Seclusion, Abstinence, and Peace which provide the atmosphere into which the higher spirits most readily come. We must be content to get so much as we can; and I have no doubt, whatever, that when we realise the sanctity of what we are doing, when we try at least to make ourselves better, and to provide better conditions, we shall get increasingly better results.

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In concluding this notice, of the meagreness of which I am fully conscious, I must express my own obligation to the unknown author of *Art Magic* for much valuable information on subjects of which too little is known. There are points to which I should take exception, and there is in the book much that is open to criticism. I gladly leave that thankless task undone. Fault will be found with the volume in proportion to the ignorance or prejudice of the reader. Let the points, which on the surface lie open to criticism, be left for the time being, while candid and thoughtful minds dwell on the view of Spiritual Evolution which is propounded, especially on the vital point which seems, to me, to go so deep into the anomalies and mysteries of Modern Spiritualism, viz.:—*The existence of an order of spirits inferior to man, and the extent to which they are responsible for phenomena which at present vex and puzzle us.* This point settled, the intelligent reader may be counselled to go a step further and enquire *how the knowledge of the ancients may be made available for modern use, and particularly with reference to the governance of these Elementary Spirits, and to the securing communion with the Higher and Ascended Spirits of Humanity.*



## THE RATIONALE OF SPIRIT INTERCOURSE, AND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE SPIRIT WORLD.

THE explanation of the unfavourable reception which Spiritualism has met with amongst the better educated classes is to be found not so much in the insufficiency of the evidence for the phenomena as in the alleged impossibility of those phenomena themselves. This was the attitude of Hume towards the Biblical miracles; and it is now the attitude of our men of science, and of most of the outer world, towards the supernatural and ghostly, at the present time. "No amount of evidence," say they, "will avail to convince of the reality of that which we know to be absolutely, and for ever, impossible." The argument, when fully developed, is as logically incorrect as it is actually false. It is the latent prejudgment which I wish to combat, by endeavouring to shew that the theory of Spiritualism is not only not absurd, but is rational; is not only rational, but is natural; is not only natural, but is such as might have been anticipated and foreseen from our other knowledge of the constitution of things. But at the same time, the opinions and theories set forth in this paper are not vouched for as the opinions of the general body of Spiritualists, nor yet of any particular section thereof. They simply express, so far as those can be expressed, the views of the writer; formed by long study of the experience of others. Nor yet do they appeal for their justification to facts. They stand as independent of the phenomena as Christianity of the Evangelical miracles; and whether deemed rational or absurd, by their own intrinsic merits they are to be justified or condemned.

The gist of the Spiritualist theory may be said to be this: the belief in intelligent beings, other than ourselves, who are able by various methods to manifest themselves to us. The belief is a very ancient one, as old, probably, as the first rudiments of conscious intellect in the nascent man. We find traces of it in all mythologies; in folklore and local traditions, and in fairy tales throughout the world. Such are the angels and spirits of the Jewish Scriptures, the afreet of Egyptian story, "the frequent apparitions of the gods," which Cicero has mentioned; the gnomes, sprites, fays, elves, goblins of German, Scandinavian, and English fairy tale. In our times the belief has become rationalised and developed, as the evidence on which it rested has been more fully and accurately ascertained. But where Spiritualists most essentially differ, from all who have before them enquired into these mysteries, is in this: they believe that all these spiritual beings are in their nature intrinsically human. Through the wide universe the Spiritualist acknowledges no



beings but such as have already passed, or are destined some day to pass, through the same stage of existence in which he is now confined. He and all living men at their death pass into that other world, with whose inhabitants we are now privileged to hold intercourse. Here the new-born spirit finds himself no whit altered by the change of death. The same desires and lusts burn as fiercely as ever; the same conscience still, as before, upbraids and warns him; his understanding knows the same expansion, the same strict bounds as before. In a word, his personality remains absolutely untouched. But his conditions are altered. He has still a body, but it is the same body no longer. The external form is there; the substance is transformed. Material, in any real sense of that word, his body still remains; for it is visible, tangible, appreciable to every sense by beings like himself; but it is an infinitely more subtle and a nobler kind of matter, more fitted to mirror forth the indwelling soul, and to grow with its mental and moral growth, than is this coarse mould with which we are now encompassed. And all outward things are in harmony with his changed form. For there are material surroundings still, but less stubborn and untoward than those of earth. For while even here, our material surroundings are, to a certain measure, moulded and shapen by ourselves; in that other world they are, beyond comparison, more pliant and flexible to our nature and our unconscious will. So that growth and change are then immeasurably easier or more arduous. To the mind set on higher things, to the strong hand and the resolute will, there are boundless opportunities; and to the earth-bound desire opportunities boundless too; whilst before the wavering and irresolute a barrier stands Alp-high, which they themselves have wrought.

But before we go on to consider the laws of the Spiritual World, let us turn back and see the relations of the newly-emancipated spirit to the world which he has just left under his feet. It would seem that all ties which bind us to this earth are not at once annulled by death; but the more earthly were our desires and affections whilst still in the flesh, the more are we still held by such desires in the spirit. This is the great law which Plato enunciated; whom Milton in the *Comus* has followed. Such earthbound spirits linger fondly round their former haunts, and love to taste, through the lips of others, the pleasures which are to their present state denied. The drunkard, the fornicator, and the murderer, are each of them impelled by other spirits, worse than themselves, who in this way gain vicarious joys, and escape all outward penalty. And wherever the soul is, by some overmastering passion, chained to some special spot of earth, there his form becomes often visible to our



eyes, haunting the scene of such strong associations. For in such spots, by his powerful sympathy with his former life, the spirit still retains something of his former environment, some vestiges of his fleshy covering. Hence the spirit of the miser is still to be seen watching over his buried treasure; the murderer and his victim still make the scene of the tragedy awful with their visible presence, and many still frequent the place where they have deeply sinned or sorrowed; and by reason of this strong tie to earth, have power to make their bodily form manifest to our senses.

And, not only so, but all souls, when just freed from the body, retain still some power over the things of the world to which they have just bidden farewell. More especially is this the case with those who die a violent death; for then the soul seems only to be freed, by the lapse of time, from those bodily elements which, in the course of a long illness, loosen their hold on the spirit gradually and completely. Hence the frequency of wraiths, or apparitions of the lately-departed to their friends on earth, and especially after death by accident or violence. And besides all this, there are certain men so peculiarly gifted that spirits can employ their bodies, or certain subtle emanations proceeding from them, for communication with us. And this gift is distributed, it would seem, capriciously and without regard to merit or desert. Like the prophetic gifts of both Old Testament and New, with which it is essentially the same, it is no prerogative of peculiar worth, or learning, or holiness; but is a natural gift, like the power of acquiring languages, or like excellence in mathematics. Or rather, it is like no other gift that we possess, for it is the one instinctive faculty that has been left hitherto neglected and untouched by reason. By means of these persons spirits are enabled still to maintain their connection with this lower world, when otherwise, through length of time, they had lost it altogether. It is probable that such communication requires on their part, too, a constitution specially adapted for that purpose; and that amongst spirits "mediums" may be as rare as amongst us.

How liable to error and deception, how entangled with doubts and perplexities, how meagre and unsatisfactory at the best such intercourse must be, a very little consideration will shew us. In the first place, those most able to communicate must necessarily be often spirits of the lowest and vilest nature—the black unsightly dregs of the pure spirit-ether which rises above our planet. Or at best, they will be for the most part spirits as yet immature and imperfectly developed, such having most affinity with earth. And setting aside these considerations the chances are still immensely in favour of the communicating spirit being



one of the class of impertinent idlers or malicious busy-bodies, as numerous, doubtless, there as here: just such as those who throng our earthly seances; but idleness and malice are, unfortunately, more hard to control when no longer on the hither side of the grave. And when all these obstacles are laid aside—when for once some spirit of power and intelligence has snatched a brief respite from other tasks to give a message to his friends below—when he has found a medium who is no half-educated clown, but a man in thorough sympathy with his own nature: consider still how he is hindered and hampered by the imperfections of his instruments. It is said that spirits tell us nothing that is new. How should they tell us anything that is new, or how should we understand? It is as if one should endeavour to teach some wild Bushman all the intricacies of our English civilisation. What should he understand of our railways, our commerce, our machinery? What of our Universities, our Courts of Law, our Parliament, and our Empress Queen? What above all, of conventionalism, of etiquette, and of that mysterious unwritten law of honour? Some of these things we might attempt to explain by interpreting them into analogies familiar to him, but even so, we could but leave him with an impression of some vague, mysterious grandeur. And for how much more would there be no names in all his vocabulary, no analogies in all his life's petty experiences. Nay, there is much of which he could grasp no adequate conception by living daily in our midst: the very faculties for its comprehension would have to be created and developed through generation after generation. And how far more difficult must be the task of interpreting spiritual by natural things. Our language and our thoughts are alike inadequate for this. Though men rise daily from the dead they can bring no news to those who lack the ears to understand.

