

# HUMAN NATURE:

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## POSITIVE VIEW OF SPIRITUALISM AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF FORCE.

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HE who claims too much for a thing does it no less harm than he who denies it its due; and there is no worse enemy to a cause than an inconsiderate friend.

It is in the interest of Spiritualism that I propose to examine a discourse entitled "God and Immortality, viewed in relation to Modern Spiritualism,"\* by Dr. George Sexton, one of the most able and eloquent supporters that Spiritualism has in the field, but who, it seems to me, might accomplish more, if he aimed at less.

Spiritualism does not give us an assurance of immortality, nor is it such an antidote to Atheism as the Doctor imagines. What Spiritualism does effect is to bring down the idea of continued existence after death from the heights of religious faith to the level of ordinary knowledge, and make it a fact as universally known and appreciated as the fact of mortality is at present. Surely this is enough for the mysterious movement to accomplish in the face of the tendencies of the present age! Surely there is ample ground here for panegyric without adding unmerited praises!

Again, it is of little use running a tilt against modern philosophy; it is worse than idle to dub it with such names as "cold, cheerless, materialistic," and to ascribe to it the aim of "crushing out the great heart of humanity." Philosophy speaks according to her lights. Her aim is truth, not the training of the emotions. Men do not wish to believe that they are dust, to dust return-

ing,—brief bubbles on the great ocean of life, appearing but to disappear. Be assured, that if they believe this they are convinced against their will. I speak of men in their better moments, not as when, sense-ridden, they are ready to barter their birthright for a mess of pottage. It is absurd to blame Philosophy for not enlightening men as to their future, for her very end and aim is to gain light, and she gives us all she can. There is certainly a tendency among men to shut their eyes to evidence when it tells against their opinions, but just in so far as they give way to this tendency, they become unphilosophic. Science and Philosophy are good; no evil will come from them; though much may come from an erroneous notion of what Science and Philosophy have to teach, and this erroneous notion, it seems to me, Dr. Sexton is doing his best to encourage.

As we draw to the close of Dr. Sexton's pamphlet we find that all his arguments for the existence of a Deity have been a mere concession to our weakness, since the matter has already been put beyond the reach of doubt by the elaboration, perfection, and popularisation of the old *a priori* argument by Mr. Gillespie of Torbanehill. "It were as easy," we are told, "to upset the propositions of Euclid as those of Mr. Gillespie." And yet all men are not of one opinion with regard to theology, though there has never been a heretic in geometry! Strange the difference of credit attaching to the propositions of Euclid of Alexandria, and to those of Mr. Gillespie of Torbanehill! Were we obliged to encounter Mr. Gillespie, this declaration from Dr. Sexton would be discouraging; but, as good luck will have it, we are not called upon to cope with this unanswerable logician, for the simple reason that if the Deity exists, his existence is a matter of fact, and no matter of fact is susceptible of demonstration. All deduction is hypothetical, and its sphere is strictly confined to the relation of ideas. Perhaps, then, what Mr. Gillespie has so firmly established is, not the existence of the Deity as a matter of fact, but the idea of his existence as a necessity of thought. Even this, it would seem, affords no fit ground for a lengthy discussion. Either there has been a beginning or there has not. If there has not, then a First Cause is out of the question; if there has, it is as easy to conceive that Matter came first and developed into Mind, as that Mind came first, and created Matter. I say the one is as conceivable as the other, because neither is so; the limits of our conception being determined by our experience, while of an absolute commencement we have had no experience.

Abandoning, therefore, a dispute which must of necessity be barren of results, let us examine whether Dr. Sexton has brought forward such arguments as render the existence of a Personal



Deity (for it is for that Dr. Sexton contends) probable as a matter of fact. Now, the first thing which strikes us is, that not one of the arguments used is drawn from Spiritualism; all are derived from the much-maligned Science and Philosophy of modern times. Perhaps the two authors upon whom Dr. Sexton has levied the heaviest contributions are Mr. Grove and Mr. Charles Bray, one of whom, so far as I know, has not turned his attention to Spiritualism; the other, accepting the facts, expressly repudiates the theory. If any proof, therefore, of natural religion has been adduced in this pamphlet, it is not special to Spiritualism, but common to science; and we may fairly quarrel with the title-page as raising expectations that are not fulfilled. When Dr. Sexton comes more particularly to the subject of Spiritualism, he contents himself with the simple affirmation that "Atheism and Spiritualism are totally incompatible." Now, Atheism is on the face of it illogical, and is incompatible with common sense and common honesty. The Atheist is only the theologian in disguise, and with equal arrogance, though without the same excuse, presumes to pronounce a final decision on matters he cannot possibly understand. Disbelief is a very different thing from scepticism, though the latter term is often ignorantly used for denial; it is, in fact, only another form of belief. The man who disbelieves any proposition must believe its contradictory. But, granting all this, it is hard to see why Atheism should be more incompatible with Spiritualism than with anything else. Any arguments which tell for Atheism with regard to what lies on this side the grave, would tell for it equally with regard to what lies beyond it. If we can conceive the material world as originating and sustaining itself, we can conceive the spiritual world as doing the same. But, it may be said, Spiritualism has, at all events, conclusively proved that thought is not the mere result of material organisation, and may exist independently of it. What of that? In the first place, Materialism is not necessarily Atheism. It is quite possible to hold that "the Lord liveth and reigneth," and that "He is the same and His years shall not fail," and yet to hold, as the Jews of old seem to have done, before they borrowed the belief in immortality from the mystics of the East, that life terminates at the grave, that God has made our lives as a span, and that "the dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence;" and there would seem to be deep religion in such a conception, if the essence of religion be self-abnegation. In the next place, even if the cause of Atheism is at present identified with that of Materialism, what has the Atheist to do but to change his ground? If matter may be conceived to exist independently of a Deity, why not mind?

Dr Sexton, then, has not made out a special case for Spiritualism as against Atheism. This, I think, will be readily acknowledged. But in the arguments he has drawn from the common stock of scientific knowledge has he proved his point? Or has he not rather mistaken altogether what is within the power of Science to accomplish? If I object to Dr. Sexton's line of argument, it must not be understood that I have any wish to call in question his conclusion; but because an object may be legitimate is no reason that it should be compassed by fraud and violence.

Dr. Sexton's argument may be summed up thus: Though we think that we know a great deal about Matter, the only thing of which we have any real knowledge is Force. We know only of one originator of Force, and that is Will. Will implies Intelligence. We have therefore no right to deny that wherever we find Force there also is Intelligence. This Intelligence must be conscious, because unconscious intelligence is nonsense. The conclusion we are desired to draw is, that Science proves that everything going on in the world about us is the direct result of the conscious action of a Supreme Intelligence. It is my purpose to show that hardly one of the above propositions is true, and the conclusion ill-concluded.

As my general attitude is to be thus hostile, I am glad to be able to agree at starting with the Doctor's remarks as to the more extended acquaintance we possess with Spirit than with Matter. True, we know neither the one nor the other in themselves; our knowledge is confined to their modifications. But external phenomena, or modifications of matter, are revealed to us by means of the senses, which are the channels of communication between Spirit and Matter. In the case of all external phenomena, then, we study Spirit and Matter in their mutual relations, and any knowledge we gain of modifications of matter is accompanied by a corresponding knowledge of modifications of mind. Sensations are thus common ground between Spirit and Matter. But with regard to Emotions, Thoughts, and Volitions, how stands the case? Here we have plentiful knowledge of modifications of mind not necessarily accompanied by a knowledge of corresponding modifications of matter. It is true such knowledge may be had, and is being rapidly gained by the advance of physiology: but that is another question; the point to be insisted on here is, that we start with a far wider knowledge of Spirit than of Matter. Accordingly, we find that savages invariably explain nature by reference to themselves; we find also in Dr. Sexton's school of thought manifest traces of the same primitive tendency.

But because we admit that our knowledge of Spirit is more



extensive than that of Matter, are we therefore obliged to merge the one entirely in the other, and say that the only thing with which we have any acquaintance is Force, as Dr. Sexton, following in the steps of Mr. Charles Bray, would have us do? Let us see what this means. Mr. Grove says, ("Correlation of Physical Forces," p. 22), "I use the term Force in reference to them (the affections of matter) as meaning the active principle inseparable from matter which is supposed to induce its various changes." On which Bray remarks: "But as the 'various changes' are the only things known to us, why assume that they are inseparable from matter, or that there is any matter at all?" Now, in the first place, it is surely a contradiction to assert that there is change, and yet to deny that there is anything which changes; and in the second place, what is really and directly known to us is neither Spirit itself, nor yet Matter, nor yet Force, but merely a series of subjective states. Our minds are so constituted that we cannot help believing some of these subjective states to be caused from without. Further, while we seem compelled on the one hand to believe that there is something which experiences the subjective changes of which we are conscious, so we seem compelled on the other hand to believe that there is something which undergoes the objective changes which are supposed to correspond with them. The former something we call Spirit, the latter Matter; but we know neither the one nor the other in itself, only their changes; and, moreover, it is our knowledge of the series of mental states alone which is primary. An accomplished metaphysician (*pace ejus dixerim*) like Mr. Bray, is of course perfectly aware of this. He says: "But when we speak of either matter or force we speak only of the external cause of our sensations and ideas; why not then continue to use the term matter as heretofore?" His answer is, that Force is a more convenient term, as being more general, and including both sides of creation—Matter and Spirit. "Force, in its different modes of action, as Light, Heat, Electricity, Galvanism, Chemical Affinity, Attraction, and Repulsion, is sufficient to produce half the phenomena around us. Life and Mind, which are correlates of Force, or other modes of its action, are sufficient to produce the other half." The reason urged in favour of substituting the term Force for the term Matter seems to tell quite in the opposite direction. Doubtless it is an advantage to have a common term embracing both Matter and Spirit; but the advantage of this is slight compared with the disadvantage of using a general term to the exclusion of a special one. However much a higher intelligence might afford to confound the human mind with lower natural agencies, surely to us it is all-important to have a term which will distinguish ourselves from what is not

ourselves, the thing which receives impressions from the thing which causes impressions? But even if it were ever so desirable that Matter should be dethroned and its very name and notion banished from our minds, still there is no reason why Force should reign in its stead. Matter has, at all events, a show of legitimacy; Force is a mere modern upstart. Matter we seem compelled by the constitution of our minds to believe in; with regard to Force we are under no such compulsion. Let us briefly review the whole question, and see what can be said by the partisans of either claimant.

