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RESEARCHES IN SPIRITUALISM DURING THE YEARS 1872-3:

TOGETHER WITH A DISCUSSION OF THEORIES ADVANCED IN
EXPLANATION OF THE PHENOMENA. BY M. A. (OXON).

INTRODUCTION.

SPIRITUALISM—the belief in the intervention of unseen intelligences in the affairs of men—is non ew thing upon the earth. It is ingrained in human nature, and permeates the history of the most remote ages. India, the cradle of races and the mother of religions, had its Gynosophists and its spiritual manifestations ages before any Western records tell of a Divine revelation. Egypt impressed on the Hebrew seer, “learned in all the wisdom” of her priesthood, a belief in the phenomena of Spiritualism, and the power of unseen intelligences to influence mankind. China, whose sacred records are lost in the vista of the far-distant ages, has always maintained a belief in the perpetual existence of the soul after its separation from the body, and of the power of the departed to minister among men. As India had her Chrishna, China had her Confucius, each maintaining intercourse with the world of spirits. Nor was Persia without the same belief. Zoroaster was but the forerunner of the Magi or Media who, by trance and vision and angelic ministration, received communications from the spheres. And when we come to the records of Hebrew seers and prophets, which are preserved in the Bible, we find abundant evidence that the self-same phenomena which we now associate with Spiritualism were of constant occurrence amongst the Jewish people. There is little doubt, indeed, that as India influenced Egypt, so the Jewish Lawgiver drew his Inspiration from the land where he had been brought up, and from the Priests who trained him in their mystic lore. There is no need

to note the evidences of spirit interference that fill the pages of the Bible: the angels who came on their divine errands to Abraham and Jacob, to Moses and Elijah; the spirits who spoke to the Seers and Prophets Daniel and Ezekiel; the portents that attended the life and death of Jesus; the "signs following," which are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles; or the miracles, so-called, which bristle throughout the history of the ages immediately following the death of the founder of Christianity. These have been detailed at length by those who have devoted attention to the subject: by Howitt, in his "History of the Supernatural;" and by Peebles, in his "Seers of the Ages." I do but refer to the undoubted fact that no age has been without witness to the truth of Spirit-Ministry, in order that I may not seem to ignore the witness of the past. It is a common question with those who are ignorant of ancient history, or who prefer to ignore as legends and myths its teachings and testimony on this subject—"What is this new thing? this strange superstition? No one ever heard anything about it until somebody in America hit upon a new idea to gull credulous people. What is it all about?" And yet these same people will accept all the miracles of the Bible, all the marvellous stories of mediæval history, without seeming to recognise the fact that all point to the same thing—the intervention of disembodied intelligence in mundane affairs, through certain exceptionally organised or gifted persons, whether Egyptian Priest, or Hebrew Seer, or Delphic Priestess, or Roman Sybil, or Mediæval Mystic, or Modern Medium. Lao-tse, in China; Zoroaster, in Persia; Moses and Ezekiel, among the Hebrews; Socrates, among the Greeks; Plotinus and Algazzali, what did they all, but live in communion with unseen intelligencies, who inspired and taught them such measure of truth as they were able to receive? It is only the blindness of wilful or perverse ignorance that can deny the truth that Spiritualism is as old as humanity, and that, if it has ever ceased from among men, it is because man has degenerated, and become so earthy and material that spiritual influence has been unable to come near him. As soon as the spiritual part of his nature has asserted its sway again, spirit influence has been manifested, and he has vindicated his privilege of communion with the spheres.

"The thing that has been is the thing that shall be." What the seers and sages of old believed and practised is going on in our midst to-day. Modern Spiritualism dates from the Rochester knockings, some five-and-twenty years ago, and since that time has developed phenomenally in a remarkable manner. It is no part of my intention to write a history of the movement. My humbler aim is to record such phases of it as have come under my own personal observation, and to contribute my mite to the

evidence from which a future history may be compiled. I have had opportunities, in some respects singular, for observation. Most of the phenomena which have been evoked in this country have at different times come under my notice, and have been recorded by me, at the time, as carefully and accurately as has been possible. A long series of records, and a mass of communications extending uninterruptedly over the past two years, give me materials more ample than I can use. And if the time during which I have had personal experience of Spiritualism be short, at any rate that experience has been amply diversified, and the last two years occupy a very important space in the history of the subject.

It is curious to read the earliest published records of spiritual phenomena, in the *Yorkshire Spiritual Telegraph*, in the light of present experience. What were then called Spirit-power circles, obtained the usual phenomena of rappings, tiltings of tables, clairvoyance, and the like. The communications made seem generally to have been of what we should now think a frivolous character, and no great result was obtained. The movement was essentially progressive: starting from the smallest germ, it had developed so far that on May 5, 1857, it was sufficiently important to claim the attention of the *Times* newspaper. The *Thunderer* took up the subject as it did last Christmas. Practical then as now, the *Times* could not see the use of this new force (as it described it), unless it would condescend to render some service to mankind. What could it do? Of what practical use was it? Would it grind the editor's morning coffee, or fetch his hat from the peg? If not, it was but a poor useless thing and even if its existence were proven, it was of no practical utility. Clairvoyance was summed up and dismissed in a doggerel couplet—

Clairvoyance means the art of seeing thro'
Those who're not sharp enough to see thro' you.

And the ever-practical downright *Times* throws away the past, and comes to the point. "Never mind about fifty years ago. Tell us what the funds will be at this day three months—who is going to win the Derby? Let us have something definite." All this is not very unlike the article of Christmas 1872 in the same paper. The subject so ignominiously dismissed, had contumaciously refused to die. More, it had dared to expand, and to force itself again on public notice. So the *Times* chartered a Commissioner, and attacked the subject again. The learned man came, saw, and reported. His report, though not excessively complimentary, was fair, so far as it went, and admitted so much that the leading organ of opinion was frightened. For twelve months the article was in type before the Editor summoned

courage to print it; and when at last it was sufficiently toned down, one fine morning in the season sacred to ghosts and fairy-tales, it saw the light. A few letters, more or less silly, were printed, more as a peg on which to hang a smashing leader than for any other purpose. And then came an article apologising to the *sensible* section of its readers for noticing such a subject, and the Commissioner was thrown over, and Spiritualism once more dismissed. Seventeen years had passed without making much effect on the best exponent of public opinion in England. It is but fair to say that as a gauge of educated opinion the *Times* has no rival; and yet all that had transpired during these seventeen years had almost no effect on public belief as so represented. Yet what strides in development had been made! But just as the people who read the *Times* and *Telegraph* know nothing of the progress of scientific experiment in the laboratory until the knowledge so gained eventuates in a new practical invention, so it is with Spiritualism. Until psychic force will grind the Editor's coffee, or fetch his slippers for him, or, perchance, put him in the way of a good thing on the next Derby, the *Times* will continue to tell its readers that Spiritualism is all stuff and nonsense.

Following in the wake of the *Times* the smaller fry have had their say. The *Daily Telegraph* has imperilled the "largest circulation in the world," by printing two very good articles on Spirit Faces and Spirit Forms, as seen in the presence of Miss Florence Cook. The *Daily News* and *Morning Post* are said to have on their respective staffs gentlemen who are posted in ghosts, though they have not yet ventured to print any of their visions. *Public Opinion* devoted a considerable portion of space, week after week, to a very vapid discussion, in which the argument was all on one side, and the theory all on the other. But alas! for the freedom of opinion, it was compelled to close its columns lest the combat should terminate in an appeal to a force better known than the one under discussion. The *Broad Churchman* started gallantly, as the two specialties, Ghosts and Woman's Suffrage. It died young, but whether the ghosts or the women stifled it, I do not know; I suspect the women, however. The *New Quarterly* celebrated its advent by an appalling article on Spiritualism. The writer detailed with creepy minuteness a séance held at his own house, during which, phenomena the most rare were displayed, one after another. Levitation of the table, and of one of the party, culminating at last in a full-length spirit-form, made up a splendid séance. But the writer soon damped spiritualistic enthusiasm, by explaining that he had fitted up a steel bar in the room below, with windlass and paraphernalia, which must have weighed about a ton. By that means the table

was raised. In a room above he had placed another windlass, and by means of a stout rope, had hauled up into the air one of his unfortunate friends, who had consented to be operated on "for this time only." Not content with this display of mechanical ingenuity, this martyr to science had further devoted a side-room to an elaborate optical apparatus, had broken a hole through the wall, and so had developed a Polytechnic Ghost. "There is the whole secret! Very simple when you know how it's done. That is the way in which Spiritualistic phenomena are produced in the thousands of private houses in which they regularly occur. The owner breaks through his walls, floor, and ceiling, invests a hundred or two of pounds in a little apparatus, gets an accomplice, and invites his confiding friends to come and see a ghost. It's all very simple." The editor was sapient enough to print this tenth-rate twaddle. Either he was befooled by some joker, who made him the victim of a silly hoax, or he got up a bogus article on a popular subject. Certain it is, that a challenge to the writer to produce the same results again, was unanswered. He might have earned £1000 so cheaply, and have recouped himself for his time, trouble, and outlay. But no, he maintained a wise silence, and the editor has taken refuge in "superior" remarks about tricks and exposure, and such like nonsense. He writes, he says, for educated people, and having once proved that such manifestations can be counterfeited, he has no more to say. One would like to know what is his idea of proof, and to see a sample of the educated people who are content to swallow such an article as that which he has not expressed shame for printing.

Another exponent of Spiritualism has come forth in the person of Lord Amberley. In an unlucky hour for his reputation, he persuaded the editor of the *Fortnightly* to print an article, in which he detailed his experiences of spiritualistic phenomena. Oppressed with the cares of State, and labouring under the weight of accumulated calls upon his time, Lord Amberley has not been able to devote more than a few hours to a subject so simple as Spiritualism. Nevertheless, such is his clear-sighted penetration, he has mastered it completely, and is prepared to expose the whole thing. An intellect naturally acute, sharpened by senatorial training, has enabled this eminent young nobleman to see further into a millstone than most men can. Indeed, he is so clear-sighted that he sees not only through modern Spiritualism, but through all ancient superstitions, Christian and otherwise. They are all tarred with the same brush; and he is good enough to set a bewildered world right. "In the name of the prophet—Figs." It is melancholy that a periodical so ably edited as the *Fortnightly* is should condescend to print such an article, merely because it is signed by a titled name. It is hard,

at anyrate, to believe that it would have ever seen the light but for that reason; and having seen the light, it will do no sort of harm to anybody or anything but its author and publisher.

Far other in point of modesty and merit are the articles printed by Mr. Crookes, F.R.S., in the *Quarterly Journal of Science*, and by Mr. Dunphy in *London Society*. Mr. Crookes has found time, in the midst of a busy scientific life, to devote time to a long and laborious investigation as to the physical phenomena of Spiritualism. He has investigated the facts with the same patient care that he has devoted to the elucidation of the phenomena of chemistry, with which his name is associated. His patient research and powerful testimony, printed in the pages of a journal devoted to exact science, form a curious contrast to the flippant folly of sciolists, who scribble theories evolved from their own pre-conceived notions. He deals with attested facts—and with facts as carefully tested and registered as are the observations of Professor Tyndal himself. The *Quarterly Journal of Science* for July 1870, July and October 1871, and January 1874, contain an able and lucid record of rigidly scientific experiments, resulting in absolute demonstration of the phenomena in dispute, which might shake the confidence even of Lord Amberley in his own wisdom. If this be too much to hope for, it may at anyrate shut the mouths of ignorant persons who will persist, ostrich-like, in ignoring that which they do not wish, or possibly fear to acknowledge.

Mr. Dunphy's article in *London Society* for February 1874, is a temperate and convincing record of personal investigation into one of the most occult phenomena of Spiritualism—the so-called materialisation of the spirit-form. Like Mr. Crookes, he speaks from long personal experience, and his observation has a claim to respect on that ground, however startling his record may be to those who know nothing of the subject. Were his experience singular, it would be open to the objection that it is beyond credence. In the light of the testimony of hundreds who have seen and tested the same phenomena, that allegation can no longer be maintained.

When such lights as the *Times*, *Telegraph*, and *Fortnightly* have led the way, the local press has not been slow to follow suit. Spiritualism has been ventilated here, there, and everywhere; and spiritualistic sandwiches have paraded the streets, and even penetrated the precincts of a university sacred to logic and exact science, in order to proclaim the union of the latter with Spiritualism through the mediumship of Mrs. Cora L. V. Tappan. Dramas, with spiritual effects, have been freely placarded; and one enterprising tradesman has come out with spirit-rapping machines, which he declares to be largely sold.