But, though there is much of the constitution of the Spirit World which we cannot yet hope to comprehend, we may yet endeavour, and with partial success, to realise the relation of spirits to the appearance which we call Matter. To their eyes, ourselves, our houses and lands, "the great globe itself," are all an unsubstantial nothing. Rarely are they enabled to view our surroundings at all, and even then they see them only as shadowy dreams by the side of the solid realities of the Spirit World. And so with us. The things of either world are phantoms to the inhabitants of the other. And this we may in part conceive and understand. We know that these so solid-seeming, immovable walls that now surround us are the veriest mockery and delusion; that at best they are a collection of invisible points, so far removed in proportion, the one from the other, as the various planets that circle round the sun, and as unstable



and swiftly-eddyng as they. What wonder, then, if quick-revolving nothings pass unseen by other eyes than ours? There is no physical difference between the chord which makes two-score vibrations in a second, and that which makes but ten; between the ether whose pulses beat 30,000, or 40,000 times. Yet for us there is fixed the infinite gulf that divides silence from sound, and light from darkness. The air is filled with sights and sounds that are never born to us; of the great world-drama we can behold still but one act; and of all the melodies of that grand orchestra our ears can catch one single tone. But shall we deny the music of the spheres because it lies an octave higher than our dull senses? or discredit all those glories which our scanty spectrum will not show us?

These illustrations may help us to understand how it is that in the Spirit-world there are sights to which our eyes are blind; sounds which our ears cannot hear; and matter which will not be measured by human rule, nor weigh down an earthly balance. But, as said before, these surroundings are, in a far higher degree than here, submissive to the will and character; not, indeed, wholly so, nor here wholly otherwise. By natural consequence a spirit bears his character more plainly written on his face than ever mortal man. Indeed, his very thoughts are visible to others, and between them there is no need of speech. So, too, they are ordinarily able to read our thoughts; though we cannot in turn read theirs. By reason of this greater openness, each more readily finds his congenial society, and does not soon depart from it. Trusts betrayed, friendships broken, or love unrequited, must be far rarer there. For the rest, they are governed by the same laws, there enlarged and intensified. All are compelled to work, and, doubtless, by some natural compulsion, such as binds us here. What that compulsion is, we cannot understand. Spirits when asked if they eat, reply that they do so, but that their food is thought; and to gain such food they are compelled to work. What that work is we do not know: but of this much we are sure that all the knowledge which we may have acquired here will then be utilised and amplified. The scholar, the scientist, and the theologian will find their occupation. Many of the problems which have interested us on earth we shall then find but partly solved, and ever fresh ones awaiting as we progress onwards. In a word, whatever state we find here shall still continue with us, in changed form, but in nature essentially the same: disease, and ignorance, and crime amongst the rest; for without these we should know no good.

Some form of government we may be sure there is, and in it different ranks and degrees. Some compulsion, too, there must



be "to haud the bad in order." But each can fill in the details as he pleases. It is but this our present state enlarged and glorified.

Hitherto we have only considered the condition of mankind, whether still on earth or emancipated from the flesh. That we may include the lower animals, too, in the great scheme of progress, it is needed that we take a more ample view. And if to any these speculations that follow should seem overdaring, let him remember that they profess to be only poor guesses at the great scheme of the universe: put forward in no wise as matters of faith, but of consideration and discussion. To the present writer it has long been matter of indubitable belief that all living things have a soul, or imperishable essence. Yet it is noteworthy that on this point there is so little positive evidence. At most the careful study which the habits and instincts of animals have received during the last half century have rendered it more probable than before. The belief that man is descended from a common stock with the lower animals, unless we are to believe that man also must perish with them, renders this conclusion to the logical mind almost inevitable. But all cannot accept the doctrine of evolution, and beyond this there is little to countenance the belief, except our own intuitive consciousness. Spiritualism can tell us nothing new on this. It is a noticeable fact that, so far as ordinary experience extends, spirits never make mention of the continued existence of the lower animals. It may be that their own concerns occupy them overmuch. It may be that each spirit is conscious only of the ranks of life immediately around him, and that his upward and downward vision is too strictly limited for this; but explain it how we may, the fact remains.

Now, if this belief be justified, concurrently with that material evolution by which the bodily parts of animals are developed into the human body, there must proceed a spiritual evolution by which the souls of these, too, are refined and glorified into the souls of men, and of angels; and so the chain of being be continuous from the Eozoon to the Archangel Gabriel. Up to a certain point the spiritual evolution must proceed side by side with the material, and only be wrought out by its means, or rather, the spiritual must always be associated with the material, but not always with the earthly material, for after a fixed period the development would still continue, but on the higher plane of the ghostly material, and the spirit would bid farewell for ever to the earth. But before this point is reached the spirit in its progress must have worn out many earthly bodies, and have suffered very many births and deaths. And during each stay on earth the spirit must grow and be strengthened, and shall



carry that increased growth and strength through other deaths into renewals of birth. And so the crown of the expiring life shall be the foundation stone of the life yet unborn. Each new life shall start from the goal of the life behind. But there can be no retrogression, and no sudden advance. The soul of man shall not enter the body of the tiger or the hound, nor shall the spirit of the wolf cover itself with the lamb's soft fleece. All is progress; progress silent and inevitable; for the great law of the attraction of like-to-like must prevail also in the mysterious genesis and incarnation of spirits. Somewhere in the universe there must be countless myriads of spirits of all degrees and kinds—spirits of worms and sea-shells; of serpents and strange ocean monsters; spirits of all birds and beasts; spirits of men—Hottentots and Australian savages, philosophers, poets, and philanthropists. All these must be awaiting another incarnation to serve out their appointed time on earth. And can we doubt that each is attracted to his kind? and so to earthly parents children born with natures like their own. On no other view can we escape from an awful inequality of justice. Your souls have had no previous existence, but sprang into birth together with their mortal covering. How is it just that the children should bear the iniquities of the father? How can it be anything else than the very extravagance of injustice that the new created soul should be burdened with the shortcomings and the iniquities of all who have gone before? If there has been no previous existence for the human soul, then the awful legacy of passions and desires which we received from our fathers, and which our children shall receive from us, is a wrong that cries to heaven for redress—a bitter libel on the just government of the world. But if otherwise, then when we are attracted to parents like ourselves, and so united to a body which is in harmony with our own spiritual nature, do we not receive the due reward of our deeds, and begin life anew with just so much or just so little as we have gained in all the long cycles that lie behind us.

There is a curious resemblance between this alternation of life on earth with rest in the spirit-world, and the alternation on earth of daily work and sleep by night. What the spirit has gained in the day, or during the earthly life, is at night-time or in the spirit-world digested and assimilated, and the shattered energies are built up anew for the coming struggle. Possibly the analogy is deeper and more real than would at first sight appear. Possibly sleep is an actual withdrawal of the spirit into the spirit-world, there to consort with its fellows out of the body.

But at last there comes a time when the soul is incarnated



on this earth no longer: just as—to continue the analogy—there comes a sleep of the body that has no re-awakening. What becomes of the spirit then we do not know. It may be that fresh births await him on other nobler worlds; or it may be that this fitful alternation of labour and rest has ceased, and that henceforward the spirit works on for ever, without haste, as without repose.

### VEGETARIANISM A NECESSARY ELEMENT IN SOCIAL PROGRESS.

ON Monday, 12th June, a Temperance and Vegetarian Congress was held at Langham Hall, Great Portland Street, London. C. O. Groome Napier, Esq., of Merchiston, read a paper on "Vegetarianism as a Cure for Intemperance." After some discussion the following paper was read by J. Burns, of the Spiritual Institution, the subject having been given him by the Secretary of the London Vegetarian Society :—

#### VEGETARIANISM A NECESSARY ELEMENT IN SOCIAL PROGRESS.

I have been requested to prepare a paper on this subject, and I do so from my own peculiar point of view. The subject may be treated in various ways: the aggregate effect on a community may be taken as a basis, or the observation may be directed to the individual. I prefer the latter method of procedure, as all social results whatever must depend upon the conditions of the individuals who make up the community. A progressive step in society may be due to many influences besides diet; but when we experiment with the individual we have all the conditions under our control, and can allot to each the due proportion of influence in the phenomena of life.

Let us first ask what is meant by Social Progress: the definition of the term may be itself the subject of warm debate, and it may also be found that the most highly-developed forms of society contain within them masterful elements that are retrogressive rather than progressive. So noticeable is this fact that we have only to look at society historically to perceive that as it approaches the acme of a conventional form of progress it becomes more and more imbued with the corroding seeds of its decline and speedy dissolution. The same fact is observed with races of families. How often is it observed that the man of genius is the last of his line, or leaves behind him a dwindling progeny which cannot be traced in direct succession for many generations! Nations likewise culminate in a blaze of glory which serves to illumine their path to obscurity and annihilation.