So far as immediate knowledge is concerned, we are confined within the narrow limits of our own minds. All that we are aware of is certain mental states. Our consciousness is presented with a perpetual series of ideas or feelings, or, as Hume calls them, impressions. To a certain class of impressions, namely, sensations, we find ourselves obliged to assign an external cause. Reason, however, tells us that of the cause itself we can know nothing; we can only study it in its effects, and these are sense-impressions. The external cause it has been the custom to call by the time-honoured name of matter. We are now told that we ought to call it force. It matters little by what name we call it, so long as we bear in mind that we are completely ignorant of it. We may remark, however, in passing, that even the slight advantage claimed for the new term by Mr. Bray, namely, that it includes spirit as well as matter, is negatived by the fact that we have already a term in use of equal comprehensiveness. The term "substance" is used equally for the unknown recipient of impressions, and for the unknown cause of them.

So far, we have looked at the question from the metaphysician's point of view, and we have found that, instead of our knowledge being confined to Force, we have no knowledge whatever of Force. Let us now look at it from the point of view of the scientific man. Science, being "educated common-sense," does not trouble her head any more than the vulgar with the perplexing problems of metaphysic. With what then does Science deal? She is never weary of proclaiming that she deals only with phenomena. These are of two kinds, internal and external. Internal phenomena are the states of mind already spoken of. What then are external phenomena? The raw material furnished by the senses is worked up by the subtle chemistry of the brain into a form very different from that under which it entered the laboratory. The picture of the world in our minds is something that could only exist for beings constituted like ourselves. This picture is no stationary one, but a dissolving view; any portion of it regarded as separate from the rest is called a phenomenon. But to Science the world is a real world, and no picture—no



whisper from the regions outlying consciousness, no revelation from the thing which is other than oneself. To the eye of Science there are *bond fide* bodies existing outside of us, whose laws it is her province to explore. These bodies act and re-act upon one another, and Science observes certain uniformities to exist in the mode of their inter-action. These uniformities she calls "laws of phenomena." Beyond these laws Science can never get. She can tell somewhat of the order in which phenomena take place, can distinguish between variable and invariable conjunctions; but why any one phenomenon should be succeeded by any other is a problem she does not attempt to explain. She accepts the facts as she finds them, only examining how these facts may be most conveniently assorted and brought under heads, if possible, under a single head. Those, therefore, who maintain that events take place according to fixed unvarying laws, do not imagine, if they know what they are about, that they are solving the mystery of the universe. On the contrary, they mean thereby that they cannot solve it, that they know how things take place and cannot tell why. What then is Force? It is a convenient term to express a series of phenomena, nothing more. Force is not the efficient of phenomena. Science knows nothing of efficiency. It is merely a shorthand expression for a series of physical antecedents and consequents. To suppose that one body cannot act from a distance upon another except through the intervention of something called Force, is the old error exposed by Brown of believing "power" to be an entity existing apart from substances. From the point of view then of the man of science, we find that about Force, in any sense in which it may be used to denote more than phenomena, we know absolutely nothing. Let us look at a particular instance. Gravity or attraction is one of the Forces, or rather forms of Force, of which we now-a-days hear so much. Now, what in this case is really known to us? Simply the fact that bodies tend towards one upon another in a certain way. The force of gravity or attraction, or whatever we may please to call it, is simply a figment, a kind of presiding deity, by a belief in which we are saved from the Fetishism of supposing that individual bodies are self-directing. There are three stages of philosophy. In the first, you explain a thing by itself; in the second you explain it by something else;\* in the third, you don't explain it at all. This last, though appearances may be against it, is the truly scientific stage, and our age is a Socrates to its predecessors.

But not to combat Dr. Sexton merely on general grounds, let

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\* This second stage includes part of the first and the whole of the second of M. Comte's three stages.

us consider the particular kinds of knowledge which he supposes as to have of Force.

Motion, he says, is the condition of human cognition, and motion "must be regarded as a particular manifestation of force." "We see in consequence of the motion of light in falling on the eye; hear through a movement of the atmosphere; taste only when a sapid body becomes dissolved—that is, undergoes molecular change; smell when odoriferous particles are escaping into the atmosphere, and are thus brought into contact with the Schneiderian membrane of the nose; and touch when resistance is offered—that is, motion interrupted." Now there is no firmer friend to Force than Mr. Charles Bray, and *he* says that "motion is nothing—it is the mere mode of action of Force, and the transference of it in greater or less intensity from one point of space to another." By this reckoning it would seem that since "all knowledge is limited to motion," and motion is not Force but merely its mode of action, and Force only acts in relation to bodies, that all knowledge must really be limited to bodies. But perhaps Dr. Sexton co-ordinates mechanical motion with the various forms of force. Let us enquire what motion really is. It has certainly a name to itself; but is it, therefore, a thing in itself? Evidently not. Motion is change in position, and position is relation in space. Motion is therefore a word indicative of a series of relations existing between bodies or between different parts of the same body. In fact, turn the matter how we will, we shall never get an inch beyond phenomena—either external phenomena, which are states of body, or internal phenomena, which are states of mind. The province of science is to ascertain the sequences that obtain among these two classes of phenomena, in themselves and relative to each other.

We have thus found that from the metaphysician's point of view, if Matter be unknowable, Force is no less so; and that from the point of view of the man of science, Force is only a convenient term for registering phenomena. So much, then, for Dr. Sexton's first proposition, that the only thing of which we have any real knowledge is Force.

The second proposition which Dr. Sexton advances is this, that "in all our experience we know of but one originator of force, and that is will."

Now, what will originates, or seems to originate, is motion; and we have seen already that motion and force are two different things; better still, we have Dr. Sexton's own warrant for putting a distinction between them. He quotes approvingly from Charles Bray to the effect that force "is not motion, but the cause of motion; it is not the action, but the agent." What Dr. Sexton ought to have said, then, is, that the only force, or origin of



motion, of which we are conscious is will, from whence he would have gone on to deduce that wherever we see motion, that is to say, wherever we infer force, we must believe in the presence of will.

Into the interminable controversy about the Will I do not care at present to enter; nor shall I follow Dr. Sexton's example and assume it as decided in favour of either side. Suffice it here to remark that the position that will does originate motion, or is anything more than a physical antecedent of it, is becoming more unsafe every day, and is expressly repudiated by that very philosophy of Force upon which Dr. Sexton draws so largely. That philosophy represents Mind, and with it Will, as a mere correlate of the other forms of Force, Vital, Chemical, and Mechanical, as only one among the many shapes assumed by that mysterious Proteus who is only known to us by his disguises, and whom we have never yet been able to seize and force into a confession of his tale of wonder. The doctrine that must be admitted to be prevalent to-day, whether we like it or not, is the reverse of that the truth of which is assumed by Dr. Sexton. Living beings, we are told, are not fountains of causation. It is true we may see animals now lying at rest, now starting into sudden activity, without apparent cause. But appearances deceive. The air of spontaneity attaching to their movements is an illusion, arising from the fact that the antecedents are not, as in the case of material objects, physical, but mental, and consequently hidden from our observation. Could we follow out the whole chain of causation, we should see motion following on volition, while volition followed on a chain of mental antecedents, the earliest of which was the result of some action of matter upon the senses, which itself had either a material phenomenon or a volition for its antecedent, and so on for ever. If this doctrine be true, Will has no title to be called an originator of motion: it is merely one link in an endless chain; but I am the less anxious to urge such considerations, as we may with all safety grant Dr. Sexton everything he requires under the present head, not only that Will is an absolute commencement, a tiny First Cause in every speck of humanity, the child and image of the great First Cause of all, but also that it is a power of contraries, making itself to be or not to be, and not merely determining its existence, but its form. All this may be granted without involving the final conclusion.