Poor man! he is behind the age. We have got far beyond raps, and mediums now-a-days care not a rap for him or for his machines. In another direction, evidence of the increased interest in spiritual phenomena is given by the fact that two sets of conjurors find it pay to monopolise the Egyptian Hall with exposures of Spiritualism. Maskelyne and Cook vie with Dr. Lynn in denouncing the new superstition, as Mr. Fox Bourne dubbed it at the Dialectical Society. Starting with intent to curse, this latter gentleman ended by blessing it altogether, and declared that were he a Christian, he must needs be a spiritualist: a curious admission to come from a materialist. "The Royal Illusionists," however, will have none of it, except so far as it may serve as a stalking-horse for their own purposes. They burlesque a drawing-room séance, and imitate the Davenport cabinet performance. What they do is poor trickery enough, viewed as an imitation of spiritual phenomena, but it seems to amuse their audiences. It is curious to observe how utterly incapable the average mind is of accurately estimating the conditions under which certain phenomena occur. An editor suggests that all spiritualists gut their houses, perforate their walls, floors, and ceilings, and fit up apparatus which would cost a small fortune, and then would not deceive the shallowest observer; and the article is accepted apparently by the readers of the magazine—the "educated" few who read it. They are few enough, probably; and their education apparently has not been very careful as regards logic: but still, no protest appears. Two conjurors burlesque a drawing-room séance on a stage with all appliances, wires and assistants, and machinery; and nobody seems to see that there is no shadow of similarity between the reality and the counterfeit. Some one behind the scenes lays about him with a stick, and these are the raps! A bouquet slides down a wire—quite palpable to ordinary eyesight—and then slides up again, a table is hauled up by wires, and a walking-stick jerked about with a string. There is psychic-force rampant! Mrs. Maskelyne strikes a stage attitude, walks to a certain position, and is raised up by machinery. There is levitation for you! And this sorry trifling is accepted as an exposure of Spiritualism! Wonderful is the gullibility of the British public! But it pays Maskelyne, and that is his principal care. At anyrate, half a column of advertisements in the *Times*, and other daily papers, represents a very considerable outlay. Whether Maskelyne's righteous soul is fired by a noble ardour not to be outdone by the charlatan in the next room, or whether Lynn is wroth at Maskelyne's clumsy tricks—"If you want to see the real box trick go to the Lyric Hall"—or whether some anti-spiritualist supports both of them, I do not know. But certain

it is, that between them they insert some yards of advertisements in a month, and spend more in putting their respective lights into candlesticks than they will get from the audiences in the Egyptian Hall. Moreover, they all but devour each other in sublime scorn of their respective pretensions. Maskelyne, the original inventor of the great box trick, has found of late that Dr. Lynn is no longer tolerable. So he has arisen in his might, and published an amusing little pamphlet, in which he summarily tells that gentleman that his "conduct is dishonest and contemptible," and that his "statements are as false as his assumption of the title of Doctor and the name of Lynn." And so these exposers of Spiritualism are exposing one another; and they may be left to fight out the little quarrel at their leisure. They only advertise the subject and expose their own folly. Meantime, however, they have raised up an avenging spirit, in the shape of Dr. Sexton, who goes about the country exposing their exposure.

"Fleas have other fleas to bite 'em;
And this goes on in infinitum."

All this shows assuredly that a belief in the phenomena of Spiritualism is gaining ground. There are vast numbers who dabble in the subject, whom their friends would never suspect of dealing in the occult. In short, Spiritualism is going through the phase through which everything new must pass, especially if it contains any elements apparently supernatural. First of all, some credulous people tell stories with bated breath, and others laugh at them for their pains; and exaggerated tales get afloat, and the subject is discredited through the efforts of injudicious friends. Still some sane men probe it, and find that there is "something in it after all." And then, after a while, people recur to the subject with a little irritation that it is not dead and buried as they thought. And it is laughed at again, but this time the laugh is a little uncomfortable; and it is met by calm statement of fact by those who know of the matter from personal experience. And at last the scoffers, driven into a corner, say impatiently, "Oh! well, of course, the phenomena are true; nobody ever doubted that,"—*that* being all the while just the point that was not only doubted but denied—"Why, it is only mesmerism, which all the world has known of for the last quarter of a century!"—mesmerism having, by the way, gone through precisely the same form of treatment before it was accepted as true—"The phenomena are all true enough (some of them at least), but they are all no use, no practical use in the world; and as to spirits, 'the last thing I will give into is spirits!'" No doubt it is the last thing, and they have not come to it yet.

Two years, twelve months ago, they had not come to admit the existence of genuine phenomena. Men will have to take the other step some day, and the first intimation we shall have of its having been taken will be the usual "Of course, everybody knows that spirits can communicate with men, why, the Bible is full of it! Don't we know that angels appeared over and over again to the Patriarchs and Prophets, and even Paul did not know sometimes whether he was in the body or out of the body. But, etc.," and then they will start off on some other tack, and so on to the end.

An amusing illustration of this is to be found in comparing the utterances of the press at different times. Before me lie two articles, clipped from the *Illustrated London News* of January 11, 1873, and January 17, 1874. One does not look for much intellectual refreshment from the *Illustrated*. Its province is pictures, and its only legitimate dealings with the departed are in respect of their "Wills and Bequests." But its ardour was fired by the *Times*, and so it incontinently printed a column of abusive rant against spiritualists, whom it described as "persons below the average of education, or persons who labour under a sentimentalism to which we will not affix a harsher name." It took as its text, "Is there any sperrits present," a motto which it described as a spiritualist incantation. The article which followed was grammatically and intellectually on a level with the text. It was written by some one who knew nothing about his subject—no rare thing with penny-a-liners generally—and who made up what he lacked in knowledge by a proficiency in the art of Billingsgate. After a column of this, he left, with an injunction to spiritualists in general to cease their "pitiable floundering, which had never been more humiliating than at present," and discover the Coram Street murderer, if they could; then they should "exchange their present position, that of mountebanks, for that of priests of a new cultus." This is a fair specimen of the taste and temper of the article of 1873. A year goes by, and the derided subject is taken up again. But how changed the tone! The *Quarterly Journal of Science* lies before him, and the writer, not feeling able to class Mr. Crookes either as a "person below the average education," a fool, or a madman, is somewhat nonplussed. So he confines himself to an enumeration of the phenomena recorded scientifically by Mr. Crookes, and runs away to two hundred years ago, and informs us of Hooke's discovery that gravity was "the result of a certain species of motion in the particles of matter," and adds the new and startling discovery that "a drop of water will run about on a hot plate without touching the surface." Having apparently exhausted his information he closes abruptly with the admission that

"phenomena termed spiritual certainly deserve careful and impartial investigation." Indeed! But where are "the sperrits," the elephantine playfulness of our liner of 1873. Who is "floundering" now? "Floundering and foundering" as pitifully as poor Mr. Disraeli in the Straits of Malacca. A change has come, and, if the same mind continues, Christmas next may see a Ghost Number, enlivened by appropriate pictures of the latest materialisations, with a disquisition on the respective merits of Katie and John King,

It is in the conviction that it is a plain duty to record from time to time observations which have been carefully registered and checked by the investigations of others, that I come forward to state my own experience. I shall not place on record anything which has not been verified by repeated observation, and by the witness of independent investigators. Though phenomena the most curious are sometimes presented most freely when conditions of accurate observation by two or three witnesses are not procurable, it is not wise, in my opinion, to rely on such for argument or induction. In dealing with the strange and mysterious it is well to be carefully guarded; and where recorded facts must contradict or reverse previously accepted conclusions too much care cannot be exercised, that such facts should be beyond doubt. What I shall have to say will probably not coincide with the mental stand-point of two classes. To those who know little of the subject, or are prejudiced against it, my statements will seem incredible. To those whose experience is greater than mine, and who accept and believe theories which I may canvass or reject, I shall appear as one who halts, and is timid and half-hearted in his conclusions.

With regard to the former class, I am relieved from much care by the reflection that this magazine will not be likely to fall into their hands. As to the latter, I am content to be called cautious rather than credulous: I prefer to rest my conclusions on reason rather than on faith. More than all, I prefer that I should individually be kept entirely out of the question. Let the facts and the statements made be judged on their own merits. Let the arguments stand or fall by the hard rules of logic, regardless of the writer, or the individual beliefs which he may chance to entertain. The facts shall be avouched by independent observations, again and again repeated. About them there is no mistake. The conclusions and arguments are either false or true. If the former, they will perish soon enough. If the latter, time will only serve to establish them more firmly. My object will be gained if I succeed in placing, in a permanent form, a record from which the future historian of Spiritualism may select materials for his history. They will be found to be in the main

corroborative of the experience of other investigators, and when they are singular, the peculiarity may be easily explained by individuality of mediumship.

From the time, now two years ago, that I was first made acquainted with Spiritualism, by reading Dale Owen's "Footfalls on the Boundaries of another World," I set to work to investigate the subject. I believed it to be a question of imposture, or delusion, or both. A strange and unaccountable interest was excited in my mind; an interest all the more inexplicable because a short time before Lord Adare's private records of seances with Mr. D. D. Home had failed to excite in me any attention whatever. I thought the book very dull and stupid, and wondered that anybody could seriously read it. I threw it contemptuously aside, and thought no more on the subject. But now I devoured all I could lay my hands on with greedy appetite. I ransacked the shelves of the Spiritual Institution, and soon made myself acquainted with the leading works on the subject. As I read, previous occurrences in my own life, which I had never attempted to tabulate and explain, received new light. As a boy I had been a somnambulist, and a curious essay remains to this day which was written and completed during the somnambulistic trance. I never could explain that occurrence, and used vaguely to refer it to the convenient unconscious cerebration—that scientific maid of all work which is called in to bear the blame for everything mentally inexplicable. I had also possessed a curious power of thought-reading which was a source of amusement, not unmixed at times with a little uneasiness, to my friends. Once only, some years before, had I been brought in contact with Spiritualism. It was in a private circle, and though what occurred was curious, it made no impression upon me. In a week I had forgotten the whole subject. But here was a new field of wonder, and my interest was intensely excited. Knowing what I now do of the power which these invisible intelligences can exercise over the mind, I have no difficulty in believing that I was influenced by them in the inquiry which I undertook. Viewed in the light of communications since received, the whole case is plain enough. And I may say in a parenthesis that my experience in this matter throws a flood of light on the question. How is it that some men never can be convinced of the truths of Spiritualism, or never can penetrate beyond the veriest shell which enshrines the higher truths? It is an undoubted fact that many minds turn impatiently away from the subject; that others concern themselves only with the material side of it; and that some shrink in terror from its very mention. With some this phase of mind is never changed, and all the evidence that could be

produced would be unavailing (and it must be remembered that it is minds of this class that it is so difficult to bring in contact with any evidence that is at all convincing); with others the phase passes and yields to an interested and receptive condition of mind. This was my own case, and I have no difficulty in referring it to the operation of those external invisible intelligences who exercise upon our lives so much greater an influence than we imagine.

Be this, however, as it may, the fact remains that my interest was deeply stirred. I could arrive at no conclusion from the printed evidence before me. I could not put it aside. I felt that it would amply suffice to convince me on almost any other subject, yet it did not convince me. I oscillated between the imposture or delusion theory and a qualified belief in the reality of what was stated, not unmixed with a certain fear of the devil. I felt that I must have the witness of my own senses. The difficulty was how to get that evidence. By enquiry I found that Miss Lottie Fowler was to hold a séance, at 15 Southampton Row, on a certain evening, and I determined to go and see for myself. The results were to me very interesting, but I need not here detail what is familiar to all who are acquainted with the subject. I saw enough to make me wish to see more, and I went off to Herne and Williams' Saturday séance, for spiritualists only. There I made the acquaintance of John and Katie King, and witnessed several phenomena which startled and astonished me considerably. I could no longer doubt the operation of a force unknown to science, nor the existence of an intelligence external to man. I sought information from those who knew of the subject by personal experience—men on whose judgment I could rely, and who were neither bigoted enthusiasts nor wild fanatics. All I heard confirmed me in my belief, but I could not satisfactorily account for what I saw and heard. I smile now as I read the old records, and see how anxious I was to solve, in a month or two, questions that will probably remain unsolved during the present phase of existence. The following extract from my records, written May 29, 1872, will show the state of mind which is, I think, not uncommon with a fair and candid investigator in early stages of the enquiry:—

“In attempting to systematise the opinions which I have gathered respecting Spiritualism, I must confess that, while the preponderance of evidence and experience incline me to admit the existence of phenomena inexplicable except on the spiritualistic hypothesis, still I cannot get at a definite result on account—

- 1, Of the extreme difficulty I find in verifying alleged phenomena.
- 2, Of the vast amount of pure sentiment and rant that is written on the subject.

- 3, Of the startling nature of phenomena credibly attested, which utterly upset all one's notions of the fixed laws of nature.

"This last difficulty meets one on all hands; *e.g.*, an object is brought from one closed room to another through locked doors. A live coal is placed on a man's head and the hair is not singed. A table rises without contact of hands, and remains suspended over the floor. A belief in such statements involves the revision of preconceived opinions as to physical laws. Nevertheless, I cannot resist the weight of evidence as to the existence of certain phenomena. They are attested to me—

- 1, By my own experience and eyesight.
- 2, By the witness of credible persons with whom I have conversed.
- 3, By the published testimony of many persons on whose evidence any reasonable statement would be believed.