What are the phenomena attendant on Social Progress? As in all the branches of inquiry into the realm of nature the study of man must be made through an acquaintance with the phenomenal facts which indicate his existence. As types at each end of the scale of human progress may be taken the abject savage—the animal man—as the lowest, and Jesus of Nazareth, the God-man, as the highest. What is it that distinguishes these two widely different types? In the savage there is a lower grade of instinctive intelligence than we find in those animals associated with man. The same is more particularly true of the savage, or demoralised classes of civilised countries in whom the alimentive, conjugal, parental, fraternal, and other propensities and affections, often seen in fine development in animals, are not only obliterated but inverted—passions of a directly opposite tendency usurping their place. Narcotics are preferred to food; and the more repulsive and gross articles of diet are esteemed beyond the finer articles of aliment. The more delicate nerve which distinguishes between the pure and the impure, the putrid and the wholesome, in morals, surroundings, and occupation as well as in diet, does not exist at the bottom of the human scale. In a word, they are to a great extent unconscious of their personal characteristics and requirements: are strangers to themselves and the universe in which they are placed.

The healthful preponderance of nervous sensibility and cerebral development in the individual is what I recognise as the concomitants of progress. The lower type of man is just conscious of his animal needs, and has but little ability to choose his food or skilful energy to augment it. He is almost wholly a creature of circumstances, and the spirit within him is all but obscured by the lower elements of his being. Commencing our review then at this point we perceive that each stage in social progress implies an increased pressure on man's skill and energies, forcing them to a higher development. To capture wild game takes more of a man than to pick up larvæ and insects. The locomotive activity to do so stimulates the reproductive powers and causes an increase in population. In due course wild game becomes too scarce to sustain the inhabitants, and the domestication of animals is undertaken. To be successful therein increased attention must be directed to the vegetable kingdom that the flocks may be provided with food. The cultivation of the ground necessitates the construction of rude implements which calls into exercise the constructive power of the mind, and paves the way for man to conquer the stern conditions in which he is placed by nature, and surround himself with those appurtenances which are indispensable to the exercise of his more glorious attributes.



Without dwelling too long upon the steps in social development, we may now consider the time when the produce of the country is not capable of sustaining its inhabitants on animal food. A double result ensues—commerce with other countries, and increased attention to the cultivation of vegetable food. These occupations have a marked influence upon the development of the intellectual, esthetic, and moral qualities of the mind: greater attention is given to the choice of food and the manner of its production. On this latter point I desire to dwell for a few moments, as it involves important considerations respecting diet as an element of Social Progress. It is obvious that the production of food must at all times be an important occupation for the peoples of all countries, particularly of those residing in temperate regions. The people of a country, distinctively so called, are eminently the occupiers of the soil, the food producers. The professionals, shopkeepers, and artisans, of all grades, however essential they may be to the machinery of civilisation, are merely accessories to the food producer, who is the basis of the social fabric, and as he is, and does, so must all the others be.

Now the peculiarity of an age like the present is, that the cultivation of the soil and the production of food is highly distasteful to the better class of minds. There is in farming and stock-raising, as at present carried on, much to disgust refinement and prove wearisome to intellect; and the department of husbandry is practically undertaken, proverbially, by the lowest and most clownish stratum of the population. It necessitates some obtuseness of the olfactory nerves and other sensibilities to enter freely into the life of the piggery, cow-shed, and slaughter-house, leading scenes in food production under the present system. The cruel, off-hand manner in which animals are dealt with by many of their keepers would make average humanity shudder, and cause some to resolve that the inoffensive brute creation should no longer suffer that they may be fed. There is much in the wilful conduct of animals to irritate the passions and lead to scenes of cruel revenge and punishment on the part of those who tend them. But it may be urged that with some attendants animals are great pets, and will in the most tractable manner do the bidding of their keepers, and live a happy life of acquaintance with man. All this is true; but in that case who is the sufferer—man or the animal? The picture of the "Sale of the Pet Lamb" tells the story. When the animals are properly cared for and protected the feelings of their attendants must be outraged in committing them to the death portal, through which they must pass to come to the table as food. I am acquainted with this practically. I was brought up amongst the life of the rural districts, and have seen both sides of the question. The person who can coolly rear an



animal and bestow upon it care and attention that it may be killed and eaten is one whose acts proceed from no genuine regard for the animal, but a consideration indirectly intended for himself at the animal's expense. If I mistake not this is a very pronounced form of selfishness. Such persons are not the most exemplary of human beings. They may succeed in pushing their way through the world, make money, dress well, live in fine houses, and be regarded as respectable; but the world would be a cold, hard place, were it tenanted with only such as these.

Of a different stamp is the mother—the neighbourly, nursing matron, who has a healing hand, a sympathetic word, a kind act to all in suffering or misfortune. She is human in the best sense of the term; her deep affections extend beyond the sphere of earth; her soul is in sympathy with higher worlds. If not the God-man she is the angel-mother.

It is my supreme satisfaction to know one of these; and she is also a manufacturer of dairy produce. The cows know her voice, and by name and intuition do her bidding like beings of a higher order. Under her care the most refractory animals have become manageable and domesticated. How was it with her and the killing business? Though a plain, unlettered country woman, unversed in the sentimentalities of conventional society, yet she could not bear even to have one of her stock sold away without regret, amounting sometimes to bitter tears. When a calf was to be killed she would not desire to know ought about it, but would follow her occupations in a distant part of the premises, trying to forget that a violent death was being perpetrated near her. But when a pig had to be killed then she found it necessary to get away from the place altogether, that she might not hear its screaming.

The inference, then, is clear that flesh-eating and its belongings are incompatible with the higher development of man, and, as a consequence, the higher order of minds are driven from the occupation of husbandry. Town is overcrowded, and country pursuits are not sufficiently stimulated by the presence of superior mental influences.

The remedy for this is the introduction of vegetarian husbandry—the produce of vegetables, grains, and fruits. The repulsive features of the animal system are wholly wanting on the vegetarian farm. It is a more unselfish course of life: the farmer has then to depend entirely on his own skill and energies, and not upon what he can filch from animal existence. It is a more intellectual course of life: the knowledge of soils, varieties, weather, seasons, and treatment afford a wide insight into nature, organic and inorganic. It is more artistic and refining: the farm might become the theatre of a new industrial art, which



would attract that order of mind which is alone capable of making it so.

It accords with the moral feelings and intuitions of man. There is nothing at all offensive in the production and gathering of crops of whatever kind. The harvest home is a feast of gratitude which never could occur over a day of blood and death. There is a moral self-reliance engendered by knowing that these stores of roots, fruits, and grains are the reward of skill and industry, and not part of the birthright of any creature. The vegetarian system throws a man back on himself and nature, leads him to depend on his own resources. While man kills the animal he will not be kind to his fellows. While man enslaves the brute he will not be liberal to his own species. Magnanimity and mercy are principles which, when possessed, manifest themselves universally, and not in a contradictory manner in one case and not in another.

Another social consideration is, that under the vegetarian system woman might be one of the most powerful aids in farming; and all children should spend their budding years under an industrial system of education in the open air and in the bosom of nature. With mechanical appliances to do the heavy work, there is much in food-culture to attract woman. The outcry against out-door or field-work for woman is most absurd. If there is any curse that more than another assails woman, and through her, as the universal mother, the whole human family, it is this life of indoor occupations with needle, sewing machine, or other enervating pursuits which take woman wholly apart from her sister Nature. It is at this point that the deteriorating elements creep into the scheme of social progress. When society progresses away from nature, then, whatever special advantages are connected therewith, it is a false system of progress, and must in time come to a deadlock, and necessitate a recommencement. The more general introduction of horticulture would provide this return to nature for all, at least during some period of their lives, and give them an opportunity for an experience which it is the purpose of earth life to supply. This art-industry of raising a sufficiency of the best food might solve the problem of poverty and privation, which is unhappily known to exist with crushing weight amongst those of education and social position, as well as at the lower end of the social scale. The work of turning the soil to its proper use, for the sustenance of the people, may be engaged in by the most refined in sentiment and delicate in health, with advantage to themselves in every respect, and benefit to the community at large. By this system of husbandry the country might raise food for many more than its present population, with a surplus to spare. Idleness



in drawing-rooms, or in courts and alleys would give place to healthful productive industry, and there would be agreeable occupation and sustenance for the whole population.

We as a people have gone too much into shopkeeping and manufactures. Commerce with other countries tends to rectify this; but at the same time a large class of very dependent individuals is fostered who are utterly unable to provide for themselves when any interruption occurs in our commercial relations. Such an overbalanced and helpless state is inimical to social progress, to afford a solid basis for which, society must be more intimately and independently related to that portion of the earth's surface on which it exists, and that end cannot be so well effected in any way as by the adoption of vegetarian food-culture.