The second proposition, therefore, we may make a present of to Dr. Sexton, unruffled by the consideration that he has laid violent hands upon it. The third proposition is, that Will implies Intelligence. So, no doubt, it does; but not at all to the extent that Dr. Sexton insinuates. We must recollect that in this question we are not concerned with Will as a power

capable of exercising control over the desires, but simply as a force producing motion. In the latter sense, no one claims it as the special prerogative of man. Now, we must recollect that the lowest animal originates, or seems to originate, motion equally with man, a fact which Dr. Sexton seems strangely to ignore. The amount of intelligence, therefore, implied in the origination of motion is not necessarily greater than that of the snail or worm. But as this proposition hangs on in some measure to the last, let us not mar the liberality of our gift by cutting off the appendage. Let us make a still further concession to Dr. Sexton, granting, as before, that there is in man a power called Will, no mere phenomenon among phenomena, no pool supplied by streamlets of desire, which are to issue again in action, but itself a well-head of causation, and, besides, that it is in virtue of his being the conscious possessor of intelligence that this power resides in him. Instead, therefore, of efficient causes being entirely hidden from our view, we have a full knowledge of one. Let us see what use Dr. Sexton makes of his assumption and our concession. "Hence, reasoning from what we know as falling within the range of human experience, to what occurs in the great universe around, there is but one conclusion to which we can logically come, which is, that a Divine volition governs the whole, and that without this primal power nothing had ever existed." This is logical, certainly, if it be logical to generalise from a single instance. We know one efficient cause; this is, therefore, the only one. Shades of Bacon and Mill, your labours were spent in vain! Our concessions, as thus turned to account by Dr. Sexton, of course, necessitate the admission of what we have set down as the fourth step in his argument, namely, that we have no right to deny that wherever we find Force, there also is Intelligence. We have no right to deny it, certainly, according to Dr. Sexton's logic, in which a single instance, in a case precluding observation and experiment, is sufficient to prove a rule.

Here let us recapitulate. We have seen that outside ourselves, at all events, we nowhere find Force, but only its manifestations, and we have reduced the object of our knowledge from an abstraction, the cause of an abstraction (force, the cause of motion), to the series of phenomena with which we really are acquainted. Not to seem captious, however, we have spoken of motion as a real thing; and we have conceded that within ourselves we are conscious of a force that originates motion, namely Will; we have further conceded that Will never exists apart from the highest form of Intelligence of which we know anything; thus granting, when our concessions are put together, that there is one efficient cause known to us, namely, an Intelligent Will.



But this is not enough for Dr. Sexton. He goes on to ask us to grant that, because an Intelligent Will is known to originate some phenomena, it must, therefore, originate all; because there is one kind of efficient cause, there is, therefore, no other. Here our complacency fails us. We are willing to stretch a point to oblige Dr. Sexton, but we cannot fly in the face of all the canons of Induction.

How comes it, then, that some people find a certain degree of force in arguments like those of Dr. Sexton? The reason is not far to seek. Will is the only antecedent of motion of which we are conscious. Our conceptive faculty is limited by our experience. Will being the only antecedent of motion, other than motion itself, of which we can conceive, we leap rashly to the conclusion that it is the only one possible.

Having thus come to issue with Dr. Sexton as to the logical necessity of supposing an Intelligent Will to underlie the phenomena of the universe, it is superfluous to discuss whether or no this intelligence must be conscious. I may remark, however, in passing, that it is not quite so certain as Dr. Sexton takes for granted that unconscious intelligence is nonsense. We have heard a great deal of late from high authorities about "unconscious cerebration," and though it does not seem to me that the phenomena of dreaming, of sleep-walking-and-talking, and of Mesmerism, can fairly be taken as proof of unconscious action of the mind, because the mind may be perfectly conscious of what it is doing at the moment, though it utterly forgets it afterwards, still, even in our waking hours, we seem to have proofs of mental action, unattended with consciousness. When ideas suddenly start up in the mind, we know not how, there must be some subtle chain of association which links them on to the ideas that have gone before. Sometimes, by a painful effort, we are able to compel our minds to trace out the missing links; more often they defy our scrutiny. But at all events, whether discovered or undiscovered afterwards, they were not, at the time being, consciously present to the mind in the same way that the thoughts they connect together are. The mind does not travel slowly and industriously up hill and down dale, but puts on seven-leagued boots, and stalks from hill-top to hill-top. From such simple considerations, and without having recourse to physiology, we would seem to be warranted in inferring that consciousness is only an accident of intelligence.

In the cases above spoken of, the transition from an abnormal to a normal state may possibly superinduce forgetfulness; but in the case of a train of thought carried on in the mind when awake, if we are equally conscious of the whole of it, why should we remember one part and forget another?

I turn now to the second religious doctrine which Spiritualism is supposed to place beyond the reach of doubt, namely, the immortality of the soul. On this point, I may be very brief. Continued existence after death is of course not the same thing with immortality. The most that the survival of one change can do is to afford a presumption that we shall survive others. But the pitcher may go often to the well, and yet be broken at the last. Again, therefore, Dr. Sexton, in his eagerness to advance the claims of Spiritualism, seems to have overshot the mark of sobriety. But in this case I have little quarrel with him, since to most minds a future life and immortality mean one and the same thing, and there is, therefore, not so much fear that when certain pretensions put forward on behalf of Spiritualism are found to be empty, its just claims will be disallowed.

It is on the question of the existence of a Deity that I conceive Dr. Sexton to have taken up ground injurious at once to Spiritualism, and to the doctrine he seeks to establish by its means—to Spiritualism, since he has not even attempted to justify the claims he has put forward for it, to the doctrine in question as resting its evidence on a false basis. We have seen that Dr. Sexton's premises, where they are not demonstrably false, are assumptions of points still under dispute, and that even granting these assumptions, they fail to establish the desired conclusion—that conclusion being that the existence of God is proved by science. Do I mean then to deny the existence of God? Far be it from me. We have each and all of us a witness to the unseen in our hearts; but it was not science that put it there. Science does not give us our conception of a Deity; the utmost it can do is to modify that conception, so as to bring it into accordance with advancing knowledge; it may criticise, but cannot create. It is a great mistake to fancy that religion can be established by argument, and that the intellect can pierce the clouds of heaven. The scientific man on being informed that "all nature proclaims an Infinite Mind that governs the universe" calmly assures us that "he has no need of the hypothesis of God;" and he is right too, since science does not pretend to go beyond second causes or to transcend phenomena. If Dr. Sexton, therefore, is wise, he will not entrust a doctrine the truth of which he has at heart to the tender mercies of such an ally. He will admit that the spheres of religion and science are distinct; and will plead for the recognition of God as a necessity of the heart, but not as a necessity of logic.

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It is said that tact may be acquired, but in general it is a gift. It surmounts difficulties less by grappling with them than by insinuating its way through them with graceful ease. Tact is always on the alert, always ready to turn advantages to account.



## GERALD MASSEY IN AMERICA.

ABOUT the time last number of *Human Nature* was received by our readers, Gerald Massey arrived in this country from his brilliant lecturing tour in America. The *Banner of Light* of May 9th, says:—"Gerald Massey's second advent before a public audience in Boston, last Sunday, will be remembered with great pleasure by our people. Many spiritualists came in from the surrounding country on Saturday's trains to listen to 'the people's poet,' whose soul goes out with wonderful power to the hearts of the oppressed." The same number of the *Banner* contains a long report of a lecture which, though evidently not perfect, our readers will peruse with much interest:—

## THE SERPENT SYMBOL: ITS SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

*A Lecture delivered at Music Hall, Boston, Sunday afternoon, May 3rd, by Gerald Massey.*

In one sense this will be the least directly spiritualistic of my lectures in Boston. But it is a most essential part of my work to try and destroy the false-bottomed Spiritualism that only deals in the figments of faith and is founded in fables perverted to suit its purposes, whereby we have so long been led astray. Theology has reared its Babel of dogmas upon a ground of mythology, and I can best serve the cause of true Spiritualism by identifying and recovering the primitive meanings of the ancient myths.

After I had had some twenty years' acquaintance with the facts of Modern Spiritualism, and thought the matter over more or less, I began to write a work on the subject of the abnormal phenomena in all times. I was, in common with all others, haunted with the notion of a revelation to mankind given ready-made instead of its being evolved bit by bit through the mind of man; and I fancied that in Spiritualism I might find the proof and explanation. From what I had seen I was amazed at the light which Spiritualism did throw on the dark things and into the secrecies of the past, and I thought by this light the old inexplicable customs or misinterpreted myths, and almost featureless symbols of effaced facts, and ancient mystic images of things passed out of thought, might be made to live anew; the marks that puzzled us so much as Friday's foot-print in the sand did Robinson Crusoe, would reveal the earliest footprints of the spiritual world fossilised in the natural world for us to recognise and read. That which looked dull and meaningless before began to bud with new life, and blush with their hidden beauty; just as if you found some old pipkin, made in the far past, and the clay of the potter had contained the seed of flowers, and these should spring up into life and exquisite relief even while you held it in your hand. It seemed to give me, as it were, the Masonic sign whereby we can interpret so many mysteries. It gave me the grip, the symbol, the language known in all lands, which underlies and underlines all the languages unknown to us.

It seemed to create a new seeing sense, or added such a new illumination to the old seeing sense, as would make the whole vast field of the past a great gold-diggings awaiting future discovery. And in this new light, I saw the past had to be re-read and re-written; so I went on to try and read the myths by this light, and for years have been engaged on a series of deep-sea soundings, sometimes grasping a handful of mud in my dredgings and now and then a precious pearl. The best way of communicating to you

something of my results, will be to carry you partly through my process in an endeavour to get at the significance of the Serpent-Symbol!

So universal has been the so-called Worship of the Serpent, as to look like the one religion of a world. Its reign has been widespread as that of night from the best-known to the remotest parts of the earth. We are but just discovering its prevalence and its power. It is only a dozen years or so since the temples dedicated and devoted to its rites were found in Cambodia, surpassing in size and magnificence the great cathedrals of York, Amiens, and Cologne.