"I cannot believe that my senses have so frequently and so completely deceived me, and always with a similar tendency. If so, my senses are untrustworthy, and my evidence on all matters inconclusive. I cannot believe this. Neither can I believe that all with whom I have conversed are deluders or deluded. I have no doubt there is imposture. I am sure that imaginative people multiply phenomena tenfold by their fancy. I also know the reluctance of even trained observers to say they do not see what others assert to be happening before their eyes. Given a few fanatics anxious to believe, some clever deluders, a crowd of gullible people, and I can quite imagine that a great noise might be made about very little, or even nothing. But admitting all this, I do not believe that all my informants may be exhaustively divided into knaves and fools. Moreover, my own personal experience precludes any such conclusion.

"Nor is this all. To this twofold cord another strand must be added. I cannot reject, as the outcome of fanaticism, fraud, or delusion, all the published testimony which I have read. No doubt the value of testimony is variable. If a credible person informs me, for instance, that on such a day he witnessed a signature to a deed, I accept his evidence without question. But if he asserts that on a certain occasion he saw a solid object go through the wall of a room, I do not accept his evidence at once. I say, either you are mistaken, or your senses deceived you, or you are stating what is not true. And if he brings the consentient testimony of one, five, ten persons, still the evidence would be insufficient. Indeed it is hard to say what amount of evidence could establish one such *solitary* fact. Probably I shall be safe in drawing the line at absolute personal witness by the senses under ascertained conditions. At any rate, the 'threefold cord' of oral and published testimony and personal experience 'is not quickly broken.' I can more readily believe that my preconceived notions were erroneous and imperfect, than I can disbelieve evidence which, if I regret it, must swamp all my faith in testimony. And so the balance of my opinion inclines to the acceptance of the fact that phenomena do occur, though I cannot decide at all as to the source from which they proceed."

It is not necessary in this stage of the subject to trace the gradual growth of conviction in my mind. It has been very slow, and I have but retreated step by step, on conviction ensuing, from the semi-sceptical frame of mind which has always been my attitude. I have assumed nothing. I have believed nothing without plain proof. I have accepted no statement made without canvassing it, and verifying assertions where such

verification was practicable. And now that the mass of information which I have got together is so great that it is well-nigh impossible to tabulate or arrange it, I am able to say with exact truth that no single communication deviates one whit from a pure, elevated, and truthful standard. Save in one solitary instance, which was readily explained immediately afterwards, no fact has been stated which is not exactly accurate. And this now extends over two years, and the information abundantly given, so far from being hazy or vague, is characterised by attention to most minute facts, dates, and occurrences. The religious sentiments put forward are elevated and noble; and if they contravene the teachings of Orthodox Creeds as accepted in this corner of God's universe, they at any rate teach a nobler theology and preach a Diviner God. I have come to regard the statements made in the same light as those made to me by a tried and proven friend, while I have taken every means of verifying and proving facts and conclusions, when that has been possible. And in eliciting information, I have always been scrupulous never to put a leading question, or to allow my own brain to interfere consciously with the integrity of the message. I have studiously occupied myself with other subjects, while communications have been made; and I have no sort of doubt that the information I have received comes from spirits disembodied, and is uncoloured by any preconceived notions of my own. Far more frequently than otherwise, what is said is contrary to my opinion, and the facts communicated are such as have never come under my notice. I shall make this clear, so far as I can, when I come to deal with the subject of Automatic Writing. For the present I merely indicate the grounds that I have for placing reliance on the communicating intelligences.

In dealing with the several phenomena, it will be convenient if I follow the plan which I have adopted in my private record. I divide them into two groups, Physical and Mental. The classification is not absolutely exhaustive, but it is near enough for practical purposes. Under the head of Physical Phenomena, I deal with the more usual phenomena, raps, tilts, movements of solid bodies, with and without contact, both within a room and from one closed room to another—the formation abnormally of musical sounds—up to the various phases of materialisation. On the border between the two groups lies direct spirit writing; and under the head of Mental Phenomena I class the phenomena of trance, automatic writing, clairvoyance, and the like.

If I am able to complete my design, I propose to discuss briefly some theories and explanations which have been put forward by friends and foes to account for the strange phenomena which I have observed.

Commencing from the simplest manifestations, I shall go through the several stages one by one, giving such records and facts as are in my possession ; or rather, such extracts as may be fairly printed without fear of wearying the reader.

HUME ON MIRACLES.

A Paper lately read by Mr. ST. GEORGE STOCK before a Society at Oxford.

TO-DAY the teaching of Protagoras is triumphant. What says the voice of the age? "Man is the measure of all things, and I am the man who is the measure. Whatever I cannot understand, whatever I cannot harmonise with facts already ascertained, is not, cannot, must not be true. There is a certain space within which Nature is at liberty to work; there are certain bounds which she may not transgress. There is one class of facts which I shall always be glad to have reported to me, another class which I shall accept on no man's testimony. Confine your attention (says the spirit of the age addressing the interpreter of Nature) to such facts as I am familiar with; all beyond these are fiction and unreality: for they are inconceivable to me—And am I not the measure of truth and the measure of existence?"

Such is the utterance of our age of enlightenment; and its practice is worthy of its precept. Let men only keep well within the groove of their predecessors, and they will be hailed as prodigies of science, pioneers of progress, priests of Nature; let them step aside, and they will be hailed with derision, and exposed to the venom of the *Quarterly*. Let a man follow up Newton's experiments with regard to the spectrum analysis, or discover thallium, and he will be proclaimed the greatest spectroscopist or metallurgist of the age; let the same man acknowledge the bare facts of Spiritualism, and he will be proclaimed a fool.

For the scientific sanction accorded to this spirit—I do not say for its prevalence, for the cause of that lies deep down in the constitution of the human mind—Hume is mainly responsible. In bringing—as I shall do—an accusation of blindness and prejudice against Hume, I have no doubt that I shall enlist against me the feelings of those whom I would most gladly conciliate; but as I am myself firmly persuaded of the truth of Hume's general principles, and am equally firmly persuaded that these principles do not land us in the conclusions of the *Essay on Miracles*, I have good hope that I may be able to render this point at least worth the attention of others.

Among all our English philosophers Hume is, perhaps on the whole, least assailable by logic. His principles are not congenial to the pride of human nature, but they are in the main incontrovertible. His thought is so sound and so clearly expressed; he is so careful not to let himself be hoodwinked by fancy; he dives with such determination beneath the perplexities of appearances to the simplicity of truth, that he has generally managed to win silent assent where he has not secured applause. But the greatest men have their weak points, and the acutest intellects will be led astray if they desert the dry light of reason for the will-o'-the-wisps of prejudice. Against the free-thinker the same objection often lies as against the most bigoted dogmatist, that of being misled by his feelings. Feeling is undoubtedly the most important element in human nature, but it by no means follows that it should usurp the functions of the rest. Feeling is an engine whose work is the direction of action, not the discovery of truth. In searching for truth let a man simply follow reason as his guide, careless if he be thus led into the camp of his enemies, and he will be pretty sure to find her. This single-minded devotion to truth it was not Hume's to render. He was superior to many prejudices, but he could not bring himself to descend from the aristocratic exclusiveness of intellect. His philosophic soul shrank from contact of belief with the despised vulgar, and the still more despised churchman. Religions were nothing but the imposture of priests or the policy of law-givers, acting upon the superstition and credulity of the people. No good thing could come out of Nazareth.

In the 18th century free-thought had not won for itself the position which it now occupies. The infidel was intensely hated and intensely feared, and he hated intensely and despised intensely in return. The enemy of revelation was then looked upon by the orthodox as necessarily the enemy of morality too; while the infidel, on his side, had not come clearly to distinguish between special forms of religion, and the ineradicable religious sentiment which gives life to the dry bones of all. But, without further preface, I must proceed to examine Hume's arguments.

Hume commences operations by taking up a position from which I have no wish to dislodge him, and which few would deem it prudent to assail, namely, that experience is our only guide in reasoning concerning matters of fact. We must watch his movements and catch him outside this stronghold before we can hope to overthrow him. In the genuine spirit of Positivism, and in perfect accordance with his general maxim, he goes on to say, "The reason why we place any credit in witnesses and historians is not derived from any connexion, which we perceive *a priori*, between testimony and reality, but because we are

accustomed to find a conformity between them." So far we can go along with Hume; but listen now to what follows! "But when the fact attested is such a one as has seldom fallen under our observation, here is a contest of two opposite experiences.

. . . The very same principle of experience, which gives us a certain degree of assurance in the testimony of witnesses, gives us also, in this case, another degree of assurance against the facts which they endeavour to establish; from which contradiction there necessarily arises a counterpoise and mutual destruction of belief and authority." It is quite true that there is a conflict here between belief and authority, that is to say, authority is confronted with an absence of belief, for the simple reason that belief is the product of association, and that where ideas have not been connected in the mind, there belief cannot be; but there is no conflict of experiences. To say there is, is to confound the absence of experience in favour of a fact with the presence of experience against it. If, on the one side, there is the positive evidence of a witness in favour of a fact, and on the other there is no evidence against it, where is the contradiction? The evidence of the witness may of course be of much or little worth; but that is a question which must be estimated on its own merits, and its decision will depend on our belief in his veracity, our knowledge as to whether he had any motive for falsehood, the likelihood of his being deceived, his love for attracting notice or creating surprise, and so on. If we were fully satisfied as to the competency of the witness, we should be very unwise to withhold belief from the fact related by him, simply because it had not come within our own experience. Hume quotes with approbation a proverbial saying among the Romans: "I should not believe that story were it told me by Cato." Now, if Cato had informed his countrymen that he saw a stone come through a solid wall, they would have had the whole array of their daily experience to set against this statement; but if he had informed them that he saw a stone fall from heaven, they would have had no ground for disbelief; because, although quite out of the range of their experience, it was not contrary to it. The unsoundness of the mode of reasoning now under consideration is well exemplified by the case of the Indian prince who refused to believe the tale that, in certain countries, water became so hard during cold, as to support men walking on its surface. This was not conformable to his experience, and therefore, he thought himself justified in disbelieving it; but it was not contrary to it, because he had never witnessed the effect of extreme cold upon water. The Indian prince was mistaken, but his error was a very natural one, arising as it did from the unavoidable narrowness of the human mind, joined to limited

acquaintance with the laws of nature. The same apology is the only one that can be offered for the views of Hume himself. Thus the philosopher is in the same boat with the savage, for whom, indeed, he shows a manifest fellow feeling. Anyone anxious to vindicate the honour of Hume, will at once be prompted to maintain that he is here speaking of occurrences which violently contradict our experience, instead of such as are merely not included in it, but he has himself shown the contrary by distinguishing these cases as the marvellous from the miraculous, which he next proceeds to discuss.

Having defined a miracle as "a violation of the laws of nature," Hume goes on to say, that "as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined." Now, what in the name of wonder is the meaning of the expression "an unalterable experience" in the mouth of an experimentalist? It was from Hume himself I learnt that experience could only refer to the past. But this slip may be condoned as not really affecting the argument. Every one may satisfy himself from reason that he has no ground for believing in the continuance of the laws of nature, and every one may satisfy himself from feeling that he is perfectly certain to believe in it all the same. The point to be noted is, that our knowledge, like everything else, rests on the basis of instinct. But no law of nature amounts to more than this, that a given cause has an invariable tendency to produce such and such an effect. Any cause may be counteracted, and apparently violated by the intervention of others. The essential question about miracles, therefore, is not, as Hume puts it, "Are the laws of nature ever violated," but "Do there exist causes—hitherto unrecognised—which have power to defeat the effects of known natural agents?" There is a tremendous body of evidence, coeval with history, in favour of the existence of such causes; but it is constantly set aside, just as it is by Hume, the first part of whose essay culminates in the assumption of the following position:—"As an uniform experience amounts to a proof, there is a direct and full *proof*, from the nature of the fact, against the existence of any miracle; nor can such a proof be destroyed, or the miracle rendered credible but by an opposite proof which is superior." Need I point out that, unless by "experience" be meant Hume's private and particular experience—in which case the argument will not hold—there is a direct assumption here of the very point to be proved; for the question is not whether miracles can occur—with that the experimentalist has nothing to do—but simply whether they have occurred and do occur. The illustration which Hume chooses brings out the

petitio principii in a still clearer light. As an instance of the miraculous—and nothing is miraculous in his sense of the term, unless there be an uniform experience against it—he takes returning to life from the dead, thus coolly assuming one of the principal points at issue between himself and his religious opponents. However much any one may admire Hume's conclusion, he cannot, at all events, admire his way of arriving at it.

In the second part of the essay Hume repents of the extreme liberality he has been guilty of in the first, and hastens to point out that no evidence can amount to proof, and consequently that nothing can ever counterbalance the presumption against a miracle. Four arguments are brought to prove this; but the first alone would have been sufficient, for it simply begs the question over again, under the form that there never was a miracle duly attested.

The second argument is a very good one. It is based on the love of wonder and the spirit of religion, by which of course he means superstition and fanaticism. These will undoubtedly account for a good many thriving lies.