This occupation does not present the revolting characteristics which have been pointed out as associated with the rearing and slaughter of animals, and which drive from the work of food-production the more refined and higher class of minds. The more general introduction of the system now recommended would attract into it many individuals who now crowd the cities and overstock the various professions. The food producers, in place of being the lowest, would soon become the highest in the intellectual scale, and as a consequence the crops grown under their supervision would improve in quality. It is beyond dispute that a fine quality of food makes a high type of man and of mind, and to enhance the quality of food we require to employ in its production men and women with a higher development of intelligence. The food of the people should be produced by the best class of the people. It is the most important element in our lives, and should have the greatest amount of care and knowledge bestowed on its production. There is more than is usually imagined in the power of mental influences being transmitted to articles of diet from the persons who produce, handle, or cook them.

These considerations, if adopted, would entirely revolutionise the present order of things. Society would progress truly, and in those directions which would render it self-sustaining—results which cannot be achieved without the adoption of vegetarian food-culture.

Having thus considered the effect of food upon the producer, we have to study its influence on the eater. It has already been observed that progress in the individual is the result of an increased degree of susceptibility in the brain and nervous system; in short, a higher state of personal consciousness in all its forms.

The student and thinker well know that temperance is highly conducive to mental lucidity, and the lighter and more easily digested foods are preferable. Those of a gross and heavy



description—animal food more particularly—stimulates the aggressive faculties of the mind; those that by blind force overcome material obstacles. In this sense flesh diet may be a necessity of man in the fierce conflict with inferior and crude conditions; yet it is abundantly proven that the most laborious work can be performed on vegetarian diet. But social progress necessitates man's advance out of inferior conditions; not the best means even of remaining therein. How is this to be accomplished? I answer, by calling out the higher qualities of mind—a deeper insight into the order of nature, by which increased knowledge and powers man is able to apply improved methods in dealing with his surroundings.

The intuitional powers of the mind are greatly augmented by a vegetarian diet. Those races in whom the finer perceptions, involving a recognition of psychical and spiritual laws, are developed have been partakers of a refined diet, and the individuals in whom these gifts have been specially cultivated were more particularly dieted on the higher products of the vegetable kingdom.

The types used in illustration of this subject at the commencement of this paper were the extreme of Animality—the Animal-Man; and the extreme of Spirituality—the God-Man. Towards the ideal perfection of that latter type man is by his religious duties constantly admonished to progress. This is indeed real progress; all other developments are simply steps leading thereto. The remarkable powers recorded in the gospels of mind-reading, discerning of influences, communion with the spirit world, and performance of acts of the highest beneficence have been the admiration of millions, and have been regarded as the insignia of religious excellence.

I do not intend to enter into any argument as to the nature of these powers recorded in the gospels. I simply observe that they are recognised as of supreme importance, and attributes of the highest type of humanity that is placed before the contemplation of the race. Keeping that argument in view, it would be well to inquire what influence diet has in controlling and developing the psychical and spiritual characteristics of humanity. I have had a very large experience in this instructive field of research. I have investigated the qualification of psychometrists, those who can read mind and character from coming casually in contact with the individual, or any letter he has written, or article he has worn or handled; clairvoyants, who can perceive what is going on at great distances; mediums, through whose entranced organisms truths of a high order have been given, languages have been spoken unknown to the medium, and the personal peculiarities of the unknown departed



have been faithfully portrayed. These and a very much larger catalogue of phenomena of the same class have been observed by me to be much affected by diet. I have found that a vegetable diet increases very much the spirituality of the organism, and heightens these remarkable powers in an astonishing degree, while the use of flesh as food blunts the sensibilities and induces animality rather than spirituality.

It may be asked, What has this to do with social progress? I reply it has everything to do with it, for it implies the development of those higher sensibilities upon which further progress has to depend. If the intuitions of mankind were so acute that they could instantly perceive the deceiver, the dishonest, the murderous, or the defiled in any person they met with, it would be invaluable protection against the most invidious evils with which society abounds. We cannot possibly reach a higher stage of social purity till we become endowed with the heightened perceptions to observe the social impurities that exist around us, and therefore loathe them and seek for higher conditions.

It may be supposed by some that the attainment of these powers leads to physical weakness and ill health. There could not be a greater mistake. Much of the illness that prostrates society is due to the fact that mankind neglect these finer sensibilities, and therefore suffer from numberless relations of the existence and effects of which they have no knowledge whatever.

And here allow me to utter a great truth, and one which all our health reformers and social progressionists ignore—viz., That we shall never advance society successfully while we base our operations on material considerations alone. Diet and the ordinary hygienic laws must be studied and applied in the light of man's spiritual existence. Man, studied as an animal, can never be understood, nor can his wants be properly supplied. Thus viewed all is darkness around him, and the best attempts end in blind experiment. The efforts of individuals instead of ultimating in social progress end in individual selfishness. Instead of eternal principles being developed in the life, personal considerations on a very narrow basis take possession of the mind and keep it down in that fixed groove. We must be guided by truth or come to erroneous conclusions, and hence must recognise that man is a spiritual being and therefore has spiritual relations as well as physical relations, and that the latter condition the former.

We now see the question in a new light, and ask what are the best dietetic conditions for spiritual life and progress? This I have already indicated in a notice of the effect of food on the psychological powers. I would, however, briefly add that mind or spirit manifests through organism in accordance with the



facilities or conditions supplied. The connecting link between mind and organism is a subtle fluid, derived in part from the food, and in part from the atmosphere, and even more impalpable elements. Organism, character, capacities, and spiritual relations depend on the conditions supplied, of which food is an indispensable ingredient, and the effects of which on the higher powers I have briefly noticed.

My position then is: Vegetarian diet, in its production throws man on his own resources; develops a self-reliant, unselfish character; fosters ingenuity and mechanical skill by which he can surround himself with those accessories demanded by his higher nature. It enables a larger population to exist on the land; it finds profitable and agreeable industry for all, and may banish poverty and want. The production of vegetarian food is not only in accordance with the refined sentiments of the highest class of minds, but tends to develop them. The adoption of this system would attract a higher class into the production of food, and thus enhance the quality of the food produced. This food is favourable for the development of the mental powers; it sharpens the intuitional percepts whereby a man is able to distinguish moral and spiritual conditions, protect himself from evil surroundings and associates, and seek for that which is higher. It is therefore in accordance with man's spiritual interests, and best suited to his requirements as an inhabitant of this world and prospectively of a spiritual state, and therefore vegetarianism is an essential element of social progress.

### THE SWORD AND THE HARP.\*

By GEORGE BARLOW, *Author of "Under the Dawn," etc.*

Through the dismal clang of battle  
 Sounds are wafted, passing sweet;  
 Through the deadly iron rattle,  
 And the red incessant sleet.

THE age is sick, believe me, and it needs  
 Rather the rugged vehemence of prose  
 Than any rapid current of the wheels,  
 And clamour of the chariot of verse.

\* Written on receiving a letter in 1871 from M. D. Conway, Esq., in which the following passage occurs:—"I have no doubt after reading these poems that imaginative literature is your fit field of work. At the same time, I am not so sure that these valuable volumes represent the truest *form* by which you can express yourself. I find that you have an inclination to nervous and strong phrases, and to criticism, which are not favourable to rhythmical expression.

. . . I cannot help thinking that such ideas and feelings as yours belong



The towers of Jericho like startled fawns  
 Shook, stuttered, and were dusty in a heap  
 Under the biting whistle of a horn ;  
 But never any tone of Orphic lyre  
 Shall have the grace and magic to upbuild  
 Upon the desolate verdure of wide plains  
 The palaces that fill the latter days,  
 The seasons held in tenure by our sons,  
 Plains overburthened and made terrible  
 With fiery turrets and disastrous gates  
 Of many a modern brazen Jericho.

First bring thy ram's horn, so the critic said,  
 With puffed-out mouth of violent emphasis  
 Unto the staring and defiant walls,  
 And wind-belaboured battlements of these—  
 Blow till the mosses shake upon the banks,  
 And fibres of the frail wall-climbing flowers  
 Divide in terror at the cutting blast,  
 But strive not to erect with gentle cheeks  
 And love-inspired labour of a flute  
 The bricks that wait to take a proper form  
 Through strong manipulation of our sons.  
 Prose for the battle!—Poetry shall crown  
 The tresses grey with windy misery,  
 And red with blood, and brown with wanton sweat  
 With which the pores of warriors do foam,  
 And black with many winters,—singed and dyed  
 With fiery summers of hot enterprise,  
 And laden with the violent storms of spring,  
 And cold shed leaves of autumn,—these shall win  
 Roses and rich redemption in the end,  
 And honeyed retribution, but not *now*.

So said he, but my angry soul, erect,  
 And biting lips of continence, replied—  
 Not so, for in the windy vales of song,  
 And by the iron sides of songful hills,  
 And iron hollow vestibules of rocks,  
 The swords and edges of keen knives are forged,  
 Whose hilts are after crowded in the hand  
 And gilded from the golden palm of Fame.