The Serpent-Symbol has literally realised that image of itself, in the mythologies, which depicts it as circling about the world and clasping the whole wide round in its embrace. It was the representative of renewed life or immortality on the doors of the chambers of the dead in the Egyptian and Chaldean tombs, and it is yet a Symbol of Eternity in the bracelet on an Englishwoman's arm. It is the Great Dragon of the Celestial Empire; the Long Serpent of the old Norse Sea Kings; the Lambton Worm; the Dragon of St. George, on our public house sign-boards and old English penny pieces. It lives and *hisses* in our letter S, and twists itself into the shape of our ampersand! This makes one curious to know the meaning of it all, if one could only be sure of touching the bottom.

Through all times and in many ways have men tried to obtain some visible representative of the Unseen Power, and reared their altars to the unknown God as they wandered in the wilderness and deified the darkness with its creeping things on their upward way to a Father of Love and a God of Light, and all the misapprehendings were revelations in their degree.

We first really begin to know what God is as we gradually learn to know what he is not! And we only find him in proportion as we know that we have not found him! I think the greatest myth in the world is the notion that man was created with a primitive consciousness of God, the Spiritual Father. There is evidence scattered all over the world that the first conception of a Creator that man ever had was as the Procreator. And that is the root-idea of all religions possibly up to the time of Jesus. The Serpent itself is but one of the symbols and proofs of that.

Have you ever thought of what the primitive man must have been, as the conditions of his existence are day by day revealed to us by Science? Why, his first conception of any unseen Power above him could not have been much beyond that of a Caliban. Life was so bitterly hard at times, the winters were so cruel cold, and he had no fire to warm his desolate cave, what would have been his ideas of a Maker if he had been cursed with light enough only to see his darkness?—what sense of eternal justice if he had possessed the power to arraign it? It could have been only the perception and conclusion of a thinking horse brutally ridden, that might estimate its rider by the incessant pain of the spur in its side! Fortunately he did not think; if he had, God would hardly have got him along at all. Such a God as he would have made out in the gloom could not have drawn him. He only felt the thrust, the spur of want and desire, and to these he responded more or less. And all this cruel spurring, as it seems, was necessary to set him thinking and have his wits about him, as we say. Hard necessity made him contrive to cover up the thorns a little and make a softer bed to lie down upon—made him watch the ongoings of external nature to see how things were done—made him try to strike a light in his darkness—forced him to plot and plan to outwit his enemies of the animal world, and after a while seek friends in the spiritual world. A being who could take up his babe, dash out its brains and make a meal when hard pressed by hunger, was not likely to have a taste for the evanescent delicacies of landscape loveliness.



Man's primal idea of the Deity would be very dark. Darkness, says Plutarch, is older than light. His first God may have been that horrible thing darkness, that came crawling on and winding round the world, the shadow of whose coming put out the light of day, making all life shiver and shrink in a cold sweat till the night was gone; and every now and then its hand was laid on the mouth of the living, and it was still; on the eyes, and they grew lustreless, and that which looked and made signs through them was drawn away into this darkness which men came to know as death. The New Zealand mythology represents the first children of earth, their Adam and Eve, as "ever thinking what might be the difference between light and darkness." And this would naturally be a most primitive study, or rather cause of dread. The first feeling then would be a child-like shrinking from the dark. The first gleam of religion would be a feeling of fear; a good deal of what is called religion is so yet, hence the recognition of a power that must be propitiated. "We believe in a good spirit and a bad spirit," said a North American savage, "but we offer our sacrifices to the evil one. He do us harm. Good spirit no hurt us; he no need to be worshipped; he good." The primitive man also dreaded the powers of darkness, which possibly might, if offended, put out that source of light and warmth, the sun, which evidently only rose on sufferance every morning, and whose life might at any time be extinguished.

Then he began to wonder what shape this power possessed. He saw it went round and round in a serpentine sort of manner. The great lights went round, and the little lights went round, and the darkness came winding round about like the coils of a Serpent that finally, in death, held you fast for ever!

Surely the Serpent must be a representative, on earth, of that terrible hidden force that dwelt in the darkness—that *was* the Darkness: This vast and appalling thing that, when angry, would look at you and speak outside its sky-cavern with eyes of lightning and voice of thunder, and perhaps dart down death in those live Serpents of the forked flashes that licked up a forest at a time with their tongues of fire! The heavens would mirror back for him that which he knew and dreaded most on earth. They would wear the awful aspect of a cruel mind; and as he was a dweller in trees and caves, his most subtle, most mortal foe, would be the Serpent. Not that man began by worshipping the Serpent for itself! That never has been done on this earth except by a monstrous taste intelligently perverted.

It was the recognition of the power beyond the Serpent that bowed him to the knee. He divined and dreaded the invisible destroyer lurking behind the visible veil, who sometimes lightened, and stung you suddenly, and darted death out of his darkness. So, it may be the first form of Serpent-worship was the deity of utter darkness, as it were, a black live ring round the being of the primitive man, that closed on him, tightened its folds and strangled him when angry or when it pleased.

In one of the Brahmanic traditions, *Christna*, who is one form of the Sun-God, defeats *Kalli-Naga*, the great Serpent-God, who is the black or evil spirit with a thousand heads; an earlier rendering of the Lernean Hydra of the Greeks, slain by Hercules. The Serpent twisted himself about the body of *Christna*, but the God tore off his heads one after the other and trampled them under his feet. But *Christna* was vulnerable in the *foot*, and his *heel* was *bruised* or *bitten* by the serpent. This is reproduced in the Hebrew Genesis.

One form of the Serpent running or rather zig-zagging through the maze of mythological symbolism, is the zig-zag of the lightning. The Algonquins were asked by Father Buteaux, who was among them in 1837 as a mis-

sionary, what they thought of the nature of lightning? They replied it was an immense Serpent, which the Manitou, the Great Spirit, was vomiting forth. "You can see the twists and folds that he leaves on the trees where he strikes; and underneath such trees we have often found snakes."

The Chinese believe in a Dragon of enormous strength and sovereign power, which is in heaven, in the air, in the waters, and on the mountains. We frequently meet with the myth of a Serpent of vast bulk, which engirdles the world, as in the Norse Mid-Gard Serpent.

The Caribs speak of the God of the thunder-storm as a Great Serpent dwelling in the fruit forests. Shawnees called the thunder the hissing of the Great Snake; and Totelec, the Aztec God of Thunder, was represented with a gold serpent in his hand. The savages of Australia believe in the existence of a gigantic Serpent who created the world, and who is the coiled-up cause of earthquakes. In the Persian mythology the Polar Dragon is denominated Azacha, the Serpent who drowns men and beasts. The word serpent literally means the Destroyer; and with the Persians the original Destroyer was the Winter. In the Zend-Avesta, Ahuza-Mazda creates a Summer Garden which is a perfect Paradise. Then the Evil One, Ahrimanes, the Death-Dealing, creates an opposition to the same, in the shape of a Mighty Serpent. That Serpent is Winter; it inflicts death on men and cattle with its bitter bite. The primal and the worst form of evil is thus distinctly identified as, or by means of, Winter. This is the primordial curse, and the bite of its sharp frost was the Serpent's sting. I found in a very ancient Hindu map of the world, the North is called the Land of Darkness, the Abyss of Waters, the Abode of the Great Spirit. This Great Spirit was the Destroyer. Then, as men began to watch the motions of the heavenly bodies they would sooner or later make out one particular group or string of stars which every autumn led on to the winter. This would be the starry apparition of the Destroyer in the shape of a serpent. It does not matter which was the earliest constellation of the Serpent. That there was one, we know. There are three or four in the heavens to-night. Lucian, in his work on astrology, says a virgin delivered the oracles at Delphi; hence the symbol of the constellation Virgo. And a dragon spoke from under the Tripod, because of the constellation Draco, the Dragon, appearing among the stars. The allusion made by Job is alone sufficient to establish the fact that a Serpent constellation had been recognised: "By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens. His hand hath formed the crooked Serpent." A very remarkable illustration of a process that the Hebrew writings have undergone is afforded by the paraphrase of this passage by the Septuagint, where we read: "By his hand he hath slain the Apostate Serpent." I beg you will bear this fact in mind. Isaiah also alludes to this crooked Serpent, whom he identifies as the Leviathan of Job, which the commentators have always been looking for on the earth or in the sea. There is something bungled in the translating of the crooked or piercing serpent. You will see, in the margin, that it is *stiff* or *crossing like a bar*. It really means that this Serpent is the Opposing Power.

In fact, it is the original Satan who becomes the spiritual opposer, the adversary of souls. Satan means the adversary. Of course it was made out that this Serpent Constellation, this deity of darkness, this opposer of the sun and conqueror, who led up the destroying Winter every year, was the natural enemy of man, and of such evil and malign an influence that the sun itself sickened in its presence and lost its power. This Serpent was identified in the Northern Hemisphere, the abode of Winter. The Hebrews called it the North Zaphon; the Northern heavens were the land of Zaphon. That is, Ziphon, the Serpent. Thus, the primal adversary of man would be recognised in a physical shape both



on the earth and in the heavens, and imaged by that reptile which was always looked at with an eye of wonder and awe. They saw that as soon as this Serpent deity ascended its throne, it let loose the storms and winds of the Autumn Equinox, as if it would blow every leaf off the Tree of Life, especially in the night-time, when it walked the world darkly and raged furiously. In the Hesiodic Theogony Typhon is the father of dreadful tempests, and destroying winds and fearful hurricanes, the equinoctial enemy of man. This will no doubt account for the association throughout the East of Serpents with storms of wind and rain, and the power over these which they exercised at their will, for the good or ill of man.