The third argument is, that miraculous relations are most common amongst ignorant and barbarous people. That is no doubt true, and the cause is not far to seek. In an early age, before men have obtained settled ideas about the course of nature, one thing obtains credence as easily as another. But it is by no means true, that accounts of miracles are the mere product of a dark age. Else what shall we say of the miracles of Christ and his disciples, wrought in the streets of Jerusalem and in the market-places of Greek towns? What shall we say of the miraculous cure effected by Vespasian in the streets of Alexandria, recorded by the sceptical historian Tacitus, and borne testimony to after the death of the emperor, when there was nothing to be gained by falsification? What shall we say of the numberless miracles of the Jansenites? What shall we say of the Irvingites? What shall we say of modern Spiritualism? Our literature of to-day teems with miraculous relations. I do not know that Robert Owen and his equally illustrious, though less celebrated son; Alfred Wallace, the naturalist; Professor Crookes, the metallurgist; Dr. Huggins, the spectroscopist; Cromwell Varley, the electrician; Serjeant Cox, the lawyer; the late Lord Lytton, the late Professor De Morgan, Dr. Ashburner, Dr. Gully, Professor Challis of Cambridge, the poet Longfellow, and so on, can exactly be taken as types of ignorant and barbarous people.

The fourth argument is merely a dialectical one. It was of considerable force to confound Hume's orthodox opponents, but does not tend in the least degree to elucidate the truth. It is

briefly this: miracles are alleged to have been wrought in support of every religion. Only one religion can be true. Any miracle, therefore, alleged in support of any one religion, is so much positive evidence against a miracle alleged in support of any other religion.

The time has long gone by when religions could be regarded by thinking men as the mere inventions of priests and law-givers. No doubt, in every form of religion which ever soothed or elevated the heart of man (and many have done so besides our own) there has been an element of the divine, whatever that may mean—something, at all events, that is more than human, something that is beyond our ken. Why then should not all have had their share of the miraculous? But as I am sedulously avoiding theories, I refrain from entering on this point.

Such are the four arguments which Hume brings against the credibility of miracles. He then proceeds, out of his own mouth, absolutely to refute what he has said under the first head. There is something one cannot help admiring in the extreme effrontery of this proceeding. Hume knew that his adversaries, as bigoted as himself, but in a different direction, would have nothing to say in defence of Romish miracles; and it was sufficient for his purpose if he triumphed for the hour. Listen to the following passage, and judge, impartial hearers, whether it should have been written by an opponent, and not rather by an advocate of miracles! He is speaking of the extraordinary events that took place at the tomb of Abbé Paris, the famous Jansenist. "The curing of the sick, giving hearing to the deaf, and sight to the blind, were everywhere talked of as the effects of that holy sepulchre. But what is more extraordinary, many of the miracles were immediately proved upon the spot before judges of unquestioned integrity, attested by witnesses of credit and distinction, in a learned age, and on the most eminent theatre that is now in the world. Nor is this all; a relation of them was published and dispersed everywhere; nor were the Jesuits, though a learned body, supported by the civil magistrate, and determined enemies to those opinions, in whose favour the miracles were said to have been wrought, ever able distinctly to refute or detect them. Where shall we find such a number of circumstances agreeing to the corroboration of one fact? And what have we to oppose to such a cloud of witnesses, but the absolute impossibility or miraculous nature of the events to which they relate? And this surely, in the eyes of all reasonable people, will alone be regarded as a sufficient refutation."

Thus we see that, when all has been said, Hume comes back to a simple restatement of his belief in the absolute impossibility of miracles. As if an experimentalist could assert any event to

be impossible! His famous argument comes to this—A miracle cannot happen, because it would be a miracle if it did. By the illustrations he has chosen, he has cleverly made his sophistries irrefutable by his immediate adversaries, men who believed that the Christian religion must win its way to a Spiritual throne by strangling all its brethren. As a specimen of eristic, the *Essay on Miracles* is admirable; but as such, its aim is not truth, but triumph.

SANITARY INFLUENCE OF TREES AND FLOWERS.

By CAVE NORTH.

It has long been known to naturalists that the respiration of the vegetable kingdom counter-balances animal respiration by purifying the air which animals vitiate, and that nature has thus provided a means in this respect, as in every other—a means for the self-adjustment and equipoise of all her operations. All organised beings are constantly inhaling, both from lungs and skin, large quantities of carbon, which, were there no counter-balancing influence at work, would soon so deteriorate the air we breathe as to destroy life. This counteracting influence is provided in the exhalation by all vegetable life of oxygen, and the absorption of carbon. It is true that in the latter case this operation is said to be reversed during the night, plants then giving off carbon instead of oxygen; but there is some doubt on this point; and indeed, if it be true, the amount of carbon exhaled during the hours of darkness can by no means equal the quantity thereof absorbed during the day; otherwise growth could not take place, as it is well known that vegetable tissue is made up almost exclusively of carbon.

It is a matter of common observation that towns (especially large ones) are less healthful than the country. Now this can arise from no other cause than that the deteriorating influence of animal life on the air we breathe is not sufficiently compensated for by the breathing (so to speak) of plants; and it is a question of importance for governments and city authorities to solve, whether the public health might not be very largely augmented by the encouragement, on a larger scale, of the cultivation of flowers and trees in centres of population and industry. In fact more than thirty years ago a distinguished London physician drew attention to the good that might be effected in this direction by the culture in houses of ornamental flowers. There is a very prevalent objection to this practice, on the ground that plants are injurious in dwelling-rooms. Now, although this prejudice may hold good in reference to plants with strong odours,

more particularly in the case of highly sensitive persons, it is by no means of general application, especially if due attention be given to ventilation.

But, after all, the proper *habitat* for vegetable life is *out of doors*; and it is relative to the open-air cultivation of trees, flowers, &c., that we now wish to speak.

Some thirty-five years ago a Professor Schörbein, of Basle, discovered that by the electrolysis of acidulated water an odouriferous gas was produced. He also noticed that the same gas was set free by discharges of the ordinary electrical machine through the air; and when once overtaken by a thunderstorm on the Jura mountains, the same gentleman recognised the identity of its smell with that accompanying a flash of lightning. The properties of this gas were further investigated by a number of other physicists, resulting in the establishment of the fact that ozone is an allotropic form of oxygen, and that the two gases are mutually convertible, the one into the other. Ozone may be chemically prepared in various ways; amongst others, by mixing three parts of sulphuric acid with two parts of permanganate of potash. According to Böttger this mixture will continue to give off ozone for several months; and Dr. Cornelius Fox strongly recommends it for purifying the air of hospitals, public buildings, &c. The properties of ozone are the same from whatever source it is obtained, and is one of the most oxidising agents with which we are acquainted. It purifies water charged with organic refuse; destroys the foul odour of sulphuretted hydrogen; corrodes organic matters, and bleaches most vegetable colours. So essential, indeed, is this all-pervading principle, that without it life on our globe would probably come to an end.

Now, the recent researches of Professor Montegazza, of Padua, have led to the discovery that certain shrubs and flowers, upon exposure to the rays of the sun, cause so large an augmentation of the ozone round about as to conduce, in an astonishing degree, to a better condition of the atmosphere. Among these botanical producers of ozone, the above gentleman mentions the cherry laurel (which is poisonous in its leaves and kernels), the lemon tree, lavender, fennel, the clove, and many others; also the narcissus, the hyacinth, the heliotrope, and mignonette. Certain prepared perfumes, too, similarly exposed to the sunshine, add further to the atmospheric stock of ozone, as, for instance, Eau de Cologne, extract of millefleurs, essence of lavender, and some of the aromatic tinctures. Professor Montegazzo accordingly recommends the extensive and sedulous cultivation of ozone producing plants in all districts and localities where the air is liable to vitiation; as, for example, in marshy places.

Quite in accordance with the researches of the Italian Professor were the observations of a Dutch physician, who was led to recommend, with the greatest success, the cultivation of the common sunflower in neighbourhoods where malarious fevers were known to abound.

Further investigations have shown that this plant (no dainty stickler for place, but able to make itself as much at home in the back-yard of the poorest cottager as in the garden of the richest grandee) not only purifies the atmosphere of marshy places, by removing a very decided amount of the miasmata there engendered, but confers the positive benefit of augmenting the quantity of ozone.

Similar to these febrifugal properties of the sunflower are those of the Australian tree, *Eucalyptus globulus*; concerning which a highly interesting paper was recently read before the French Academy of Science by M. Gimbert. The tree in question is one of that family indigenous to New South Wales, known to the colonists as gum-trees. Its sparse and curiously-twisted foliage grows in a thin crown at the top of a pillar-like stem; but the characteristic feature of the whole *genus* is rapidity of growth, exemplified alike in the "iron-bark," the "blue-gum," and the interesting species before our notice. The *Eucalyptus globulus* absorbs an immense quantity of water from the earth, at the same time emitting an aromatic odour. Wherever it is extensively planted in marshy bottoms, the subsoil is dried up as if by magic, and miasma ceases. It has been tried for this purpose at the Cape, and within a few years has completely transformed the climatic condition of the unhealthful parts of that colony. Somewhat later its cultivation, on a large scale, was undertaken in various parts of Algeria, and with decided success. At a farm twenty miles from the capital, situated on the banks of a river, and notorious for its pestilential atmosphere, some 13,000 eucalypti were planted. That same year, at the time when the fever season was wont to commence, not a single case occurred, although the trees were not more than nine feet in height. Since then the neighbourhood has enjoyed perfect immunity from fever. A similar experience is reported from another noted fever spot in the vicinity of Constantina, where, in five years, the whole ground, formerly covered with marsh-water winter and summer, was dried up by 14,000 of these trees: farmers and their families now enjoying excellent health. It is also stated that throughout the Island of Cuba, malarious epidemics are rapidly disappearing from all the insalubrious districts where the eucalyptus has been introduced. Again, a station-house at one end of a railway viaduct in the department of the Var, was so pestilential that the officials could not be kept there

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longer than a year: forty of these trees were planted, and the place is now as healthful as any on the line.

Such are some of the interesting facts mentioned by M. Gimbert, interesting not only as facts, but as suggesting a fertile field for the researches of botanists. Hitherto, while vast monuments of genius have been reared in the realm of scientific classification, little or nothing has been done in the direction pointed out by M. Montegazza and M. Gimbert. While other sciences have of late been making giant strides, the science of health has been making no progress whatever. The death-rate of our towns and cities is deplorably high; not so high as it has been, but still very high. In the words of Professor Huxley—"We, in later times, have learned somewhat of nature, and partly obey her;" but we have yet much to learn, and our obedience must be much more perfect. When we have learned our lesson, and when we have also learned to obey, we may see our cities almost as healthful as the country. This, however, will not be effected by multiplying drug-shops and dispensaries, but rather by enlightening blind alleys, planting our squares with health-giving trees and shrubs, and by planting ozone-producing flowers in every available spot. We know that the most putrid ditches and ponds are purified by plants growing in them, and their waters preserved in a state fit for animals to drink; in the same way the foulest courts and wynds of our Londons, Glasgows, and Liverpools might be rendered comparatively salubrious, and the air made pure enough to breathe.

In past ages, in *heathen* days, there appears to have been much more wisdom in this as in many other respects. Though the people of those times do not seem to have made the progress we have done in the invention of foul intoxicating drinks, adulterated comestibles, soothing cordials for physically deteriorating and killing children, they were far ahead of us in respect of common-sense notions about health. Thus we find that the heathen Roman introduced personal purity wherever he went, while the Christian disregarded (if not destroyed) the bath and canonised filth. The ancients, too, appear to have had an instructive knowledge of the disinfecting qualities of certain plants. The disciples of Empedocles, for instance, were in the habit of planting aromatic and balsamic herbs in the vicinity of their dwellings, in the confident belief that by so doing they were providing means of defence against fevers, and so forth. And Herodian relates that during a plague in Italy, strangers crowding to Rome were directed by the physicians to repair to Laurentum (now San Lorenzo), so called from the abundance of the sweet bay tree (*Laurus nobilis*) which then grew there, and by inhaling the odour of which they would, in a measure, be

guarded from infection. Not less worthy of note is the fact, that Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and others taught in the open air, and frequently in groves or gardens.

Here, then, is an example for us to follow, not blindly, but wisely, and with understanding. It is evident that plants have these health-giving qualities—perhaps not all, but the majority—and that each is adapted to some special circumstance of man. The forests of America, of India, of Australia are exhaling their hygeian virtues into the desert air: why not import it by ship-loads and give our sickly urban populations a portion thereof? In other words, why not endeavour to find out the special and peculiar properties of some of the characteristic trees, shrubs, and flowers of those regions, and give our country the benefit of them? There must be many such trees as the *Eucalyptus globulus* and plants as the sun-flower. To search them out and place them at the disposal of men would be a task worthy the intellect of a Linnæus or a Humboldt.

Meanwhile almost every one can plant lavender, thyme, mignonette, and a host of other ozone-producing flowers (if not shrubs like the lemon tree, sweet bay, &c.), for these can be grown almost anywhere. The beauty and fragrance they shed around them would alone repay the trouble of their culture. But independently of the manufacture of ozone (a distinct performance which pertains to the flowers alone), the purification of the atmosphere from a portion of its carbonic acid goes on, as we have seen, all the same.

INDIAN TEMPERANCE REFORMERS.