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as yet to life's battle-field. Unhappily in matters of the kind you are moved to deal with (moved overmasteringly), we are in the thick of struggle, and the clash of our arms frightens away the larks and nightingales. The time has hardly arrived when our cause may soar into song. In verse argument is trammelled. The Westminster Abbey whose passionate windows, and sweet chanting, shall lovingly express radicalism is not yet built. Are you quite sure that the ram's horn of stern prose is not better around walls that must fall, than the Orphic lyre trying to build walls on places still occupied by the Jerichos? As for Beauty, surely when we read Saadi, Carlyle, Emerson, Ruskin, etc., etc., we see that there is no degree of it that cannot be attained by patiently contrived prose."



The post for a true singer is the van,  
 And better is the cloudy canopy  
 Made thick, and as brown steam upon the lips,  
 That hangs above the battle, like the wings  
 Of a brown eaglet over fields of dead—  
 Better is this disastrous canopy  
 Than any cushioned seat beneath the dome  
 And shadowy solemn arches of a church,  
 Protected by the majesty unseen  
 And grim immediate presence of a God.

For over the wide fighting of the age,  
 The great extended shout of shattered hearts  
 And vast effulgence of the age's brain  
 That gleams divided by the surgeon's knife,  
 Dissected for the benefit and health  
 And easy recognition of the next—  
 Over this crimson battlefield there broods  
 The presence of an iron-handed God,  
 Having the hands and thews of warriors,  
 But bosom as a woman's, being white  
 And tender, and in woman's haste to save.

And here in this red battle is the post  
 The singer being faithful to his task,  
 Should grasp with tightened hands and occupy,  
 Driving from out his trumpet some faint signs  
 And tokens of the timbrels of the morn;  
 Standing by many a hundred yards before  
 His tongueless followers in the tongueless mail,  
 And catching, therefore, upon upturned face  
 That smiles to meet the soft, descending rays,  
 The kisses that the crimson dawn delivers  
 Blushing, to lover-poets one by one.

And in that this our age is troubled much  
 With smoke and divers shouts of fighting men,  
 And rattle and convulsive clash of swords,  
 And charge and black-maned interflux of steeds,  
 And press of banners; and all hearts are turned  
 Trembling to watch the open cannon-mouths,  
 Whence fly the thunders and red flakes of fire  
 That crown the terrible years that are to be,—  
 It surely doth behove the singing birds  
 To spread no timid and uncertain wings,  
 But rather, boldly shaking in the sun  
 The unviolated ardour of broad plumes,  
 To chase the treacherous and receding airs  
 With rapid aftercourse of struggling feet:



And mounting through the smoke, to hover over  
 The bloody diorama of the lists :  
 Sending the various trumpets of their songs  
 To overtop the discords of the earth  
 And introduce a storm of harmony  
 Between the iron intervals of swords,  
 That sounds may touch with honeyed vehemence  
 The steel-capped pinnacles of dancing crests,  
 And leap from peak to peak and plume to plume,  
 And saddle-bow to crimson saddle-bow—  
 Mixing throughout the blood-red foam of death  
 Sweet rainbow-bubbles of a loud delight.  
 This is the truer place, it seems to me,  
 For high-aspiring larks and nightingales,  
 Whose part is not to crouch like cowardly toads  
 Upon the damp and unenlightened ground,  
 Yellow and wet and destitute of wings ;  
 But rather to divide the laughing airs  
 With kisses and incessant fangs of feet,  
 Till every limb is white and plumes are white  
 With amorous snows deflected from the sun,  
 The burning snows of his descending rays  
 That clothe and purge and animate the tree.  
 So let not any singer falsely wait  
 Till the fair palace of the future stands  
 With golden pinnacles and dewy walls  
 Before him, and invites his keen embrace,  
 Even as the dewy lips and fervent arms  
 And fragrant waiting body of a bride.  
 But rather let him stand erect of head,  
 And diligent and temperate of heart,  
 Upon the silent and distempered sand,  
 And raise the shadowy arches of his voice  
 And mounting turrets of delicious sound,  
 Building, if nothing else be manifest,  
 His white, dream-haunted castles in the air,  
 And rosy, dream-bedizen'd pinnacles,  
 And golden gates, and towers dream-begirt,  
 Upon the thin foundations of the mist,  
 That many a corps of stalwart engineers,  
 Voiceless, but hard and venturesome of hand,  
 May, following the singer's primal plan,  
 Build of clean bricks and slates material  
 The mansions and desirable abodes  
 Whereto he laid the towels of his song.  
 And let him not despise, but hold in high  
 Esteem, the swart companions of his work,



Begrimed with sweat, and bent and worn with toil,  
 Though these bear but the ordinary tools  
 And coarse appliances of common work ;  
 Whereas the poet in his triumph wields  
 The silvery effulgence of the sword  
 Of sacred and divinely-moulded Song.

## THE PLANCHETTE MYSTERY.

By WM. FISHBOUGH.

### THIRD—THE DEVIL THEORY.

THIS theory, which appears to have many advocates, is well set forth in the following excerpts from an article published in the *Philadelphia Universe*, a Catholic organ:—

“Neither the sight of the eye, nor the touch of the hand, can discover the spring by which Planchette moves. Therefore, it is not, in its movements, a toy. It moves—undoubtedly it moves. And how? Intelligently! It answers questions of any kind put to it in any language required. It does this. This can not be done but by intelligence. Well, by what description of intelligence? It cannot be supposed that the Divine intelligence is the motive; for how can God be conceived to make such a manifestation of himself as Planchette exhibits?

“A corresponding reason cuts off the idea that it is presided over by an angelic intelligence; and it is evident to all that a human mind does not control it. There is but one more character of intelligence—that of evil spirits. Therefore Planchette is moved by the agents of hell. . . . But why should the devil connect himself with Planchette? . . . We suppose that the experienced scoundrel is ready to do anything human wickedness may ask him when souls are the price of the condescension. But his reasons for particular manifestations are of small importance here. Facts are facts, and the point is, that Planchette is not a toy, that it is moved by an intelligence, and that the intelligence that moves it is necessarily evil. We would therefore advise all who have a Planchette to build for it a special fire of pitch and brimstone. . . . No one has a right to consult the enemy of God. They who do so are in danger of becoming worshippers of the devil, and of dwelling with him for ever.”

This theory has at least the merit of being clear, definite, and easy to be understood, if it is not in all respects convincing. But here we have an exemplification of the old paradox of an irresistible force coming in contact with an immovable body. The Catholic priest tells us that Planchette is *not* a toy; that it moves by an intelligence and volition that is not human; that its moving and directing power is of the devil. The Rev. Dr. Patton in his article in the *Advance* (heretofore referred to), tells us that “It is a philanthropic toy, which may be used to bring to light hidden connections of mind and body, and to refute the assumptions of spiritism”; and the Rev. A. D. Field, in his article in the *Ladies’ Repository*, backs up Dr. Patton by saying, that it is “a mere toy,” “is no humbug,” is of “some use”;—and, concerning the *devil* theory of the general power which moves it and other physical



bodies, he says: there is "too often the spirit of gentleness to make the theory acceptable." The "immovable body" here, is the authority of the Catholic priest; the "irresistible force" is the authority of our clerical brethren representing Protestantism. To the former we say, Stand firm, and to the latter, Pound away, till the world takes warning by the follies of you both.

But this *devil* theory, if what the Bible teaches us concerning that personage is true, is encumbered with other difficulties; and the first of these is, that the devil, however wicked, is not a *fool*. If he should set a trap for human souls, he would not be so stupid as to tell them there is a trap there. When approaching human beings, he assumes, as the good book tells us, the garb of an angel of light; but it is not likely that he would ever say he is the devil, as Planchette sometimes does—at least until he felt quite sure of his prey. And again, when, in a case slightly parallel with cases sometimes involved in the question in hand, the captious Pharisees accused the Saviour of men of casting out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils, he reminded them that a house or a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. Now Planchette, I admit, is not always a saint—in fact she sometimes talks and acts very naughtily as well as foolishly; yet at other times, when a better *spirit* takes possession of her, she is gentle, loving, well disposed, and does certainly give most excellent advice—advice which could not be heeded without detriment to the devil's kingdom, and which, if universally followed, would work its overthrow entirely. It is inconceivable that Satan would thus tear down with one hand what he builds up with another.

#### THEORY OF A FLOATING, AMBIENT MENTALITY.

It is supposed by those who hold this theory, or rather hypothesis, that the assumed floating, ambient mentality is an aggregate emanation from the minds of those present in the circle; that this mentality is clothed, by some mysterious process, with a force analogous to what it possesses in the living organism, by which force it is enabled, under certain conditions, to move physical bodies and write or otherwise express its thoughts; and that in its expression of the combined intelligence of the circle, it generally follows the strongest mind, or the mind that is otherwise best qualified or conditioned to give current to the thought. Although the writer of the interesting article, entitled, "*Planchette in a New Character*," in *Putnam's Monthly* for December, disclaims, at the commencement of his lucubration, all theories on the subject, yet, after collating his facts, he shows a decided leaning to the foregoing theory as the nearest approach to a satisfactory explanation. "Floating, combined intelligence brought to bear upon an inanimate object," "active intellectual principle afloat in the circum-ambient air," are the expressions he uses as probably affording some light on the subject. This is a thought on which, as concerns its main features, many others have rested, not only in this country, but in Europe.