The lecturer here cited the fact that several tribes of ancient Mexico had for their chief divinity "The Cloud Serpent," (as the word signified in their dialect;) the same idea was to be found among the natives of Panama; and our word hurricane, as applied to the terrible tornado of the Carribean Sea, was derived from "*Hurakan*," "the heart of the sky," which signified some mysterious creative power called "the strong serpent." Typhoon, as applied to the fearful tempests of the Eastern seas, also acquired its name from Typhon, the name of the Phœnician devil. In the motions of the circular whirlwinds called cyclones were to be traced—to the mind of the Eastern nations—the serpentine nature of this deity of darkness.

Sooner or later the constellation Ophiuchus was identified as the bearer of the Serpent. He appeared in the Heavens as grasping the form of a Serpent in his hand. This was obviously a symbol of that power which the Destroyer might at any time let loose on the world.

The Serpent-worship is chiefly known as a superstition of ignorance—a religion of utter darkness, practiced with bloody rites and full of foul abominations. As we get glimpses of it in the night of the past, luridly revealed as if by light of Tophet, it is most horrible and ghastly. We peer through rent and rift into the ruined house of its mysteries like shuddering children at the slaughter-house door, from under which the warm life crawls ruddily.

The hair stirs snakily with horror; the blood creeps with a reptile-like coldness; we shudder and shrink from what we cannot see, because what we do see is so strange! so appalling! But no religion has ever been wholly evil in its nature, or merely a foul disease of human nature. We see the running sores that resulted in death; but these never were the cause of its living. And Serpent-Worship—which looks so absolutely a thing of night—was the darkness out of which comes the first streak of dawn. It brought the earliest light of Revelation into the world. It was one of the primal forms of all Spiritualism. Every one has more or less remarked the character of wisdom universally ascribed to the Serpent, but no one has yet explained the nature of that wisdom. Sir Henry Rawlinson observes that the most important titles of the Serpent-God, who was the third person in the Chaldean triad, or Trinity of Gods, refer to his functions as the source of all knowledge and science. He is a deified source of intelligence. He is the personification of wisdom: "Be ye wise as serpents." But how came such a beast as the Serpent to be the symbol of wiseness, worshipped as the communicator of knowledge? It cannot be literally the wisdom that is the consummate flower of human knowledge and perfected fruit of experience which is signified. No Serpent ever possessed that. As an animal the Serpent is not remarkably intelligent. It certainly is reticent in expression, and has an admirable faculty of silence; but the profoundest silence is not necessarily wisdom: its hiss, from a critical point of view, is at times imposing, but, like that of some other critics, it may be only an imposition; the hiss may not mean that it knows more than we do, and could utter it if it would. The Serpent is not the embodiment of wisdom in the animal world, but I think the early Spiritualism that was practiced under the Ser-

pent sign contains one hidden clue to the wisdom meant. The wise Man, a Wizard; the wise Woman, a Witch, we still call those who attain knowledge in the abnormal way. The wise men of the East were Persian Magi, or men who attained knowledge by magic arts; a wise man was one who divined, saw, or interpreted by spiritual means, and mainly by the abnormal method, whether he wrought for a good power or for an evil purpose. "Thou shalt take no gift, for the gift blindeth the wise," says Moses; that is, the seer in trance must not divine for money; such a motive will destroy his vision. Divinity signified this divination long before it meant Deity in our sense; it was revelation by means of Deus—that is, spirits—our word Devil simply meaning Spirit-Lord, which came to be looked upon as devilish. In the early time the gift was held to be divine, and consecrated as such, because it afforded the first glimpse into a spiritual world, whereby man discovered that he also was a spiritual being. Be ye wise as serpents, then, may be interpreted as an allusion to the wisdom of the magical knowledge, abnormally derived by vision or divination which was primally attained by the Serpent-Worshippers. Be ye intuitive, knowing as the cunningest of the sorcerers who had eaten of the Tree of Knowledge, but do not use your divine gift harmfully. In one sense, then, the wisdom of the Serpent was the occult knowledge obtained through spiritual communication through mediumistic means by the ancient worshippers of the Serpent-Symbol. It is a well known fact that in every country the Serpent has been looked upon as a medium of communicating knowledge or wisdom more than mortal.

The Serpent-Symbol, then, was not worshipped as the embodiment of knowledge and wisdom in the animal world—not deified for anything in the Serpent itself. It was made the spiritual symbol of knowledge darkly derived in man's mortal night-time by the early Star-Worshippers, whether by study of the starry book opened to them in the heavens, or by interpretation of natural phenomena on earth, their method including the trance condition of seership and communication with spirits.

I used the term darkly derived, because they were groping after knowledge in the dark, by magic means and dark arts, and their religion of fear was a worship of the dark powers, or, at least, of powers that were but darkly apprehended. It was under the reign of the Serpent—which was one sign of the Star-Worshippers that became an universal Symbol—that letters were discovered, and the earliest art of healing was revealed.

When the Israelites were stung by the fiery-fanged Serpents in the wilderness, they had to be cured by a return to the old worship of the Serpent in its milder shape; and the image was sacredly kept in the temple at Jerusalem for five hundred years. Surely this goes to prove the Serpent-Worship to have been a familiar form of faith with them, and that in their time of need they had a greater belief in the Agatho-Demon than in the God of Israel? Also, their faith seems to have been justification. At first sight it appears somewhat strange and incongruous that the Serpent should have been held up as the cause of the fall and degradation and death and damnation of man in the Book of Genesis, the first Book of the Book of Books, and then that the Serpent-Symbol should have been raised aloft as the healer, the restorer, the saviour, to look on which, in the shape of a brazen image, was to live.

The conclusion follows, of natural necessity, that if it were a man, Moses, who lifted up the Serpent as a god of healing, it could hardly be the same man who represented the Serpent as our mortal and immortal enemy, and made him who struck the Semitic pair down in spiritual death the magic restorer of the stricken Israelites to physical health and life. The Hebrews had got their Serpents mixed. The Serpent Divinity, then, is the Deity of



Divination. The Serpent is the symbol of abnormal seership, the vision and the faculty divine of the trance-seers and ghost-seers.

After referring to the crowning with snakes of the priestesses and initiates into the ancient serpent mysteries, in token of wisdom and abnormal vision—second sight—the speaker proceeded to illustrate his point by citations from the Chinese, Hindoostani, and Grecian records. To his mind the face and look of the Gorgon, with its power to turn the beholder into stone, did but symbolise the magnetic influence that could catalepsy the patient into the white stillness of apparent death—stiff and stony in the state of trance.

It is interesting to note that augury—divination—is derived from an old Aryan word that means *sight*, and that the Scottish “spae-wife,” from whence we derive our “spy,” means a seeress, a prophetess, a wise woman, one who sees covertly to gain occult knowledge.

The gift of seership or mediumship was at times called by the name of the hidden treasure, or the hidden treasure of life; and at the same time, represented as being under the guardianship of the Serpent. The Jewish patriarch, Joseph, was the possessor of this hidden treasure. He was a very great diviner, superior to all the famous magicians of Egypt, unequalled as a prophet and interpreter. It was on this account that Pharaoh, the king, exalted him over all the people of Egypt: “And Pharaoh called Joseph’s name Zaphnath-Paaneah,” or Zaphnath-Pionk, which in the Coptic signifies a revealer of secrets, or one through whom secrets are revealed, literally a spiritual medium. But in Egyptian the name means “the hidden treasure is life.” And to show how inseparably it is associated with the Serpent, we find the name given to Joseph represents the Serpent as Zephon or Typhon; so that the fact of Joseph’s being a man in whom the spirit of revelation was so remarkably manifested that he is an oracle of Deity is indicated to the Egyptians by a sacred name which accredits his inspiration, his wisdom, wizardry, to the Serpent. This hidden treasure, which is life, and which is kept under the charge of the Serpent or Dragon, lies at the root of many of the myths. The knowledge derived through this mediumship was so highly prized of old that it became the secret treasure of the mysteries; a secret to be kept in the dark.

The Serpent was likewise the representative of a hidden treasure which continually gleamed out on us from the darkness where it had long lain concealed. This treasure was the spiritual, therefore the underlying real shape of that which was accursed in the Norse mythology by the dwarf Andvari as it was in the Hebraic legend of “the fall.”

When Sigurd in the Norse story had killed the Dragon and was roasting its heart, he burned his finger, and putting it hastily into his mouth, accidentally tasted the life-blood of the monster, and instantly his eyes (spiritual) were opened like those of Adam and Eve in the Garden, and he heard (and understood) the voice of the birds, who told him to eat the heart—which he did—and he would become the wisest of men. This was the same advice as that given by the Serpent of Genesis—the same temptation as that proffered to Eve, and the same assurance that it would lead to the hidden treasure, with the same fulfilment.

The belief anciently cherished of the existence of Draconites, or precious stones, which could be taken from the brains of Dragons—if secured *before* the death of the animal had supervened, which had the power to render the wearer at times invisible, (an exhibition of the natural obverse of the seeing power possessed by the Serpent while in life)—was alluded to, and the speaker said:

One of the latest forms taken by this myth, is the supposed jewel in the head of the toad; the shining preciousness hidden in the dark and loathly evil—a true, even if unconscious recognition of the soul of good in things

evil, of the divineness of vision whereby the seeing eye is lighted, and that the light which so often led astray was light from heaven. When we kill our Dragon, let us mind and preserve the hidden jewel, by tackling him while there is life left in him.