WE do not happen to know who Kalikrishna may be, but his name heads a monster memorial lately presented by himself “and 16,200 others” to the Viceroy of India on the increase of intemperance; but it is painful to learn that this enlightened leader of the prohibitory party in India ascribes the growth of the evil complained of to the effects of those very influences which we are wont to boast of as the future victors over the habits of drinking among our own working classes. . . . It is a painful fact (it adds) that among the higher and more educated classes, and in places long subject to British rule and the influence of Western refinement, the worst effects of intemperance have been realised.” The drink-reformers of India go farther even than their allies here have hitherto done; for they not only suggest, in accordance with permissive prohibitory views, that all liquor shops should be closed “where the majority of the inhabitants object to their existence,” but also “in the vicinity of educational and religious establishments and places of business;” and further, would have the sale of liquor for consumption on the premises altogether forbidden.—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

THE VISION OF IMAUM MAHIDI.*

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE BOOK OF GOD," "BOOK OF ENOCH," &c.



I.

THE night is over me with starry veil: the clouds have vanished away: bright and cold is her pure presence. Let me go forth beneath the high heaven, and invite the Spirit of God into my soul. O Spirit! hearken thou unto me. O Spirit! descend from Heaven. Behold I go into the silent green to woo thy brightness from the Spheres. I look upon the golden stars and live: the sacred music of a Celestial Presence breathes its magic through my being. I look upon the stars and live. O Spirit! blend thou with my meditation: crown me with thy Divine auspice.

The Spirit of God came unto me: she whispered peace into my heart. She said, Confide not in thy knowledge, nor in the lore which books teach; but unto the Supreme One, open thou thine essence: *He* will teach, and *He* will guide thee. Not as men teach, nor as their books guide, but as wisdom only can instruct. She smiled—she touched my lips with flowers like flame. I was transfused into Paradise.

What heavenly glories then were poured upon my soul. I saw the Universe at one glance, shining with celestial fires. Hero-Angels passed in grand procession; stars and suns and lights that flashed with colours more pure, transparent, and dazzling than flame itself, curled themselves around, and clothed with silent magnificence and majesty the forms of those Mighty Essences. Light passed into my soul; their glory magnetised me. I felt as if I could embrace the Universe. I saw a thousand Mystic Secrets of the past disclosed in brightness. Then the thunders rolled: they marched along like giants. The whole arch was illuminated by lightnings: a blaze of meteors coursed amid the troubled Vast; and

* Arabic for Pontifex Maximus, or Supreme Priest. The Hindu name for God, AUM, is one of its components.

so in brightness, night, and deluging splendours, the gorgeous Vision was revealed. The light of God had passed into my soul: there does it abide for ever.

II.

From darkling caverns of rushing fire
 I heard the voice of Wisdom:
 Lo! my Eagle goeth forth in splendour:
 Who shall meet him in the hills of tempest?
 He speaks, even as the voice of the sea:
 Like a rock is his, mighty heart:
 The feeble fight him—they are but withered leaves,
 Blown by a hundred warring winds:
 As the lightning is his wrath:
 As the King of ten thousand spears:
 Mortals, yield ye: bend your stubborn pride:
 Sheathe the sword: fall down and worship.
 Voices hymned, and harps sang:
 Those palace halls resounded;
 And lamps, like flashing war-spears,
 Shed their beam over the vast waters.
 I was blinded with the glory of light;
 I was dazzled with the myriad-faced iris:
 By the showers of a starry lustre—
 By the music of a thousand choirs.
 Son of the hand of fire!
 CYNHAVAL with the golden key,
 Clothe thee in the arms of gold.
 Go forth, and fight and conquer.

III.

And after this I saw a Golden Cloud, glittering with quick coruscations; the brightness dazzled the eye, and filled the spirit. It was intense with flame.

From the far-off boundaries of Heaven did it extend; rain darted over it, and shining meteors flashed; and the vibrations of the thunder-lights were seen.

And out of the bosom of this Golden Cloud of Mystery I saw a luminous Hand; white as the snow-wraith it was; and in the Hand a Mitre, framed of gems, and gleaming from afar with the splendour of the morning.

And I saw One, who in his spirit was a lion; and a Voice divine called to him from on high, and said, Approach thou, and receive the Mitre; thou shalt wear it before all the children of men.

And he whom the Voice called went and received the Mitre; and he wore it on his brow, but yet with childlike meekness; and it was the emblem before men of the power which he possessed.

And out of the deep abysses, and out of the dark chasms, I saw many shapes and monstrous formations; and they hissed aloud;

venom was in their eyes and tongues; they sought to slay the Wearer of that heavenly Mitre.

And many cursed, and many mocked with deep hate; young and old uplifted themselves against him; but he murmured not, neither did he destroy the life of one, though in his hands I saw the lightning-cinctured thunders.

But he breathed forth light and music from his lips; and beams that were like morning light, and were as sweet waters; and where they fell they fertilised the wilderness; and where they were received the poison-plants withered.

IV.

And behold I found myself standing in the centre of a plain, and many thousand children, heavenly in brightness, were there; and they were clothed in lustre: white and emerald, and blue and fiery-sparkling, like the flame-pillars of Paradise. And they moved in Choirs like the planetary dance amid the Spheres, and sang hymns of sweetness: hymns whose theme was the Most High; all the music that is in the earth of man, or in the stellar orbs, equals not the harmony of that child-chorus. And there were palm trees, and spreading cedars, and banyan trees; and fountains of crystal gushing in the sun; and the atmosphere was of a golden orange brightness; and this also was the colour of the suns that illumined that place. And near the fountains were showers of silver and gold, shining like light condensed, like solid sunbeams, or like the burnished foam of waters, crystallised at the moment, when it reflected sunshine in a thousand broken beams. And mosques and minarets, and towers and temples of diamond glittered through the green rifts and open glades of the cedar forests; and the air was laden with perfumes, and those sweet undying songs that are wafted from the borders and fountains of Paradise. And one of them rising up among the others spake these words; and his looks were as strong adamant to my spirit: Fear not to go forth among the evil-hearted of the earth; to them expound the Sacred Word of God, thy Master. Arm thee with the innocence of a childlike heart, and thou shalt prevail against every foe and every false friend; for men sin not because they perversely love evil doings, but because they really know not good from evil. I have seen the aged man, and the young of hope and strength, go among the Children of Darkness to reveal light, fearless as a lion walketh in the forest where he is king; so went each one before the wicked, who rose up against them. They bound them in chains, and put out their eyes; they dragged them through the street with mockery and curses; but they complained not, neither did they grow pale: they endured their agony like Sons of God. Then they asked them to abjure their Master, and the Word which they went out to preach on earth; but the old man spake not, though they tortured him; and the young man smiled in silence amid his torments. And they threw them into prisons, deep and noisome, and scourged and

walled them up—living martyrs; yet still they lifted their prayers to God, and besought a blessing on the heads of their oppressors.

V.

And I heard a Voice that spake to them in prison :
 Be not terrified though temptations assail thee ;
 Resist well, and thou shalt conquer ;
 The wisest men are tempted at times,
 By the darker propensities of their nature ;
 But if thou be too sorely oppressed,
 Betake thee to the Book of God ;
 There, as in a heavenly armoury,
 Thou shalt find sword and helm of proof.
 For all things abound with error,
 Save only this Ordinance of Heaven :
 Wherefore God has given it as a gift
 Unto all his sons upon the earth.
 Whosoever confideth in his own strength,
 And not in the lessons of this Book,
 Shall wander far into darkness ;
 And shall lose his spirit in the night.
 Therefore are all men commanded
 To obey the Institutes of this Book:—
 Blessed are they who shall receive it :
 Who shall receive it with joyful spirit.
 It will give balm to the poor in their affliction ;
 It will upraise the rich man from his slough ;
 It bringeth a bright assurance of Heaven,
 To those who will fulfil its laws.
 Whoever therefore desires to know it,
 Must reverently read it for himself ;
 Not hastily glancing over the page ;
 But slowly pondering its lessons.
 Thus shall his spirit be made glad,
 By the good tidings which it brings ;
 Then shall his reason be convinced
 That it is indeed the Book of God.

VI.

And after these things I beheld the Universe
 Opened before me, as a Sphere divided into two ;
 And I stood in the centre of the Sphere,
 And many mysteries were revealed ;
 And I saw on all sides Innumerable Spirits,
 In their various orders, circles, and dependencies ;
 The amplitude of this transcendent Vision
 Was too vast to be described in human speech.
 And I saw Armies of the Living God
 Clothed in beams of splendour ;

They stood like pillars; pillars of light,
Which reach from Earth even unto Heaven.
Then out of the central Fiery Brightness,
A Spirit arose, white, cerulean, golden-coloured;
And in his hand he bare the Book of God,
Sealed with the seals of Twelve Divine Ones.
And after him Twelve starry-shining Spirits,
Clothed in heavenly rays, and crowned with mitres;
And their looks were as the many-coloured diamond,
When it reflects the sun from a thousand facets.
And the Spirit that ascended out of the Fiery Brightness
Placed the Book above his heart;
And he kissed the Book, and paid obeisance to it.
And raised it on high like a banner.
And the Twelve starry-shining Spirits came,
And each one touched a seal that was on the Book;
And the Book opened, as Paradise might open,
Diffusing beauty over the Spheres.
And the Armies of the living God saw it:
And beheld its mighty characters,
And they confessed the Truth of God
And the Wisdom that was therein written.
And they sang with one voice a hymn
That filled the Spheres with music most divine;
Praising God, the Lord Eternal,
Who had made manifest the Supreme Law.

VII.

O God! Thou Mighty One, hear while I invoke Thee; Lord of Universal Nature; Lord of the Heavens and the Earths; who rulest the all-nourishing Spheres of Life, and art the Master of Everlasting Fire. O splendid Source of our wheeling motion, who by thine Ordinances dost infuse life through all things. Father, Spirit, and Love, hearken to Thy wanderer's prayer. Thy throne is high amid the starry lights; Thou art the sweet Musician of the Universe; Thy voice of Song goes forth, and it dances before Thee, circling through the divine all-beaming Choirs of Beauty. Glorious are the Visions which Thou dost give to those who see Thee; myriadfold in divine splendour; but upon those who fly away from Thee in abject earthliness, terror falls with darkness and despair. O starry-beaming Searcher of the heart, who lovest the image of Thine own eternal loveliness; all-creating, all-producing Lord of Heaven, who hast a thousand names and changing shapes: be with me now while meekly I implore Thee, to guide me in the way of life; withholding not Thy promised blessing while I truly follow in Thy path. Guide me; teach me; illuminate my darkened soul, that seeing and knowing all things veritably, I may be as an example of Thine eternal excellence, and teach mankind by the lesson of my life.

VIII.

What splendid fire gleams over the desert!
Is it the Light of Heaven?
Do I see the footstep of the Supreme?
Or is it the golden glance of Morning?
From the region of the East it comes:
Like the advent of a man of war;
Girt around with thunder;
And in his hand the lightnings of God.
O Cabir! thou Son of Might,
Darkly rolling in thy clouds I see thee:
Thy face is as an ice-mountain:
Thy spear a pillar of flame.
Grandeur in thine outspread wings:
Hail! hail! thou great Deliverer!
The earth rejoices in thy presence:
Shall not I also bow down before thee,
As an ocean of fire, as billows of flame?
Even so the Cabir of God descended:
The evil saw him: the sons of sin
Away upon the mists of night they fled:
I heard the cry of an eagle,
As of an eagle thirsting for its prey:
And the Cabir of God descended
Into the glen of the eagles.
The clouds were gathered in the glen;
But they melted away before him:
I looked, and where the strength of the powerful had been,
I saw only the Splendid Mover.

IX.

Then new Visions entered into my soul—lessons of many and sublime things. I saw myself a hapless wanderer in a Dark Valley, called the Earth. Above me I beheld the splendid waves of light: the azure heaven with its golden brilliancy. Choirs of Celestial Beings were in the ether: lovely as the planets of the east. They sang of immortal life. They breathed immortal beauty from their eyes. No care or pain was in their star-bright features. No trace of anxiety for the future, or misery for the past, or trouble in the dark present left its deep furrow upon their shining lineaments. But all was radiant, holy, and delightful. As a star glittering afar off—as the sun rising out of the ocean—as the full moon walking in the blue firmament—even so were the Children of Heaven. I saw and blessed them.

Then I looked within; but all was tempest and confusion. I beheld an ocean of wrecks: a desert of shattered hopes and fancies. The pillars of the temple were fallen: the stately sculpture was shattered into fragments. The images which God himself had painted were defaced. In the ruins owls dwelt. The serpent made

her nest beneath the fallen shrines. I saw the whole human race personified as a Man. O God! he cried, from the depths of his despair: Thou hast awakened the slumberer as with a trumpet. Mine enemy was coming against me to destroy me. He stole upon me in the night when all was darkness. I was asleep when he drew nigh. A little moment and I was undone. I believed that I was the worshipper of a True Faith, and behold it was Falsehood at whose shrine I bowed. I imagined that the god in whom my childhood was taught to trust was the Eternal Lord of Beauty: and behold I find that he was but a mockery of the True One. I confided in books which were deceitful. I hung upon the lips of preachers who were more treacherous than even their books. I feared to use the light of reason, because I had been taught that to do so was a crime, and I delivered myself up bound hand and foot to ministers who professed to teach God, while they laboured only to conceal Him.