The first difficulty that stands in the way of this hypothesis is that it supposes a thing which, if true, is quite as mysterious and inexplicable as the mystery which it purports to explain. How is it that an "intellectual principle" can detach itself from an intellectual being, of whose personality it formed the chief ingredient, and become an outside, objective, "floating" and "circumambient" entity, with a capability of thinking, willing, acting, and expressing thought, in which the original possessor of the emanated principle often has no conscious participation? And after you have told us this, then tell us how the "intellectual principle," not only of *one*, but of *several* persons can emanate from them, become "floating" and "ambient," and then, losing separate identity, *conjoin* and form *one* active communicating agent with the powers aforesaid? And after you have removed from these *mere assumptions* the aspect of physical and moral impossibility, you will have another task to perform, and that is to show us how this emanated, "combined," "floating," "circumambient" intelligence can sometimes assume an individual and seemingly *personal* character of its own, totally distinct from, and, in some features, even *antagonistic* to, all the characters in the circle in which the "emanation" is supposed to have its origin?

It is not denied now that the answers and communications of Planchette (and of the influence acting through other channels) often do exhibit a controlling influence of the mind of the medium or of other persons in the circle. But no theory should ever be considered as explaining a mystery unless it covers the *whole ground* of that mystery. Even, therefore, should we consider the theory of the "floating intelligence" of the circle reproducing itself in expression, as explaining that part of the phenomenon which identifies itself with the minds of the circle (which it does not), what shall be said of those cases in which the phenomena exhibit characteristics which cannot possibly have been derived from the minds of the circle?

That phenomena of the latter class are sometimes exhibited is not only proved by many other facts that might be cited, but is clearly exemplified by this same writer in *Putnam's Magazine*. The intelligence whose performances and communications he relates seems to stand out with a character and individuality as strongly marked and as distinct from any and all in the circle as any one of them was distinct from another. This individuality was first shown by giving its own pet names to the different persons composing the circle—"Flirt," "Clarkey," "Hon. Clarke," "The Angel," and "Sassiness." The young lady designated by the last *sobriquet*, after it had been several times repeated, petitioned to be indicated thereafter "only by the initial 'S,'" which the impertinent scribbler accorded only so far as omitting all the letters except the five S's, so that she was afterwards recognised as "S.S.S.S.S."

The writer further says:—

"It is always respectful to 'Hon. Clarke,' and when pressed to state



what it thought of him, answered that he was 'a good skipper,' a reputation fairly earned by his capacity for managing a fleet of small boats. But we were not contented with so vague an answer, and our urgent demand for an analysis of his character, produced the reply:—'A native crab apple, but spicy and sweet when ripe.' . . . When asked to go on, it wrote:—'Ask me Hon. Clarke's character again, and I will flee to the realms of imperishable woe; or, as Tabitha is here, say I'll pull your nose,' and on being taunted with its incapacity to fulfil the threat, it wrote:—'Metaphorically speaking, of course.' Not satisfied with this rebuff, on another occasion the subject was again pursued, and the answer elicited as follows:—'Yes, but you can't fool me. I said nay once, and when I says nay I means nay.' [A mind of *its own*, then.] More than once it has lapsed into the same misuse of the verb, as: 'I not only believes it, but I knows it;' and again: 'You asks and I answers, because I am here.' . . .

"Again, on being remonstrated with for illiteracy, it defended itself by saying:—'I always was a bad speler' (*sic*); an orthographical blunder that no one in the room was capable of making. But, on the whole, our Planchette is a scientific and cultivated intelligence, of more than average order, though it may be, at times, slightly inaccurate in orthography, and occasionally quote incorrectly; I must even confess that there are moments when its usual elegance of diction lapses into slang terms and abrupt contradictions. But, after all, though we flatter ourselves that as a family we contain rather more than ordinary intelligence, still it is more than a match for us."

Who can fail to perceive, from these quotations and admissions, the marked and distinctive *individuality* of the intelligence that was here manifested, as being of itself totally fatal to the idea of derivation from the circle?

But not *only* was this intelligence *distinctive*, but in several instances even *antagonistic* to that existing in the circle, as in the case reported as follows:—

"Some one desiring to pose this ready writer, asked for its theory of the Gulf Stream; which it announced without hesitation to be 'Turmoil in the water, produced by conglomeration of icebergs.' Objection was made that the warmth of the waters of the natural phenomenon rather contradicted this original view of the subject; to which Planchette tritely responded:—'Friction produces heat.' 'But how does friction produce heat in this case?' pursued the questioner. 'Light a match,' was the insequent answer—Planchette evidently believing that the pupil was ignorant of first principles. 'But the Gulf Stream flows north; how, then, can the icebergs accumulate at its source?' was the next interrogation; which elicited the contemptuous reply:—'There is as much ice and snow at the south pole, as at the north, ignorant Clarke.' 'But it flows from the Gulf of Mexico?' pursued the undismayed. 'You've got me there, unless it flows underground,' was the cool and unexpected retort; and it wound up by declaring, sensibly, that, after all, 'it is a meeting of the north and south Atlantic currents, which collide, and the eddie (*sic*) runs northward.' [At another time,] on being twice interrogated in regard to a subject, it replied tartly:—'I hate to be asked if I am sure of a fact.'"

Now, what could have been this intelligence which thus insisted upon preserving and asserting its individuality so distinctly as to forbid all reasonable hypothesis of a compound derivation from the minds of the circle, even were such a thing possible? A fairy, perhaps, snugly cuddled up under the board so as to elude obser-



vation. Friend "Clarkey," try again, for surely *this* time you are a little befogged, or else the present writer is *more* so.

"TO DAIMONION" (THE DEMON).

There was published, several years ago, by Gould & Lincoln, Boston, a little work, entitled—"TO DAIMONION, OR THE SPIRITUAL MEDIUM. *Its nature illustrated by the history of its uniform mysterious manifestations when unduly excited.* By TRAVERSE OLDFIELD." This author deals largely in quotations from ancient writers in illustration of his subject; and as an attempt to explain the mysteries of clairvoyance, trance, second sight, "spirit knockings," intelligent movements of physical bodies without hands, etc., his work has claims to our attention which do not usually pertain to the class of works to which it belongs. "*To Daimonion*" (the demon), or the "spiritual medium," he supposes to be the *spiritus mundi*, or the spirit of the universe, which formed so large an element in the cosmological theories of many ancient philosophers; and this, "when unduly excited" (whatever that may mean), he supposes to be the medium, not only of many psychic and apparently preternatural phenomena described in the writings of all previous ages, but also of the similar phenomena of modern times, of which it is now admitted that Planchettism is only one of the more recently developed phases. For some reason, which seemed satisfactory to him, but which we fear he has not made clear or convincing to the mass of his readers, this writer assumes it as more than probable that this *spiritus mundi*—a living essence which surrounds and pervades the world, and even the whole universe—is identical with the "nervous principle" which connects the soul with the body,—in all this unconsciously re-affirming nearly the exact theory first propounded by Mesmer, in explanation of the phenomena of "animal magnetism," so called. Quotations are given from Herodotus, Xenophon, Cicero, Pliny, Galen, and many others, referring to phenomena well known in the times in which these several writers lived, and which he supposes can be explained only on the general hypothesis here set forth; and in the same category of marvels, to be explained in the same way, he places the performances of the snake-charmers, clairvoyants, thought-readers, etc., of modern Egypt and India.

This *spiritus mundi*, or "nervous principle," to which he supposes the ancients referred when they spoke of "the demon," is, according to his theory, the medium, or menstruum, by which, under certain conditions of "excitement," the thoughts and potencies of one mind, with its affections, emotions, volitions, etc., flow into another, giving rise to reflex expressions, which to persons ignorant of this principle, have seemed possible only as the utterances of outside and supermundane intelligences. And as this same *spiritus mundi*, or demon, pervades and connects the mind equally with all physical bodies, in certain other states of "excitement" it moves those physical bodies, or makes sounds upon them, expressing intelligence—that intelligence always being a reflex of the mind of



the person who, consciously or unconsciously, served as the exciting agent.

Whatever elements of truth this theory, in a *different* mode of application, might be found to possess, in the form in which it is here presented it is encumbered by two or three difficulties which altogether seem fatal. In the first place, it wears upon its face the appearance of a thing "fixed up" to meet an emergency, and which would never have been thought of except by a mind pressed almost to a state of desperation by the want of a theory to account for a class of facts. Look at it: "The spirit of the world identical with the nervous principle!"—the same, "when unduly *excited*," the medium by which a mind may *unconsciously* move other minds and organisms, or even dead matter, in the expression of its own thoughts! Where is the shadow of proof? Is it anything more than the sheerest assumption?