The speaker proceeded to state and to give proof by citations that in several languages, including the Hebrew, Arabic, Algonquin, and Dakota, the word for Serpent had various derivations, which signified the practice of magic, divination, the consulting of spirits, and said: We frequently find the Serpent so inextricably entwined with the human form as to seem synonymous with it, and constitute one of the profoundest riddles of the unknown, propounded by a sort of Serpent Sphinx. This has raised the suspicion that, in its primal shape, the legend of the Hebrews and that of the Mexicans gave the Serpent form to both the Father and the Mother of the human race; one reason for this being that, in the annals of the Mexicans the first woman whose name was translated by the old Spanish writers—"The woman of our flesh," is always represented as accompanied by an enormous male Serpent: and in the Mexican mythology the Goddess-Parent of primitive man, the Serpent-Woman, was also called Tonantzin, our Mother. According to Tanner's narrative the grandmother of mankind—"Me suk kum me go kwa"—was represented indifferently by an old woman or a Serpent.

The Serpent-Woman is continually to be met with under many names; but the mystery is not to be solved on the physical theory of a serpent geniture. The Serpent-Woman is not a Woman-Serpent. She is a Serpent-Woman because in the service of the Serpent. Eve was a Serpent-Woman or Woman of the Serpent, but not a Woman-Serpent. Alexandrinas says, according to the strict interpretation of the Hebrew term, the name Hevia aspirated signifies a female serpent. . . . But we shall understand the Serpent-Woman better if we look upon her as the Pythoness. The damsel spoken of in the Book of Acts was possessed by a spirit of divination, or, as it ought to be rendered, Python. She was a Pythoness, as was the Priestess of the Delphi, and many other shrines and oracles of old—a medium whose utterances were inspired by spirits or gods of the Serpent Religion.

For we must bear in mind that Serpent-Worship, Water-Worship, Star-Worship, Sun-Worship, as they are named, were all connected with the same facts as are alleged to underlie our Modern Spiritualism. And the devotees all made use of spiritual mediumship for their oracles, and believed themselves to be in communication with the unseen world. It was not the sun, or the tree, or the water, that replied through the mouth of the prophet or priestess. Each of these religions was founded on the theory that they were divinely—that was, spiritually—inspired; and that a God possessed the Pythoness, and unfolded the past or foretold the future by means of her mediumship. This fact of Serpent-Worship, as connected with the oracles in that form of Spiritualism called Pythonism, will help us to explain many transformations of the myths, although attempting to follow and arrest all the changes in the process is somewhat like trying to photograph the figure of a man ascending a ladder, and arresting a bit of him on several rounds. But this is certain: the Python woman, the Python oracle, the whole Pythonic mediumship, is continually and everywhere represented by the various Serpent-Symbols.

In the light of his idea many of the myths—the Hebrew included—could be resolved to their original elements. The story of Hercules uniting himself with a monster who was half a woman and half a serpent, by this illumination, meant that Hercules, the *man*, wedded a woman who was a priestess of the Serpent-worship—a Pythoness; and that told of Alexander, who was represented as acknowledged by his father Philip, of



Macedon, to be the son of a Serpent or rather of a God, was to be fathomed in that Olympia, his mother, was a Serpent-Woman of wonderful enthusiasm—a Pythoness of extraordinary power, and was represented as being “remarkably ambitious of these inspirations.” What more natural to such a fervent ophite than that the Serpent God, the Controlling Spirit of the oracles, should appear in vision [as she is reported to have dreamed the night before her marriage] to his devotee, and embrace her in a trance, or that she should look on her hero son as divinely, *i. e.*, spiritually begotten?

The speaker referred at this point to the fact that looking into the strange, unfathomable eyes of the Serpent was probably the earliest method of attaining to the condition of the magnetic trance—the Zend-Avesta (among other authorities) distinctly attributing the characteristic to the Serpent. This method widened into the looking upon or into water or crystal or anything bright. It is possible that the jewel brightness of the Urim and Thummim produced the magnetic trance, and that this method of magnetising was alluded to by St. Paul when he said, “We see as in a glass darkly,” or mystically.

Wherever I have gone deepest in trying to fathom my subject, I seem never to have touched bottom without finding that Serpent-worship is Phallic-worship on the one hand, whilst on the other the bottom falls through altogether, and I find myself in spirit-world. Many persons may not think of spirits as connected with such a subject.

But we have the great authority of Jesus Christ in asserting the Spiritualism of the old Serpent-worship, and in recognising the fact that their oracles were truly based on a false Spiritualism; that is, they were often uttered by spirits which were opposed to the immortal welfare of man.

When the seventy return to the Master, with great joy, saying, exultingly, “Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name,” Jesus replies, in his musing, remote manner, as if half absent in dream-land: “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” That is what John calls “the old Serpent.” And then, turning on them the full presence of his spiritual self, he says: “Behold I give unto you power to tread on Serpents and Scorpions”—symbols of the old Serpent-worship—“and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”

Going on further to illustrate the signification of the Serpent-Symbol, as a type of wisdom, the speaker said the time was when the only healing known was performed by the priests and priestesses of the ancient mysteries, and by them many marvellous things were done, many wonderful things foreknown and foretold. It is of course possible, he said, that in the lower intellectual range the spiritual signification of Serpent-Worship—the cryptothesis of the symbol—may have been partially lost, and the Serpent literally accepted instead of the symbol, or rather instead of the Spiritualism that was symbolled. One of the most widely known of Greek myths is the destruction of the Dragon or Python by the Sun-God Apollo, and taking possession of the Oracle which the Serpent hath hitherto guarded. This myth illustrates the fact that Serpent-worship was an earlier form of worship than the Sun-worship, and marks the change when higher influences took possession of the shrine and gave the Parnassian Oracles to men instead of the lower spirits, that had kept possession and given the responses under the Pythonic inspiration. The Serpent-worship originated in fear of evil influences, and in dread of winter and darkness; consequently the Sun-worship was an immense advance to humanity; it was a recognition of the God of beneficence and joy—a religion of love,

compared with the earlier religion of terror on earth and malignancy in Heaven; it was the incarnation of a spirit of brightness.

You see the world turning to it out of the shadows of a miserable night of the past, and its face brightens sunward, and the reptile influence begins to fail in power and unwind its coils and slink apart into out-of-the-way lurking-places. The human mind rejoices and expands in this new morning of the world, and in many shapes and under divers names deifies the Destroyer of Serpents, primally the sun.

The Zoroastrians were among the first to represent God as a spiritual essence whose symbol was in the fire and in the sun, and to endeavour, by worship on housetop and mountain summit, to typify a climbing a little nearer to the "Heart of Light." The Gods Horus, Osiris, Apollo, Bacchus, Balder, Adonis, were personifications to the nations worshipping them of this Sun-God warring with the Power of Darkness which they ultimately destroy. St. John had taken the old astrological allegory and made the conflict which took place yearly a final fight betwixt the Lord of Light and the Demon of Darkness, and turned the sun's victory of the vernal equinox into an eternal triumph of the new Spiritual Sun which he held to have arisen on the world in Jesus Christ.

The physical imagery furnished by the ancient myth, as astronomically interpreted, has been adopted altogether as typical of certain spiritual facts identified in the person, the birth, and other circumstances connected with the life and religion of Christ. And everything necessary was there ready for adoption, and fitting so perfectly to the new needs that it would have seemed a sin against the law of coincidence, or Providence, not to have taken advantage of the old facts and given them a new interpretation. "And the Lord said, I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between her seed and thy seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." In the first form, the seed of the woman was the Sun-God, the God of Light, which was at enmity with the Serpent as leader of the hosts of darkness. The Sun was, in the elder cosmogony, the power that repaired all the wrong and healed all the evil done during the reign of darkness—the evil introduced into the happy Garden of Summer by the symbolical Serpent; hence the prophecy identified with Christ as the Sun of Righteousness, who was to rise with healing on his wings and repair the consequences of the fall, and the loss of the Summer Garden of humanity, by restoring it to the primal condition and rescuing it from the empire of Darkness and the malign influences of the Serpent.

The Ormuzd of Zoroaster was the Sun-God, or Lord of Light. Also, the epithet of Adonis, or Lord, was given to the sun. This Adonis was the Tammuz of Ezekiel. It was one of the abominations mourned over by this prophet that he saw in the inner court of the Lord's house about five-and-twenty men with their backs turned toward the temple of the Lord and their faces toward the east, and they worshipped the sun toward the east. And at the door of the gate of the Lord's house there sat women weeping for Tammuz, lamenting in a loud and idolatrous manner the death of Tammuz, that was Adonis, Lord of Light, or the Sun, who was either setting or dwindling down for his wintry death, and losing his strength daily. This is represented in the Mithra-worship—that is, the so-called Sun-worship—as a man stabbing the Bull, a Serpent biting him, and the Scorpion tearing him.

At the ancient mysteries the people were instructed by means of representations, dramatic and pictorial—thus, thoughts and obscure facts, however occultly obtained, had to be humanised by parables, plays, &c., before they could be grasped by the common understanding. And in this way the Constellation of the Virgin, ascending the East by night, just at the turn



of the year and the birth of the Light-God—the Summer Sun—would be represented to the people present at the mysteries as a woman (the Virgin) with her new-born child in her arms or at her breast, together with such other personifications and scenery as would complete the picture and convey the meaning. Such representations must have been at times so familiar to the popular mind that they easily took the place of the original facts; humanity being much more interesting to itself as a subject of study than either scientific truths or abstract speculation. The speaker proceeded by several extracts from authorities on Arabian, Egyptian, and Persian traditions to prove that this shadowing forth by the Virgin and child, of the constellation of the same name, was wide-spread among the nations of antiquity.