A multiform figure rose before him. I am the Present, she said. Thou, O mortal, art deeply moved. I see thy spirit like agitated waters. The clouds above thee are black and turbid. The rains fall. The thunders roar. The lightnings flash their arrows, but they make the darkness more appalling. Deep and anxious are thy thoughts. Thou dwellest on the Past, the Present, and the Future. But thou art lost in deep anxiety. A thousand voices call to thee on all sides. Each one says it is the Voice of Heaven. Thou beholdest a thousand passing systems. Thou hearest a thousand discordant sounds. Each one says, it is alone the Holy. Each one avers that it only is the Sacred Voice of God. This cries out, I am the most ancient. This replies, I am the most perfect. This proclaims, With me alone doth God reside. This thunders out, Accurst is he who obeys me not. O Mortal! thou art in a maze. Thou knowest not whither thou shalt turn. The fate of thine immortal spirit trembles in the balance. Where shalt thou find God?

X.

Shall we seek his footsteps in the East? She led him to those hallowed climes. Here God first revealed Himself. Here he sent His first Apostles. How was God worshipped? Priests offered to the Lord of Light sacrifices of animals. They slew hogs, they killed fowls, they slaughtered fish. Upon the heads of these creatures they said, O Lord, let the penalty of our transgression fall. We are guilty of many sins; but have we not slain a horse? We have habitually disobeyed Thy commandments; but have we not given Thee the blood of goats? We have despised every one of Thy Sacred Institutes; but great is the merit of the rams and sheep which we have butchered upon Thine altar. Punish not us therefore, O forgiving God! but let Thine anger fall entirely upon these creatures, which we present to Thee as an atonement for our sins. I saw a priest descend into a pit. He was clothed in white garments. They covered the pit over with loose boards, and stabbed

a bull upon this temporary floor, so that the whole blood descended in a shower and drenched the man all over. He ascended. His robes were no longer white. They were thick red with hot blood. All the people shouted their delight. O God, they said, this man is now most pure; so also are we.* He hath washed away all our sins, and all his own, in the blood of the slain. He alone is now worthy to be our pontiff. Suffer us to touch his garments that we may be cleansed. They followed, they venerated, they adored him. They looked on him as a very god. He went and joined himself to his brethren. These professed to raise the dead, and to reveal the future. They gave magical signs to their followers. They built temples to animals. They had shrines and altars for birds and reptiles. They prostrated themselves before these images. They debased themselves to the earth in paying them homage. When their prayers failed, they flogged or burned their deities. When their hopes were successful, they gave them offerings. They prayed to the departed, and to legions of spirits, good and evil. In every place we saw the vilest superstition. The name of the true God was almost unknown, except among the few and wise. All professed to worship Him, but scarcely any knew what He was. Vestiges of his true religion were indeed seen, and temples were raised in his name; but ceremonies took the place of virtue, and a rabble of false idols was worshipped with more devotion than the God of Heaven. In every place superstition triumphed, and reason was banished. Priests were more attended to than Truth. The law of God gave place to the customs and fables of men.

We proceeded onward and saw a man adored as God. He sat upon a throne, and received from all profound homage. I never die, he said, I do but transmigrate from one human shape into another. Hence I have reigned here for more than three thousand years. But the priests used him merely as an instrument to secure their own sway. He died, he was entombed, and his votaries sought out an infant, and exclaimed aloud: Behold our God! The most fanatical superstitions profaned the minds of all his followers. Yet at the base I saw Truth—but Truth perverted from her heavenly purpose. Observances that availed not, and fashions that were of no profit to an immortal spirit, took the place of that august re-

* A similar custom once prevailed all over Europe, and with ourselves: it is now confined to Ireland, some wild parts of Scotland, and to Wales. In the last country we read that when a person died, his friends sent for the sin-eater of the district, who, for the small sum of half-a crown, actually took upon himself the sins of the deceased by the simple process of eating them. The plan of operations was this: A loaf of bread was provided, which the sin-eater first placed upon the dead person's chest, then muttered some incantations over it, finally eating it. Will it be credited that he was believed to have taken from the defunct the heavy weight of his sins, and to appropriate them to himself, for which act of kindness he was regarded by everybody as a tabooed outcast. Indeed, immediately after the ceremony was finished, and he had received his pay, he vanished in double quick time, it being the usual custom to belabour him with sticks—if they could catch him.—*Once a Week*; Nov. 29, 1862. The Jewish scapegoat is an analogue of this; so is the Christian Saviour and Redeemer.

ligion which counsels virtue and practical benevolence before all other things.

We proceeded onward. We saw a land of innumerable temples. But the number of its gods was still greater. Every attribute and quality that appertains to Heaven and Earth was symbolised by a figure, and worshipped as the true God. Some had a thousand heads. Some had only one. Some had the heads of animals that exist. Some had the heads of those that never did exist. Some were giants. Some were dwarfs. Some were red. Some were black. All were hideous and deformed. Yet many millions of shrewd, clever, calculating, and learned men worshipped them as gods. The most incredible legends were related and believed as truths. The fictions of wild fancy were accepted as solemn revelations from the spheres. The symbolic language of a fiery enthusiasm was followed and confided in according to the letter. All the sins of which man is capable were assigned to these gods in turn; and virtue, justice, chastity, or truth were rarely practised among their celestial rulers. This was the popular belief. This was the creed that held millions of enlightened mortals bound in chains. This was the doctrine that evoked the most astonishing fanaticism, and led to the most excruciating self-torture, men who were sane and intelligent in all other respects. The true religion that had once existed was known and practised but by few. The sublime ideas of God, the One and the Most Holy, which their books in part enunciated, were lost upon the immense masses and millions of believers; and by a small minority alone was the image of the Creator venerated. Cows and birds and fishes and trees and stones and rivers and fire were worshipped; but the One God was nowhere worshipped by the many. The sun and moon and sky and earth were adored; and sheep and goats and lambs were offered to them as peace-offerings and atonements for crime; but only in a few places were the hearts of the people uplifted to the Splendid One of Light.

We proceeded onward. We saw idol-worship everywhere. The Great God, they said, cares not for us. He is absorbed in happiness, and casts no thought upon mankind. He forgets us. Why should we regard Him? But there are inferior Gods to whose agency He commits the government of mundane things. These we worship. We give them sacrifice, and pay them homage. They showed us reliques: the bones and teeth of their divinities. These they venerated more than holiness itself. In one great temple they worshipped only apes. Behold, said they, the ruling powers of the earth! There were wise and holy men among them who believed in the true God. But what were they? As a handful of sand in the desert—as a few leaves in the forest. The vast population of millions was held in debasing slavery. Their reason was in chains.

We proceeded onward, and saw millions who believed in the efficacy of child-sacrifice. A brazen image was set upon an altar;

flames were kindled beneath; when it became red-hot, a living child was flung into its open mouth and immediately destroyed. O God! they cried, be this blood an atonement for all the crimes we have committed. Some cut out their tongues, and believed themselves purified unto holiness. Others cut off their flesh by piece-meal, and said, O God! see how we torment ourselves for love of Thee. Others adored the four winds, and sacrificed fowls in their honour. Others venerated demons only, and by profound arguments convinced themselves that devil-worship was the true religion of the Holy. Others adored the Sun, the Moon, the Stars, and Time, and celebrated with wine and hog's flesh a festival propitiatory of their darkest sins. They regulated their actions by the flight of birds, and believed in Two Principles: one Good, the other Evil, who were always warring against each other. But the latter had more of their respect than the former; and fear was the foundation of their faith. They sacrificed a red cock* to the demon: they trusted their magicians more than Heaven itself. We saw penitents who subjected themselves to torture in order to please the Lord of Beauty and Divineness. They traversed deserts; they ascended mountains; they wandered on the brink of precipices, and, casting their eyes on the past, confessed their sins aloud. Now we are absolved, they said: now we are fit for heaven.

XI.

We were borne onward yet more and more. We saw a great people and a valiant. They adored an image. They sacrificed their own lives and that of their children to propitiate him. We saw their great ones go into shallows, gilded and adorned with silken banners; they danced to solemn music, and floating onward to the ocean, flung themselves into its depths. We saw them entomb themselves alive and die, as it were, by inches, all in honour of a dog-headed idol.

We were borne onward into a vast region thickly populated—a region of wise men. They had temples without number to the genii of air and water; to the spirits of the mountains, and the sea-dragons; to the moon and to the king of the birds. They worshipped dead men, and provided entertainments for them. They kindled fires to give their Spirits light, and burned paper to supply them with money. They did homage to imaginary existences; but they did not practise the Law of the Real Existence. Every man made a deity for himself, and adored it. They prayed to a Stone. Their superstitious practices had no end, and no meaning, save only to the grossly ignorant. They resorted to divination, and all the arts of

* In mystical allusion to this, Jesus was always painted by the ancient artists (who acted merely according to the orders of the hierophants, or pontiffs of the Secret Creed, which always has prevailed in Rome, and is still the guiding principle of the Vatican) with red, or golden-coloured hair. The cock was a solar symbol, the bright-haired Phoebos, or Light of Life, "with healing in his wings."
—Malachi iv. 2.

foolish barbarism ; while they prided themselves on being the most enlightened tenants of the earth.

We were borne onward over mountains and plains, and saw the rites of many hordes. At every man's door we saw a god made of straw or earth. This was his tutelar divinity whom he honoured by prayer, by sacrifices of animals, by fire and food. The public images of their gods were also venerated ; and ceremonies wholly fantastical made up the all of their religious creed.

We were borne onward and found others who believed in an Evil Phantom that watched the souls of all the dead for three days, and bore them off to Hell, if they were not perpetually prayed for by their kinsmen. But if the living weep for the dead, the waters which divide Earth from Heaven are so wildly swollen that the deceased cannot pass, and he is obliged to wander in desolation and despair.

We were borne onward and saw others who believed that the races of men were born of arrows planted in the earth by some Unknown Power. They venerated images ; they adored wizards. They bowed before devils. They prayed to the Sun to bless them, to the Moon to give them prosperity. They sacrificed human beings to the gods, and feasted on their dead bodies. Vengeance is sanctioned by their religion ; savage licentiousness is a mark of faith. Everything that degrades man beneath the lowest brute is a symbol of perfection with these people.

We proceeded onward and saw tribes who venerated Fire, and the Moon, and with oblations of peas, honey, beans, and blood, hoped to secure the favour of Heaven. They used talismans. They held that the dead were changed into serpents. They declared that God was a bloody tyrant, who could be appeased only by their misery and sufferings ; such as would not pray to Him, prayed to goats, snakes, and tigers, to defend them from His rage. Some adored God by burning straw, and smearing themselves with the smoke. They thought it the highest proof of virtue to devour the flesh of their enemies ; in their alliances they were beasts ; but all was sanctioned by their priests. Some dipped a bit of gold into water, and, drinking it off, cried out, Now we are free from all sin : we are pure as gold. Many carried their gods about with them in little boxes ; they praised them if they prospered in their undertakings ; but if they were unsuccessful, they loaded them with abuse. The lowest vices reigned among them ; the most debasing depravities existed, and were part of their religion. There was hardly any moral corruption which was not authorised by a divine example : there was scarcely an aberration from decency which some one of their gods had not committed. The priests made themselves all-powerful. They were venerated by the men : they were adored by the women. They were in alliance with the kings and rulers to maintain the existing system, by which men were reduced to a condition below that of swine.

We proceeded northward. There also we saw idols worshipped.

Their seers called them to adoration. They sold favourable winds to mariners, and venerated spirits who, they said, dwelt in the atmosphere. They invoked the manes of the departed, and idolised black cats. They gave the dead money to pay for admission into Heaven; and placed food and drink on his coffin. He is in Hell, they said, who hath not been washed in water when he was named: who did not pay a holy priest. They worshipped saints, and pictures of the saints. They preached that all things were predestined by God—good as well as evil. They said that many virtuous men were elected to Hell, and many bad men were elected to Paradise. They believed in miracles done by human agents, and in the subversion of the immutable laws of Nature for a whim. They professed that money given for prayers drew the wicked out of the influence of justice; and that God forgave the most dreadful sins when the priests received a present of gold or silver for their intercession. They venerated holy water, and declared that it averted evil from their homes. They confessed their sins to priests, and boasted: Now we are absolved—now we are as pure as snow. But they began to sin immediately after. They said that fire descended from heaven to light their candles on certain festivals; and that lamps illuminated at that fire saved them from all future punishment for crimes committed on the earth. They preached that their god had a mother who was a mortal woman, and another's wife; and believed that the Lord of the Universe, whom the Universe contains not, was born on earth out of a body of flesh, and became subject as a man to all the miserable wants and necessities of human nature.