Then, again: even if this mere assumption were admitted for truth, it would not account for that large class of facts referred to in the course of our remarks on the "Electrical theory," unless this *spiritus mundi*, demon, nervous principle, or spiritual medium, is made at once not only the "medium," but the intelligent and designing *source* of the communication; for, as we have said before, it would be perfectly useless to deny that thoughts are sometimes communicated through the Planchette and similar channels, which positively never had any existence in the minds of any of the persons visibly present.

And, then, too, in relation to the nature of the demon, or demons: the theory of the ancients, from whose representative minds this writer has quoted, was notoriously quite different from that which he has given. The ancients recognised good demons and evil demons. The demon of Socrates was regarded by him as an invisible, individual intelligence. A legion of demons were in one instance cast out by Christ from the body of a man whom they had infested; we can hardly suppose that these were simply a legion of "nervous principles" or "souls of the world." What those demons were really understood to be in those days, may be learned from a passage in the address of Titus to his army, when encamped before Jerusalem, in which, in order to remove from their minds the fear of death in battle, he says:—

"For what man of virtue is there who does not know that those souls which are severed from their fleshy bodies in battles by the sword, are received by the ether, that purest of elements, and joined to that company which are placed among the stars; that they become *good demons* and propitious heroes, and show themselves as such to their posterity afterward?"—*Josephus, Wars of the Jews, B. VI., chap. 1, sec. 5.*

Hesiod and many others might be quoted to the same purpose; but let this suffice as to the character and origin of these demons; and it may suffice also for the theory of *To Daimonion*, as to the particular mystery here to be explained.



## IT IS SOME PRINCIPLE OF NATURE AS YET UNKNOWN.

If there is any wisdom in this theory, it is so profound that we "don't see it." It looks very much to us as though this amounted only to the saying that "all we know about the mystery is, that it is *unknown*; all the explanation that we can give of it is, that it is inexplicable; and that the only theory of it is, that it has no theory." Thus it leaves the matter just where it was before, and we should not have deemed this saying worthy of the slightest notice had we not heard and read so much grave discussion on the subject, criticising almost every other theory, and then concluding with the complacent announcement of the writer's or speaker's theory as superior to all others, that "*it is some principle or force of nature as yet unknown.*"

## THEORY OF THE AGENCY OF DEPARTED SPIRITS.

After having exhausted apparently all possible anti-spirit theories, and shown them to be utterly inadequate to explain a tithe of the phenomena we are seeking to solve, *this* seems to be our only remaining hope. If *this* should fail, then, truly, we must be introduced into an entirely new world of physical and intellectual causes, or be left in hopeless darkness.

Among the strong points in favour of this theory, the first and most conspicuous one is, that it accords with what this mysterious intelligence, in all its numerous forms of manifestation, has steadily, against all opposition, persisted in claiming *for itself*, from its first appearance, over twenty-five years ago, till this day. And singularly enough, it appears as a fact which, perhaps, should be stated as a portion of the history of these phenomena, that years before public attention and investigation were challenged by the first physical manifestation that claimed a spiritual origin, an approaching and general revisitation of departed human spirits was, in several instances, the burden of *remarkable predictions*. I have in my possession a little book, or bound pamphlet, entitled, "A Return of Departed Spirits," and bearing the imprint, "Philadelphia: Published by J. R. Colon, 203½ Chesnut Street, 1843," in which is contained an account of strange phenomena which occurred among the Shakers at New Lebanon, N.Y., during the early part of that year. In the language of the author: "Disembodied spirits began to take possession of the bodies of the brethren and sisters; and thus, by using them as instruments, made themselves known by speaking through the individuals whom they had got into." The writer then goes on to describe what purported to be the visitations of hundreds in that way, from different nations and tribes that had lived on earth in different ages—the consistency of the phenomena being maintained throughout. I have conversed with leading men among the Shakers of the United States concerning this affair, and they tell me that the visitation was not confined to New Lebanon, but extended, more or less, to all the Shaker communities in the United States—not spreading from one



to another, but appearing nearly simultaneously in all. They also tell me that the phenomena ceased about as suddenly as they appeared; and that when the brethren were assembled, by previous appointment, to take leave of their spirit-guests, they were exhorted by the latter to treasure up these things in their hearts; to say nothing about them to the world's people, but to wait patiently, and soon they (the spirits) would return, and make their presence known to the world generally.

During the interval between the autumn of 1845 and the spring of 1847, a book, wonderful for its inculcations both of truth and error, was dictated in the mesmeric state by an uneducated boy—A. J. Davis—in which the following similar prediction occurs:

“It is a truth that spirits commune with one another while one is in the body and the other in the higher spheres—and this, too, when the person in the body is unconscious of the influx, and hence cannot be convinced of the fact; and this truth will ere long present itself in the form of a living demonstration. And the world will hail with delight the ushering in of that era when the interiors of men will be opened, and the spiritual communion will be established, such as is now being enjoyed by the inhabitants of Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn.”—*Nat. Div. Rev.* pp. 675, 676.

Eight months after the book containing this passage was published, and more than a year after the words here quoted were dictated and written, strange rapping sounds were heard in an obscure family in an obscure village in the western part of New York. On investigation, those sounds were found to be connected with intelligence, which, rapping at certain letters of the alphabet as it was called over, spelled sentences, and claimed to be a *spirit*. The phenomena increased, assumed many other forms, extended to other mediums, and rapidly spread, not only over all this country, but over the civilised world. And wherever this intelligence has been interrogated under conditions which *itself* prescribes for proper answers, its great leading and persistent response to the question, “What are you?” has been, “*We are spirits!*” Candour also compels us to admit that this claim has been perseveringly maintained against the combined opposition of the great mass of intelligent and scientific minds to whom the world has looked for its guidance; and so successfully has it been maintained, that its converts are now numbered by millions, gathered, not from the ranks of the ignorant and superstitious, but consisting mostly of the intelligent and thinking middle classes, and of many persons occupying the highest positions in civil and social life.

At first its opponents met it with expressions of utter contempt and cries of “humbug.” Many ingenious and scientific persons volunteered their efforts to expose the “trick”; and if they seemed, in some instances, to meet with momentary success in solving the mystery, the next day would bring with it some *new* form of the phenomenon to which none of their theories would apply. Being finally discouraged by repeated failures to explain the hidden cause of these wonders, they withdrew from the field, and for many years allowed the matter to go by default until the introduction into this



country of the little instrument called "the Planchette"—an instrument which, to our certain knowledge, was used at least fifteen years ago in France, and that, too, as a supposed means of communicating with departed spirits.

This little board has been welcomed as a "toy" or a "game" into thousands of families, without suspicion of its having the remotest connection with so-called "Spiritualism." The cry has been raised,

"Quidquid id est, timeo Danaos et dona ferentes,

but too late! The Trojan walls are everywhere down; the wooden horse is already dragged into the city with all the armed heroes concealed in its bowels; the battle has commenced, and must be fought out to the bitter end, as best it may; and in the numerous magazine and newspaper articles that have appeared on the subject, we have probably only the beginning of a clash of arms which must terminate one way or another.

Should our grave and learned philosophers find themselves overcome by this little three-legged spider, it will be mortifying; but in order to avoid that result, we fear they will have to do better than they have done thus far.

Having thus exhibited these several theories, and, to an extent, discussed them *pro et contra*, it is but fair that we should now ask Planchette—using the name in a liberal sense—what is *her* theory of the whole matter? Perhaps it may be said that after raising this world of curiosity and doubt in the public mind as to its own origin and true nature, we have some semblance of a right to hold this mysterious intelligence responsible for a solution of the difficulty it has created; and perhaps if we are a little skilful in putting our questions, and occasionally call in the aid of Planchette's brothers and sisters, and other members of this mysterious family, we may obtain some satisfactory results.

#### PLANCHETTE'S OWN THEORY.

Planchette is intelligent; she can answer questions, and often answer them correctly, too. On what class of subjects, then, might she be expected to give answers more generally correct than those which relate to herself, especially if the questions be asked in a proper spirit, and under such conditions as are claimed to be requisite for correct responses? Following the suggestion of this thought, the original plan of this essay has been somewhat modified, and a careful consultation instituted, of which I here submit the results:—

*Inquirer.* Planchette, excuse me if I now treat you as one on whom a little responsibility is supposed to rest. An exciter of curiosity, if as intelligent as you appear to be, should be able to satisfy curiosity; and a creator of doubts may be presumed to have some ability to solve doubts. May I not, then, expect from *you* a solution of the mysteries which have thus far enveloped you?