The Sun-God derives from the Father of Lights, and is deified as the light of the world. He is born a tender child at the winter solstice, under the sign of the constellation of the celestial Virgin. The Romans celebrated this birth of the Sun-God with festivities and games on the 25th of December—our Christmas-day. "We celebrate," says the Emperor Julian, "some days before the first of the year, magnificent games in honour of the Sun, to whom we give the title of the Invincible."

"Oh, Sun-King," he continues, "King of the Universe; thou whom, from all eternity, the first God produced out of his pure substance." In the Mysteries the God-Sun descends to the under-world in his death. If we take it as Balder, he descends to Hel, or the shadowy realm of Hela; if as Bacchus, he descends to Hades. Then he is raised again, and ascends the heavens in greater power as the first-born of the Father; and from thence we have the descent of fire to vivify the world and renew its life.

It is somewhat startling to find what an amount of the old Sun-worship reappears in the worship of the Son. At first sight there seems to be no room for any other foundations for Christianity than the ancient religion, on account of the facts being forestalled.

This fact the speaker proceeded to prove by evidence showing that the Egyptians celebrated in the winter solstice the birth of the God of Light, holding in honour of their virgin goddess a famous celebration of lights, which was represented in the Christian ceremonies of Candlemas.

The Christian Sunday, or Lord's Day, was the day of the Lord, Sun-Adonis, Tammuz, Domine, Sol, and Mithra, Lord of Light. The hold of the Sun-worship was so strong upon the early Christians, that as late as the fifth century, Leo the Great made complaint that many Christians, on entering the Basilica of St. Peter for early worship, would turn round and make their obeisance to the rising sun. The same thing exists in the English Church to day, in the custom of turning and bowing toward the East when the name of Jesus occurs in the creed, thus actually making the identification geographical.

The speaker then entered into a further exposition of the connection existing between the leading characteristics of Christianity and the Sun-worship. The constellation Virgo arising in the heavens would naturally appear to be pursued by the Serpent constellation—and from thence came the story in the 12th chapter of Revelations, wherein the great dragon stood ready to devour the child whom the woman in labour was about to bring forth; and the war which Michael waged with said dragon was typical of the fight annually occurring between light and darkness, contending for supremacy. "We know," said Albert the Great, "that the celestial Virgin ascended over the horizon at the moment at which we fix the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. All the mysteries of this Divine incarnation, and all the secrets of His wonderful life, from His conception to His ascension, are to be found in the constellations, and figured in the

stars that announced them." And think what you may of it, he said, the fact is that in many nations and under divers names, the Sun, born of the Virgin constellation, was worshipped, and his birth celebrated as the light of the world ages on ages before Jesus Christ was born.

This was proved by reference to the Chronicle of Alexandria concerning the Egyptian mysteries of ancient times. Thus did the Dragon of Darkness, the old Serpent of the Persian Mythology, the Typhon of Egypt, the Crooked Serpent of Job, the Prince and Power of the Air who ascended his throne of the winter world adopted by St. John, become the Man-Serpent Satan, our spiritual adversary on earth, whose name is one with that of the ancient Saturn and Egyptian Set, who was looked up to and feared of old as man's adversary in the heavens. The Serpent has taken spiritual form, and been made to cast its loathsome shadow on the shuddering souls of men.

Calvinism was the later and uglier and most gruesome form of Serpent-worship; it deified and adored the same almighty Moloch, whose anger could only be quenched by a great glut of gore, only propitiated through the offering of innocent blood.

Such was, such is the mystery of the Beast, which the speaker of the Revelation left for us to interpret as best we may. That was the Beast which was, and is not, and yet is; for the Serpent of Spiritual darkness still winds about the souls of men and chokes the life out of them and steals their treasures, and has yet to be wrestled with and conquered in struggles as stern as any that are told of in the stories of the Dragon-slayers of old. Its name is Theology!

The lecturer here introduced what he considered the unwinding of the last coil of the Serpent, whose turnings he had followed through its primal convolutions of darkness and horror, its astro-theological aspect, and its spiritualistic signification of wisdom, and in so unwinding he proposed to show that in his opinion the basis of the myth was physical. The early men who set forth their meanings in the myths saw with Darwinian instinct that what really and truly divided and differentiated them from the animals as a visible fact was the catamenial period which marked the creation of humanity. It was their creation—they did not trouble themselves about world-making, as had been assured—and so they formulated it in various ways; among others under the symbol of the Serpent, the Renewer, the Renovator of Life, the Continuer of Being. This catamenial period was the preparer for creation—the first form of prophecy to man—its duration was the first direct measure of time, and its methodical close marked the seventh day, the sacred season of rest. Arguments and facts in proof of his theory—in which Egyptian, Sanscrit, and Hebrew writings alike were called in as evidence—were advanced by him with cogency and power, and in the light of this hypothesis he declared himself able to intelligently interpret any story related of the Serpent, "whether it originated in the theology that made it typical of good, or emblematic of evil." Orthodox theology, he said, has created its Satan out of the evil Serpent, and its Saviour out of the Procreator called the Sun-God, under various names, the natural opponent of the old Red Dragon and Deity of the Dark. These constitute the two halves of its scheme of damnation and salvation. Nothing else in this world have they to go upon.

He concluded his lecture with a prophecy that the theological ring would ere long be broken up, and that all sects would see the necessity of abandoning their creeds and embracing the higher revelations of Spiritualism.



## RESEARCHES IN SPIRITUALISM.

BY M. A. (OXON).

## CHAPTER III.

On some of the rarer and more infrequently observed phenomena :—  
 Perfumes—Lights—Musical Sounds abnormally made.

HITHERTO I have described phenomena which my eyes have witnessed, which have occurred while I was in full possession of my faculties, and when my powers of observation were unimpaired. I come now to a group, which, for convenience, I have classed together, where the case is somewhat altered. I have, indeed, observed all the phenomena of which I speak at many different times, and under various circumstances, but not in their most perfect form of development. In all cases where the large luminous appearances, which I am about to describe, were most successfully presented, I was in a state of unconscious trance. In a similar way, the most perfect musical sounds are made when I cannot hear them ; and, as a general rule, to which the exceptions are so rare, as only to serve to establish the principle, the best and most successful manifestations occur when the medium is deeply entranced. The condition of absolute passivity on his part is then most perfectly secured, and the force which the operators use can be more safely drawn off. Over and over again have I heard this passive state spoken of as an essential condition of success.

The fact that I am entranced during the occurrence of the best manifestations, renders it difficult for me to give an accurate description. I have endeavoured to remedy this, by requesting those who have witnessed specially notable phenomena, to favour me with a description of what they saw ; and I have been at pains to record a faithful account immediately after each séance, drawing my information from the impressions left on the minds of the sitters. My own records, therefore, contain exact accounts of what I have seen myself, and, further, of the descriptions given me by careful observers of phenomena which occurred during my entrancement. These sources of information I have supplemented by accounts kindly furnished me, which I print exactly as I have received them. As a consequence, I am able to affirm that my descriptions and statements are trustworthy, and within the margin of fact.

SEC. I.—*Perfumes and waves of scent-laden air.*

In every circle with which I am acquainted the conditions are harmonized by some means. Usually music is employed for that purpose. It seems to have the effect of soothing the minds of

the sitters, and leading them to throw aside, for the time, thoughts of other matters, while they dwell harmoniously on what is being attempted in the circle. Whatever other effect music may have, I believe its soothing property to be its chief merit. This harmonizing is effected in our circle by means of Perfumes and waves of cool scented air. We are never asked for music. If, very rarely, a musical box is set in motion, its only effect is to elicit a peculiar muffled sound in the floor, and to cause a vibration to be made in the room. By these sounds we know of the presence of a particular Intelligence, who so announces himself. But they are never asked for again, and they apparently have no harmonizing effect. Singing is never introduced; and any noise, even of loud conversation, is checked at once. We are told to keep still. But when any opposing conditions are to be removed, then the room is pervaded by odours of subtle and delicate, or strong perfume. If a new sitter be present, he or she is censed (if I may adopt the expression) and so initiated. The chair which the stranger occupies is surrounded by luminous haze, from which issues the perfume; and very frequently wet scent, more or less pungent according to conditions, is sprinkled from the ceiling at the same time. If a new Intelligence is to communicate, or special honour to be paid to a Chief, the room is pervaded by perfumes which grow stronger as the Spirit enters. This scenting of the room in which we are about to meet, will sometimes commence many hours before we begin. Indeed, when we have been in the country, far from the polluted atmosphere of smoke and dirt, charged with the nameless odours that London breeds, the air of the séance-room is always laden with perfumes. There is a subtle odour in it which is perpetually being changed. Sometimes the aroma of a flower from the garden is drawn out, intensified, and insinuated throughout the house. Sometimes the odour is like nothing of this earth's production, ethereal, delicate, and infinitely delightful. Sandal wood used to be a favourite, and rose, verbena, and odours of other flowers, have been plentifully used.

I find it difficult to convey any idea of the subtle odours that have been diffused throughout the room, or of the permanence of the scent. It is usually the first manifestation and the last. The perfume is sprinkled in showers from the ceiling, and borne in waves of cool air round the circle, especially when the atmosphere is close and the air oppressive. Its presence in a particular place is shown to me by the luminous haze which accompanies it. I can trace its progress round the circle by the light—and my vision has been many times corroborated on this point by other sitters—and can frequently say to a certain sitter, "You will smell the scent directly. I see the luminous form going to you."



My vision has always been confirmed by the exclamations of delight which follow.