We proceeded onwards, and found the same opinions held by millions under another name. They said their God was his own father, and that he was both son and father at the same time, though both were eternal, and had no beginning, but had existed from the same instant; and yet that He was neither father nor son, but one Triform Uniform Being during the whole period: that He was put to an agonising death to satisfy a vow of vengeance made by himself—that only by his own misery and destruction could man enter into Heaven, from which he had excluded him, and that in pursuance of this revengeful vow, which was one of love and mercy also, He bore all the sins of human kind, even those of his murderers, while He was at the same minute the Immaculate, Eternal, and Undying Lord of the Universe, throned in Heaven: suffering no penalty, but radiant and happy in the Spheres of Light; that nothing could appease his wrath but his own blood, offered in the person of his own Son, who was himself; and that He procreated himself anew, by means of himself and the wife of another man, for the purpose of being killed by the hands of wicked wretches, whom he loved so much that he resolved to die in utter misery for their salvation; while He at the same time cursed themselves and their posterity, and only subjected them to everlasting exile on the earth, for doing that very deed of murder which was to

throw open Heaven to all mankind. This god, they said, was changed into a wafer, and was eaten by men; and no man who did not eat Him could enter into Heaven. They professed to eat and drink him at their festivals, and said: Now, indeed, we are free from all sin. But I observed that they were no better than before. They believed that the bodies of their dead, which were corrupted, and had been dissolved into the elements, rose again, and eat and drank and performed all the functions of human nature in the incorporeal Spheres of Paradise. And, seeing these things, we inquired no more, but wended further on our lonely journey. Our hearts were filled with tears, and we half despaired of mortals.

We found millions living under a code of blood. They called it the Teacher, but it taught massacre. They declared it was the Revelation of God, but it commanded the destruction of his children. Pure in its original conception, it had been transformed by the hands of fierce soldiers into a sanguinary ordinance, which justified almost every crime when committed under the Crescent of the Faith. But these men were wholly free from idolatry. Their only superstition was the adoration of a Black Stone. They despised all other men. They believed that earth was made for their control; but, relying implicitly on the laws of fate and irrevocable predestination, they sunk at times into torpor, and left to Heaven to work out those purposes which Man himself only can achieve.

Yet again further to the west we wandered. We found mighty tribes who adored trees and stones, and serpents, and bowed themselves to the planets. They believed in a Great Evil Spirit, who tempted men into crime, and was appointed or permitted to do so by the Supreme Lord; they venerated an insect, and prayed to a fetish, and offered as victims to atone for guilt men and cows. They believed in witches and in necromancy, and bore about with them the bones of fish and birds and monkeys as powerful amulets against misfortune. Others whom we saw had for gods elephants' teeth and dead men's heads, or dogs or cats which they accidentally met, and to these they immolated cocks. Our gods, they said, are now propitiated, and will confer all blessings upon ourselves and families.

XII.

Among all these men, though bound in slavery and ignorance, we found instances of sublime virtue, purity, and self-denial. Among whom, indeed, found we it not? No matter how debasing were the superstitions that prevailed, we discovered human beings noble in despite of their superstitions; and asserting their divine original by the exercise of acts that dignify mankind. But these were few and far between. The masses were wholly brutalised and enslaved. They were chained body and soul to systems of abomination too gross to be described; and the appearance which the Earth presented was little better than that of one vast wilderness of crime and error, with here and there a palm tree and a fountain, glittering amid surrounding death.

And seeing these things, I grew faint. My eyes were clouded. My senses were confused. My heart melted into snow-water. The stars shone, but I heeded them not. The moon walked in the firmament, but I felt not her pure light. The day-star gleamed; the sun arose above the hills, and out of the deep ocean, yet still I was in a trance of thought. I heard the sound of many waters in mine ears, and turned my thoughts to heaven reluctantly, and with sadness. Then the Vision said, Thou hast beheld the Present; what token doth it give of happy presage? Canst thou wrestle with these gigantic powers? Behold they have crowns upon their heads: they wear tiaras and royal robes. They wield swords also, which they bury in the hearts of those who cry aloud against them. They arm elephants and war-horses against their foes; they equip priests with flame and poison. Go now, and overthrow, and conquer if thou canst. But if thou perish not, thou shalt be indeed alone among the few who spake and were not slain. But I answered: God is with me, and no man shall triumph over Him. Me, indeed, he may trample beneath his feet; but that which I bear within me and around, he cannot overcome. The Star of Hope and Heaven gleams before me. I will march onward by her glittering light.

O Sun! thou glorious orb!
 In heart I chase thee over the heavens:
 Stay thy course: answer thou unto me,
 Answer me in voice of love and power.
 Thou dost arise in light—
 But where is thy cradle?
 Thou dost descend in triple splendour—
 But where is thy bed in the skies?
 The raven-dark clouds
 Gathered round the King of Lustre:
 He shone a moment, and was gone:
 A chill of death came round me.
 My heart beat—my spirit sank;
 Alas! Alas! Alas!
 And out of the raven-cloud He spake—
 Onward!

Then the Vision left me, and I was again alone;—with vivid dreams and solitary musings—alone, amid the heavenly Vision—
(To be continued.)

CONSCIENCE: ITS PLACE AND FUNCTION.

BY A TRUTHSEEKER.

“Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man.”—ACTS xxiv. 16.

In the columns of *The Times* we frequently meet with a paragraph headed “Conscience Money,” in which the Chancellor of the

Exchequer acknowledges the receipt of various sums on account of unpaid Income Tax. The heading of this paragraph fairly indicates the conventional meaning attached to the word "conscience." In some of these cases, at least, we should be justified in assuming that the motive actuating the sender was the simple desire to do the right—that the man was acting from principle. We have here an illustration of an apprehended principle in action. The man is impressed with a *feeling* that he ought to pay this money, and his desire to do the right constitutes his motive to action. There is thus a principle: the apprehension and application of a principle, and a motive to action. A little thought on these points may possibly show the place and function of Conscience.

The principle of LOVE, which includes Righteousness, is Divine. It is the attribute of Deity; the pervading influence from the Source of all Life and Thought. It is well called LIGHT, "the inner light," "the indwelling spirit," "the silent monitor," "the still small voice." It is, indeed, the *Light of Love*—the Light of the Divine Intelligence, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world; the impress of the Creator's nature; the image of God reflected on the soul of man. It is the voice of Deity, and it says *Do the right*.

The apprehension of this light is instinctive—an emotional perception. It is the instinct of intelligence, an infallible guide to virtue and goodness, but no test of the truth of our beliefs. The light within us does not work for us, but in us. It does not teach us intellectual truth, but presents to our apprehension a principle of Love and Goodness capable of universal application. This principle is perceived and externalised in harmony with the physical, mental, and moral conditions of humanity. It is quite possible for a man to be wholly under the influence of this Divine principle, and yet to be profoundly ignorant and superstitious. When this fact is apprehended in its full significance, men will no longer squabble over creeds and rituals.

In its capacity for receiving impressions, the human soul* may be compared to a sensitised photographic plate. In photography, the quality of the impression is dependent upon the conditions of the plate. The organic differences of the human brain may be regarded as conditioning the receptive capacity of the soul. The child commences existence knowing nothing. Its soul is a conditioned *tabula rasa*. It receives its first impressions from sensations. These sensations produce general and particular impressions—general, in so far as they are common to mankind, and particular to the extent of organic variation. Leaving the general

* By soul is here meant, the seat of the emotional in man. The impressional part of man's nature—whatever that may be—is regarded as distinct from the mind which reasons upon the impressions received through the emotions. It may be, however, that the intellectual and the emotional in man are but different modes of mental action, and that there exists but the dualism of Mind and Matter. And, again, these may possibly be resolvable into Mind alone, of which Matter is the outcome, or manifestation.

impressions produced by sensations common to humanity, we confine our attention to what appears to be the mode of progress in each man's intellectual and moral development.

Starting, then, with a conception of the human soul as a *tabula rasa*, conditioned by the size or quality of the brain, and vitalised or sensitised by an inherent life-force (derived either immediately from its parents, or inter-mediate from the attraction of this force from its surroundings, through the inherited properties of its material organism), we may regard man as an embodied individuality, inheriting a conditioned capacity for receiving and perceiving impressions. Man, at any given point in his existence, is the totality of his impressions. What he has been taught by others; observed, compared, and reflected upon for himself: the sum total of these experiences forms the conscious entity we call Man. In life, and if he exist after the change we call death, Man is what he knows. He may be clothed upon with a new body, adapted to a world of new experiences, but *the man* can only be the totality of his impressions—the result of his conscious experiences in Earth-life. Man thus perceives, compares, and reflects. It is in the process of mental development that the moral sense is evolved, and man becomes conscious of impressions of a more occult nature. He *feels* a Power above and beyond his own, and out of this emotion arises a sense of awe, which, apprehended by the intelligence, develops Reverence, and a desire to worship that Power. In the same way man *feels* he should do the right. It is this emotion which leads to the desire for righteousness, justice, reciprocity. The perception of an inner principle, in seeming antagonism to the selfishness and sensuality of a lower nature, affords a field for the education of the *will*; and it is here the faculty of Conscience is developed. The intellectual, like the physical, instincts may be disregarded. Man *may* resist their appeal. The responsibility of so doing is commensurate with the individual power of perceiving and appreciating their force and authority. We must be very careful, however, to distinguish between Righteousness as a *principle*, and Right in action—between God's light, and man's perception of that light.* Great has been the misery occasioned by man failing to perceive this distinction. The *principle* of Righteousness is absolute. It is a ray of Divine light which illumines the soul of every intelligent being. Right in *action* is man's application of this Divine principle to his life and conduct. The application of an inner principle to man's life and conduct demands the exercise of his mental faculties. This process is educational, leading to conceptions of higher and lower standards of Right in action—right and wrong, good and evil. Obedience to the higher standard constitutes the circum-

* "Plutarch, or one who evidently expresses his sentiments, replies very much as at this day, that the enthusiasm, though most truly a divine afflatus and influence, yet has human souls for the sphere of its operation, and will take much of its outward form and fashion from these; that the agitation of the spirit is divine, but that much after this is human, and is the result of the varying condition of different souls, or of the same at different times."—Archbishop Trench "Plutarch."

stance we call Morality. Man's judgment as to the application of this Divine principle will be wise and unwise in the exact ratio of his knowledge, by which is meant *true* knowledge, viz., the knowledge of the constitution of his nature, physically, mentally, and morally; the knowledge of natural phenomena, and the laws by which they are governed. If a man's will be towards "the Light," then the greater his knowledge—all irrational influences apart—the nearer will he approach in action to that absolute Right (in principle), which is the circumstance we call Truth in its moral significance.

A man of discretion and wisdom—the outcome of knowledge—influenced by an intelligent apprehension of the Divine light, will approach as near to the Absolute Right as is possible to imperfect intelligences. Thus, *the intelligent apprehension of an intuited moral principle is the birth of Conscience. The application of this principle to the life and conduct is the function of this new-born faculty.*

Conscience may be regarded as the index of the soul, showing the totality of its impressions as to the right application of an intuited Divine principle. It is the exercise of the mental faculty of judgment on moral questions. The exercise of Conscience is not, however, confined to direct questions of morality, although it is chiefly to these questions the word is conventionally applied. A man, for instance, *believes* certain propositions, or asserted statements of fact, *conscientiously*, because he is impressed they are true. How or why a man is thus impressed, does not affect the question. If the totality of a man's impressions, as represented by Conscience, be in favour of their truth to that extent, he *conscientiously* believes them, and must (if he wills to follow the "Inner Light") adapt his conduct to his belief. To alter a man's conscience, you must enlighten his mind, increase his knowledge; but if from any cause he is unable to think for himself, the task is (perhaps, desirably) hopeless.

If these views be sound, it follows that a man's conscientious convictions on questions of belief are no proof to others of the truth of his conclusions. A man is bound to follow his convictions; but to suppose that conflicting conscientious lines of moral action, or self-refuting theological beliefs, can be equally true, is, of course, absurd. A Mohammedan has been led—under no matter what influences—to abjure Mohammedanism and embrace Christianity. Christians would not think of condemning the man for his change of belief. True; but what is said of the Christian who *conscientiously* arrives at the conclusion, that many of the dogmas of Christianity are untenable? "Unbelief is sin," cries the dogmatist, and then proceeds to point out that that want of faith which he commended in the Mohammedan, in the Christian's case will inevitably lead to "eternal torments." Where is the common sense of such teachings, to say nothing of logic? The men are both, if they are conscientious, under the influence of a Divine afflatus or principle. They perceive they must do the Right, and are learning what is

Right. Cease, ye priests (Mohammedan and Christian) to anathematise the one or the other.