*Planchette.* That will depend much upon the spirit in which you



may interrogate me, the pertinence of your questions, and your capacity to interpret the answers. If you propose a serious and careful consultation for really useful purposes, there is another thing which you should understand in the commencement. It is that, owing to conditions and laws which may yet be explained to you, I shall be compelled to use your own mind as a scaffolding, so to speak, on which to stand to pass you down the truths you may seek, and which are above the reach of your own mind alone. Keep your mind unperturbed, then, as well as intent upon your object, or I can do but little for you.

*I.* The question which stands as basic to all others which I wish to ask is, What is the nature of this power, intelligence, and will, that communicates with us in this mysterious manner?

*P.* It is the reduplication of your own mental state; it is a spirit; it is the whole spiritual world; it is God—one or all, according to your condition and the form and aspect in which you are able to receive the communication.

*I.* That is covering rather too much ground for a beginning. For definiteness, suppose we take one of those points at a time. In saying, "It is a spirit," do you mean that you yourself, the immediate communicating agent, are an intelligence outside of, and separate from, myself, and that that intelligence is the spirit or soul of a man who once occupied a physical body, as I now do?

*P.* That is what I assert—only in re-affirmation of what the world, in explanation of similar phenomena, has been told a thousand times before.

*I.* Excuse me if I should question you a little closely on this point. There are grave difficulties in the way of an acceptance of this theory. The first of these is the *prima facie* absurdity of the idea.

*P.* Absurdity! How so?

*I.* It is so contrary to our ordinary course of thought; contrary, I may say, to our instincts; contrary to the general experience of the world up to this time. In fact, the more highly educated minds of the world have long agreed in classing the idea as among the grossest of superstitions.

*P.* If you would, in place of each one of these assertions, affirm directly the contrary, you would come much nearer the truth. It is certain that the highest minds, as well as the lowest, of all ages and nations, with only such exceptions as prove rather than disprove the rule, have confidently believed in the occasional interposition of spirits in mundane affairs. True, there are in this age many of the class which you call the "more highly educated minds," who, spoiled by reasonings merely sensual, and hence necessarily sophistical, do not admit such an idea; but do not even these generally admit that there is an invisible world of spirits?

*I.* Most of them do; all professing Christians do. I do, certainly.

*P.* Let me test their consistency, and yours, then, by asking, Do they and you hold that one and the same God made all worlds, both natural and spiritual, and all things in them?



*I.* Of course they do; how otherwise?

*P.* Then, seeing that you acknowledge the unity of the Cause of all worlds and all things in them, you must acknowledge a certain union of all these in one universal system as the offspring of that one Cause, must you not?

*I.* Yes; I suppose the totality of things, natural and spiritual, must be acknowledged as forming, in some sense, one united system, of diverse but mutually correlated parts.

*P.* Please tell me, then, how there can be any united system in which the component parts, divisions, and subdivisions, down even to the most minute, are not each, necessarily and always, in communication with all the others, either immediately or mediately?

*I.* I see the point, and acknowledge it is ingeniously made; but do you not see that the argument fails to meet the whole difficulty?

*P.* What I do see is, that in admitting a connection of any kind, whether mediate or immediate, between the natural and spiritual worlds, you admit that a communication between the two worlds—hence between all things of one and all things of the other; hence between the intelligent inhabitants of one and those of the other—is logically not only possible but probable, not to say certain; and in this admission you yield the point under immediate discussion, and virtually concede that the idea of spirit-communication is not only *not absurd*, but is, indeed, among the most reasonable of things, to which ignorance and materialistic prejudice alone have given the aspect of absurdity.

*I.* Well, there is something in that which looks like argument, I must admit.

*P.* Can you not go a little further and admit for established fact, proved by the testimony of the Book from which you derive your religious faith, that communications between spirits and mortals have sometimes taken place?

*I.* True, but the Bible calls the spirits thus communicating “familiar spirits,” and those who have dealings with them, “witches” and “wizards,” and forbids the practice under severe penalties. How does that sound to you, my ingenious friend?

*P.* The way you put it, it sounds as though you did not quite understand the full scope of my question; but no matter, since it is at once a proof and an acknowledgment on your part that spirits have communicated with mortals—the essential point in dispute, which, when once admitted, will render further reasonings more plain. Let me ask you, however, was not the practice of consulting familiar spirits that is forbidden in the Bible, a practice that was common among the heathen nations of those times?

*I.* It was, and is spoken of as such in several passages.

*P.* Did not the heathens consult familiar spirits as petty divinities, or gods, and, as such, follow their sayings and commands implicitly? and would not the Israelites to whom the Old Testament was addressed have violated the first command in the



decatalogue by adopting this practice? and was not that the reason, and the only reason, why the practice was forbidden?

*I.* To each of those questions I answer, Yes, certainly.

*P.* Do the Old or New Testament writings anywhere command us to abstain from *all* intercourse with spirits?—or from any intercourse which would not be a violation of the command, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me?”

*I.* Really I do not know that the Bible contains any such command.

*P.* Do you not know, on the contrary, that spirits other than those called “familiar spirits” often did communicate, and with apparently good and legitimate purposes, too, with men whose names are mentioned in the Bible?

*I.* Well, I must in candour say that there were some cases of that kind.

*P.* May you not, then, from all this learn a rule which will always be a safe guide to you in respect to the matters under discussion? I submit for your consideration, that that rule is, “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” But even if the “strangers” that may come to you, either of your own world or the spirit-world, should prove to be “angels,” do not follow them implicitly, or in an unreasoning manner, nor worship them as gods, for in so doing you would render yourself amenable to the law against having dealings with “familiar spirits.”

*I.* I must admit that your remarks throw a somewhat new light on the subject, and I do not know that I can dispute what you say. But even admitting all your strong points thus far, the spirit-theory of Planchettism and other and kindred modern wonders remains encumbered with a mass of difficulties which it seems to me must be removed before it can be considered as having much claim to the credence of good and rational minds. On some of these points I propose now to question you somewhat closely, and shall hope that you will bear with me in the same patience and candour which you have thus far manifested.

*P.* Ask your questions, and I shall answer them to the best of my ability.

*(To be continued.)*

## MR. SWINBURNE AND THE “FLESHLY FEVER.”

At the close of last century there appeared another coterie, formed of a number of ladies and gentlemen in the purlies of society, who mutually admired each other in strains of amorous insipidity, under the names of “Della Crusca,” “Laura Maria,” “Anna Matilda,” until they were all very effectually annihilated by the “Baviad and Mæviad.” These people sought to obtain notice and produce pleasure by such alliterative phrases as “dauntless day,” “lettered lightnings,” “delicious dilatings,” blissful blessings,”



"rich reasonings," "vicious venalities," "sublunary suns," "dewy vapours damp that sweep the silent swamp." And now we have another visitation of the alliterative epidemic in the coterie of Mr. Swinburne and his followers. Once more it is supposed to be fine to write of "divine death," "fleshly fever," or of "all the fear and ardour which feels and fights against the advent of Love's difference and the dawn of his division; the wood of desolation made beautiful and bitter by the same remembrance, haunted by shadows of the same hours for sorrow and for solace." It appears to us that those who admire this kind of writing—and we see by the advertisement of Mr. Swinburne's book that it has enthusiastic admirers—would have probably joined with the "précieuses ridicules" in admiring the poetry and criticism of Mascarille. Many of the conditions of modern society, its impatience of tradition, its love of change, above all its vastness, conspire to give the coterie an influence that it never enjoyed before. Public opinion doubts; the coterie believes; where the general sense seems to waver, the coterie decides, always with confidence, often with ability; frequently, therefore, the coterie obtains the success which is the reward of faith and audacity. All this makes it the more necessary to remind the adherents of the school of modern affectation that their success is not absolute; that their art, like all other art, good or bad, "must conform to the taste, not the taste to the art." The durability of their art will depend on the permanence of the taste. There are passions which are universal and lasting: it is to these that Homer, Milton, and Shakespeare addressed themselves. There are others which are merely local and transitory: to satisfy these is the object of the coterie. Mr. Swinburne has discovered a secret of metrical language, which has pleased the ear and stimulated the taste of an inquisitive and fastidious society. This secret he has tested and explored; he has worked his mine with a scientific precision, till it has yielded him all the wealth which we think it contains. So far he is entitled to the credit due to an original inventor. But when he comes forward as a critic, and claims on behalf of himself or of his friends, who have made similar mechanical discoveries, that their inventions are based on the absolute and immutable laws of art, it is time to point out that he is reckoning without two important conditions—time and change. So long as men think that he is telling them something new, they will listen to him, but when they perceive that he is merely ringing the changes on a technical trick, it wants no spirit of prophecy to perceive that they will leave him, either for some more substantial entertainment, or for some more stimulating, if equally ephemeral, "sensation." Every coterie is the product of *ennui*, and by *ennui*, in default of any better purge, it will be destroyed.—"Mr. Swinburne's Essays" in the *Quarterly Review*.



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