Let reason have its full sway.* The Creator has endowed men with mental faculties, which, if allowed free scope, will in time enable them rightly to apply that Divine principle of Righteousness which He has impressed upon their souls. There is no hurry. We shall not all think alike until our organisms are constructed alike, and we are subjected to precisely the same combinations of circumstances and influences. Most Christians believe the Bible to be the infallible Word of God. The Mohammedan believes the Koran to be inspired, and Mohammed to have been a prophet of God. The Hindoo believes Khrishna to have been an incarnation of Deity. The Buddhist believes in Buddha. It cannot be urged that these varied and conflicting beliefs are the results of inward Divine teaching.† On the other hand, will not believers in all these creeds admit the presence of a "Light within," and acknowledge the pressure of a principle of Righteousness common to all beliefs? If this be so, is not the universality of testimony in favour of this inner Divine principle the strongest evidence of its being the voice of the Universal Father? whilst the varied and conflicting theological conceptions of mankind afford ample proof of their human origin. It is impossible to read that beautiful hymn of Dr. Newman's,‡ written it is said, shortly before he entered the Roman Communion, without feeling assured of the integrity of the writer's desire for Divine guidance. It may be asked, Was the step Dr. Newman then contemplated, and has since taken, the result of the

* "The God of Nature has given every man his own reason to be the judge of evidence to himself in particular, and to direct his assent in all things about which he is called to judge; and even the matters of revelation are to be believed by us, because our reason pronounces the revelation to be true. Therefore, the Great God will not, or cannot, in any instance, require us to assent to anything without reasonable or sufficient evidence; nor to believe any proposition more strongly than what our evidence for it will support."—*"The Improvement of the Mind."* Dr. Isaac Watts.

† See "Truth versus Ecclesiastical Dogma" (by the same author). Pages 32 and 46 on "Spiritual Discernments."

‡ Lead, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
 Lead Thou me on;
 The night is dark, and I am far from home,
 Lead Thou me on.
 Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
 The distant scene; one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou
 Should'st lead me on;
 I loved to choose and see my path; but now
 Lead Thou me on.
 I loved the garish day, and spite of fears,
 Pride ruled my will. Remember not past years.

So long Thy Power hath blest me, sure it still
 Will lead me on,
 O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
 The night is gone,—
 And with the morn those angel faces smile,
 Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

direct teaching of the Divine Spirit? The answer will probably depend upon a man's theological views. It is not here denied that our impressions are at times due to spiritual influences. It may be that the soul of man is capable of receiving impressions from spiritual sources. Disembodied spirits may, under certain conditions, and probably have, throughout the world's history, impressed the souls of those in the body. The mistake has been in regarding such impressions as infallible. Man would, indeed, be cast upon the ocean of life without compass or rudder were he left without a standard whereby to judge of his impressions. To the tribunal of Reason and Conscience must *all* impressions be submitted and there adjudicated upon under the reflected light of an inner Absolute Principle.* Intellectual freedom, combined with an intelligent apprehension of the Divine light within, will inevitably lead to the attainment of as much of Truth as a man, *at the time*, is capable of receiving. Men are apt to confound Intellectual Truth† with Goodness. Our views and conceptions on theological subjects are, as we believe, of little moment compared with a life of virtue and unselfish love, —the living out the light of the Divine Spirit within, the fruits of which are Justice, Reciprocity, Love. This alone can afford rational satisfaction to intelligent beings, and is, after all, the only source of true peace to men of all creeds. When the light of this world wanes, and the brighter light of a higher life breaks upon the soul, the important question then will be, not "What have I believed?" but, "What have I done or left undone?"

INCREMATION.

WE have on several occasions brought the subject of cremation before our readers, and have very recently given a full account of the mode in which the process might be carried out, as suggested by Professor Brunetti. The subject has been discussed by Sir Henry Thompson in the pages of the *Contemporary Review*, and there can be no doubt that various arguments may be advanced in its favour, whilst few can be adduced against it. In the first place, as Sir Henry argues, incremation only effects rapidly what inhumation accomplishes slowly, clumsily, and wastefully. The death and decomposition of the animal is the very means of life, nutrition, and development of the vegetable kingdom. Carbonic, acid, ammonia, and salts are the products of the disintegration of the animal body, whether rapidly or slowly completed. But in burial in the earth, months or years may elapse before these changes have reached their limit, whilst in cremation the whole cycle is finished in a few hours. In a sanitary point of view, no question can be entertained

* "Human reason is a reflex of Divine reason, a finite type of the Eternal Logos, or it could never understand the phenomena of experiential life and organisation." — "Organic Philosophy" (*Biology*). Doherty.

† Logic is the divine re-agent for testing the truth of our intellectual beliefs.

on which side the advantage lies. In cremation the ultimate chemical compounds are formed at once without prejudice to the living, whilst in burial the intermediate products are extremely harmful, and to say the least, are capable of inducing disease and death in the living. Even in cheapness, the advantage is altogether on the side of cremation, for a body may be burnt at a cost little exceeding half-a-crown in fuel. We think Sir Henry Thompson somewhat weakens his argument by dwelling on the value of the ashes. It is not likely that they would ever be used for economical purposes. The affection of friends and the introduction of funeral urns, which would certainly soon become general, would prevent all but a very small proportion of the capital at present spent in the importation of foreign bones for manure being supplied by human ashes, even supposing cremation to be universal. The main objections to cremation rest on sentiment and custom. A custom of many thousand years' duration—for the practice at least ascends to the time of Abraham—is not easily broken through; whilst the sentiment so impressively expressed in our burial service that these our bodies shall rise again in an incorruptible state must not be lightly disregarded. Sir Thomas Browne, however, cites various authorities in his "Hydrotaphia" to show that cremation was common amongst the old German nations, and was practised by the Druids. It would, therefore, only be a return in our case to ancient usage. It is certain that any change from established usage in the mode of disposing of the dead could only be slowly introduced; but the vulgar mind might be gradually familiarised with it by the erection of an incremation furnace, and the performance of the rite, with due solemnity, and under the supervision of properly-appointed officers in cases of unclaimed poor, whilst the arguments for its adoption by the better classes must be those which Sir Henry Thompson has well expressed in the paper above referred to—economy, cleanliness, and wholesomeness.—*The Lancet*.

A FIVE WEEKS' TRANCE.

MYSTERIOUS CASE IN AVON—A YOUNG LADY DONS HER SHROUD AND DIES PREDICTING HER RETURN TO LIFE.

AN experimental young lady of Avon is undertaking to develop new and startling beauties in the Spiritualistic line. For five weeks she has been lying as one dead, without breathing, eating, drinking, or giving any signs of life whatever—all for the purpose of convincing the sceptical world of the truth of Spiritualism. We take the facts, which appear below, from the *Rochester Democrat*, whose reporter learned them principally from Mr. John Ryan, a brother-in-law of the woman. Other prominent and respectable citizens of Avon also certify to the fact of the occurrence having taken place as related:

"Several months ago an unmarried woman by the name of Eleanor Bonney announced to her friends with whom she was living, that she was, at some time not far distant, to go into a long and peculiar trance, the result of which would be the revelation of some startling facts—facts which would convince the doubting world of the truth of Spiritualism. Miss Bonney had been an inmate of the house of L. O. Preston, a farmer residing about a mile and a half west of the village, for more than eight years. She was the daughter of poor parents who lived in the immediate neighbourhood, and was adopted into the family of Mr. Preston when about seventeen years of age. She had been for some time past an acknowledged medium and clairvoyant, and had, as her friends allege, through the instrumentality of the spirits, been enabled to perform many wonderful things. She was the intimate friend of a lady clairvoyant physician of this city, Mrs. Jennie C. Dutton (of the firm of Sprague & Dutton, 185 Powers Block), who by the way, had been peculiarly connected with the trance in which Miss Bonney is now lying.

"As stated above, she (Miss Bonney) frequently gave notice to those intimately associated with her that she was to pass into this mysterious state, and did this so frequently that they began to weary of it, doubting the idea that the event would ever come to pass. At a visit to Avon, made some time during the summer, Mrs. Dutton was informed of what she expected to take place, and from her the promise was elicited that in case the event should occur, she would remain with the body, prevent any attempt at burial, and keep her entirely free from the gaze of any intruder, save a special few whom she named. This promise Dr. Dutton gave unhesitatingly, with little faith, however, we are informed, that her services would ever be really required.

"On the tenth day of November last Miss Bonney informed her friends that the time had come, and they must prepare for the event which had been so long predicted. Sending for her brother-in-law, John Ryan (a deputy sheriff of the village) she informed him of what was coming, and to him and Mr. Preston announced the course of conduct to be pursued by them, and certain conditions necessary to be carried out in order to make the experiment a success. She stated that she was to prove that a person could die, the soul be completely separated from the body, the first stage of decomposition even set in, and then, by miraculous power, be restored to life again in all respects as she was before. To accomplish this certain rules must strictly be observed, and she left the matter entirely to her friends, believing that they would see that her wishes were conscientiously carried out. She named the hour at which she was to 'go out,' as she termed it at two o'clock in the morning, and lying down upon the bed finished the directions she wished to give. No one was to be allowed to watch over her but Mr. and Mrs. Preston, Mr. and Mrs. Ryan, and Mrs. Dr. Dutton. The room where she slept was to have no stove, but by means

of one situated in an adjoining room was to be kept at a temperature of seventy degrees.

"Next followed particulars regarding certain events which would occur, the manner in which her body would change, mysterious sounds and phenomena, &c. Of these predictions many, according to the statements of her attendants, have really come to pass, and the majority of her fellow believers seem to be confident that the remaining cure, even to the seeming impossibility of returning to life, will surely occur. After she had finished what she wished to say, she lay upon the bed for some time without speaking a word, but breathing very hard. This grew weaker and weaker, until at precisely two o'clock, without a single contortion of the body, or the movement of a single muscle, she passed into what is called a trance, to all appearance dead. In that state it is affirmed she has remained ever since that time, lying upon her back, slightly inclined to the right side. Her attendants solemnly aver that in that time (five weeks next Monday) she has not partaken of a particle of food, had a drop of anything to drink, nor stirred a muscle. A mirror on several occasions has been held before her nostrils for an hour at a time, without collecting the slightest moisture.

"Among the changes which she predicted would take place was that her tongue would protrude from her mouth and a slight effusion of blood take place from her nostrils. This we are informed occurred some three weeks ago. She also said that her body would lose fifty pounds in weight, and when that was done it would be manifested by the ringing of bells; that when the soul had entirely separated from the body the house would be violently shaken. Both of these predictions, it is claimed, have come to pass. Miss Bonney was quite a large woman, weighing 208 pounds, the day she passed into the trance, and a medical gentleman of experience says that the body was evidently shrunk enough to warrant the difference in weight which was predicted. The same gentleman avers that he was in the house the time the bells were rung and distinctly heard them; also that he was present on one occasion when the house shook as if an earthquake was prevailing.

"Another prophecy was that the body of the woman would turn black, and that the eyes, instead of sinking would protrude, and that this has taken place is solemnly declared by both her brother-in-law, Mr. Preston, H. B. Simmons, one of the proprietors of the United States Hotel, and the physician above referred to. Although this has taken place, yet we are assured that decomposition has not yet commenced, and there is no more unpleasant odour than would naturally proceed from a sick room. This will seem especially strange when it is understood that a physician of many years experience has announced that to the best of his knowledge and belief the woman is undoubtedly dead, and has been for some time."

In conclusion the *Democrat* remarks: "There was at one time considerable feeling existing in Avon in relation to the matter, and the coroner was importuned to look into the case. Those who have

charge of the body declare that no person shall enter that room, and they evidently mean to stand firmly to what they have said. The premises have been given into the hands of the deputy sheriff before mentioned, and thus it would seem that the parties have the advantage. It is confidently expected by the most faithful believers of her sect, that what appears to be now a senseless corpse will again revive and quicken into life."

One peculiar feature of this case is the condition of the clairvoyant physician, Mrs. Dutton, who, according to her promise, went to Avon and took her place beside her friend on the next day after the trance began. Two days after that she was taken sick, and for seventeen days existed without food, drink or sleep. She was perfectly conscious and would answer when spoken to. A few days ago she ate four bunches of grapes, which constituted all the food taken into her stomach in twenty days.—*Albany Evening Mail*, Dec. 16, 1873.

THE PHRENOLOGICAL AND PHYSIOGNOMICAL ANNUAL FOR 1874.

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Through the kindness of our friend, Mr. Wells of New York, the readers of *Human Nature* again have the annual privilege of obtaining this yearly visitor at half price. The issue now before us is worth the double of any of its predecessors. It is on a page the size of the *Phrenological Journal*, its articles of a greater variety, and more importance, and it literally teems with first-class illustrations. To save space, we must refer our readers to the advertisement of its contents, on another page. It is an extremely cheap work at 1s, but at 6d, few will be able to resist the temptation of possessing it.

In all my Eastern travels thus far, I have not seen a Chinaman drink liquor, nor have I even *heard* of a drunken one! Such habits may prevail, but I have heard nor seen nothing of them. On the other hand, I have seen several clergymen jolly and "mellow" over the social glass! Cool and reflective, these Asiatic Chinese are not slow to forget that foreign Christian nations introduced opium into their empire, against the positive remonstrances of the Pekin Government. Out of this opium trade business grew the first war, with a great slaughter of life. They also well understand that their countrymen have not been allowed to testify in the civil and criminal courts of America only under certain crippled conditions; and further, they take a sort of demoniac satisfaction in reminding western nations of their frequent drunkenness, their houses of prostitution, their city dancing dens, their immodest pictures, and their publication of obscene books. On the whole, they think Christian nations not only terribly immoral, but downright hypocrites! Sir John Davis sensibly wrote thus to Englishmen: "The most commendable portion of the Chinese system is the general diffusion of elementary *moral education*, among even the lower classes."—*J. M. Peebles*.