When we first observed this manifestation, it was attended by a great peculiarity. The odour was circumscribed in space, confined to a belt or band, beyond which it did not penetrate. It surrounded the circle to the extent of a few feet, and outside of that belt was not perceptible; or it was drawn across the room as a cordon, so that it was possible to walk into it and out of it again—the presence and absence of the odour and the temperature of the air which accompanied it being most marked. Mr. Barlow (*Human Nature*, April, 1874) mentions a somewhat parallel experience, and Judge Edmonds especially notes the presence of an odour which was *not diffused through the room*. Both he and Mr. Barlow describe the sensation as being like a flower presented to the nostrils at intervals. I should rather describe what I observed as a scented zone or belt perfectly defined, and not more than a few feet in breadth. Within it the temperature was cool and the scent strong, outside of it the air was decidedly warmer, and no trace of perfume was perceptible. It was no question of fancy. The scent was too strong for that. And the edges of the belt were quite clearly marked, so that it was possible, instantaneously, to pass from the warm air of the room to the cool perfumed air of this zone. I do not remember ever hearing of a precisely similar case to this which occurred repeatedly.

I have known the same phenomenon to occur in the open air. I have been walking with a friend, for instance, and we have walked into air laden with scent, and through it again into the natural atmosphere. We have gone back, and have found that the air in a certain locality—generally a narrow belt—was distinctly perfumed, while the air on each side bore no traces of scent. I have even known cases where wet scent has been produced and showered down in the open air. On one special occasion, in the Isle of Wight, my attention was attracted by the patter of some fine spray on a lady's silk dress, as we were walking along a road. One side of the dress was plentifully besprinkled with fine spray, which gave forth a delicious odour, very clearly perceptible for some distance round.

During a séance the scent is either carried, as it seems, round the circle, and is then accompanied by cool air, or it is sprinkled down from the ceiling of the room in liquid form. In the clairvoyant state I am able to see and describe the process before the scent is sprinkled, and can warn a special sitter not to look upwards. For, on certain occasions, when conditions are not favourable, the scent is pungent and most painful if it gets into the eye. At other times it is harmless, and causes no pain

whatever. I have had a quantity of it thrown into my eye, and it has caused no more pain than water would. On the contrary, I have seen the effect caused on another by a similar occurrence. The pain caused was excruciating, the inflammation was most severe, and the effects did not pass off for twenty-four hours or more. In fact, whatever the liquid was, it caused severe *conjunctivitis*. Perhaps Dr. Carpenter would like to try a little experiment of this kind. I know none that would so soon convince him of the objective reality of Phenomena, and of the existence of something that Unconscious Cerebration will not account for.

This variety in the pungency and potency of perfume I attribute to variety in the attendant circumstances. The illness of one of the sitters will cause the scent to be coarse and pungent. Harmonious conditions, physical and mental, are signalised by the presence of delicate subtle odours, which are infinitely charming. I have said that sometimes the odour of flowers, either in the house or garden, will be intensified. A vase of fresh flowers put on the table causes the diffusion through the room of one or more of the odours of flowers in the bouquet. I have observed the process of drawing out the natural perfume in this way. We used frequently to gather fresh flowers, and watch the process. Flowers which had a very slight smell when gathered would, by degrees, throw off such a perfume as to fill the room, and strike any one who came into it most forcibly. In this case the natural odour of the flower was intensified, and the bloom received no harm. At other times, however, some liquid was apparently put upon the blossom, and an odour not its own given to it. In that case it invariably withered, and died very rapidly. I have frequently had flowers in my button-hole scented in this way; and the phenomena to which I refer are too unmistakeable, and have been too frequently observed, to leave any room for doubt.

Great quantities of dry musk have been from time to time thrown about in the house where our circle meets. On a late occasion it fell in very considerable quantities over a writing-desk at which a lady was sitting, in the act of writing letters. It was mid-day, and no one was near at the time, yet the particles of musk were so numerous as to pervade the whole contents of the desk. They were *placed*, for no throwing would have produced such a result, at the very bottom of the desk, and between the papers which it contained. The odour was most pronounced; and the particles, when gathered together, made up a considerable packet. Sometime after this, when at a séance, I saw something which looked like luminous dust on the table. No odour was perceptible, but in my clairvoyant state I saw a heap



of luminous particles which appeared to me extremely brilliant. I described it, and putting out my hand, I found that there really was a heap on the table. I inquired what it was, and *musk* was rapped out. We demurred, for no odour was perceptible, but the statement was reiterated. After the séance we gathered up the dust, which looked like musk, but *had no smell whatever*. The next morning, however, the odour was powerful enough; and the powder still exists, and is indubitably very good powdered musk. By what imaginable process can that phenomenon have been accomplished?

I remember another occasion, amongst several, when, after a séance, I was walking up and down smoking a cigar. The odour of strong perfume was distinctly perceptible, in spite of the tobacco. On the table lay a blotting pad of white paper. My eye fell on it, and I asked, on the spur of the moment, whether some scent could not be sprinkled so that we could see it there. The request was at once and repeatedly complied with. The paper was drenched, and the odour from it was very pronounced twenty-four hours afterwards. One of the astonishing points connected with this matter is the quantity of liquid that is produced. The table is covered with innumerable stains; and if they be removed, another séance will renew them. The spray appears to fall everywhere, for the very fire-irons bear traces of its presence; and I am quite sure that the housemaid's opinion of the manifestation would not be complimentary to the invisible operators.

I must omit much that might be said, but in conclusion, I append an account of one remarkable manifestation, for which I am indebted to the kindness of a friend who was present. Our hands were all joined in a cluster in the middle of the table, and the quantity of liquid must have exceeded half an ounce at least.

"In compliance with your request, I will describe as briefly as possible what occurred at the dark séance held on the evening of March 18th, 1874, when scent was produced so abundantly in the presence of Mrs. S. and myself, while you were in a state of trance. The controlling spirit began by speaking through you at some length, and we were told to expect unusual manifestations. They commenced with a strongly-scented breeze, which passed softly round the circle, its course being marked by a pale light. In a few minutes it suddenly changed, and blew upon us with considerable force, as if a pair of bellows had been employed, and the temperature of the room was perceptibly lowered. After this liquid scent was sprinkled upon us several times: it appeared to come from the top of the room, and fell upon us in small drops. Finally we were told that a new manifestation would be attempted, and that we were to prepare for it by joining hands and holding the palms upwards. In this position we waited for two or three minutes, and then I felt a stream of liquid scent poured out, as it were, from the spout of a teapot, which fell on one side of my left hand, and ran down upon the table. The same was done for Mrs. S.; and to

judge from our impressions at the time, and from the stains on the table, a very considerable quantity must have been produced. I may remark, in conclusion, that there was no scent in the room before the séance, and that we could distinguish several different perfumes which made the atmosphere so oppressive that we were glad to seek a purer air so soon as the séance came to an end.

F. W. P."

## SEC. II.—*Luminous Appearances.*

From the very first I have been familiar with various luminous appearances at séances. When first I went to Herne and Williams' séances in Lamb's Conduit Street, I saw floating masses of luminous vapour in the air. These clouds of light seemed to condense now and again in a spot where any particular manifestation was going on. I have seen a luminous cloud in a corner of the room from which a chair was afterwards brought. I have seen a column of this misty light near me while I have felt the peculiar sensation caused by the nearness of a presence. I have seen the whole air full of tiny phosphorescent specks, which were condensed momentarily into a hand that played the guitar, and then were dissipated again. When I began to sit alone, or without the presence in the circle of a known medium, the same appearance was manifest. The same luminous column was at my right hand; the air was filled with the floating luminous vapour which comes out so clearly in Mr. Beattie's photographs; and the same diffused light was there, shifting here and there and marking by its presence the progress of some manifestation. At that time I had no clairvoyant power developed; and my vision was confirmed by the sight of one of our circle. She could see exactly what appeared to me. That diffused phosphorescent light, which I take to be the indication of Spirit presence, has never left our séances, save on the rarest occasions. When it is not perceptible, we find that for some reason nothing can be done. It heralds special manifestations. Light of this kind near the ceiling preludes the showering down of scent; a column of misty light carries a cool scented air round the circle; a luminous cloud hovers over any part of the room where anything is being done; and spirit forms that I describe by clairvoyant vision are visible by the same misty light to the natural eye.

When Katie King, the Elder, used to show herself two years ago, it was by the expedient of passing over her face hands from the fingers of which streamed phosphorescent smoky light. These fiery fingers gave forth a yellow luminous smoke, the odour of which was very pungent and unpleasant. A most weird effect had this figure which usually rested on the middle of the table, and chattered volubly, as it passed over a face, which seen through the yellow fiery smoke was decidedly pretty,



fingers from which streamed this phosphoric light. The room gradually grew unbearable with the fumes, and the expedient was but a clumsy way of lighting up an object.

Phosphorus in some form enters very largely into the manufacture of all these luminous appearances. I have seen it streaming from the fingers of mediums at times; my own hands are frequently covered with a lambent bluish flame; and under unfavourable conditions a distinct odour of phosphorus is perceptible, and the light grows yellow and smoky. On one occasion when an attempt to make the large luminous globes which I am about to describe failed, the room was filled with just such smoky vapours, luminous and phosphoric as would be produced by phosphorus; and my hands streaming with phosphoric light left a plain trace of light on anything they touched. Yet there was no phosphorus in the room or in the house, save what was drawn from our bodies, or at any rate what was brought or obtained for the purpose of experimenting by the Invisibles. I shall not easily forget the fright I got as the clouds of luminous vapour with strong phosphoric odour sailed up under my nose. It all passed away, but for the time the appearance was sufficiently terrifying.

The first distinct Spirit-light (so-called) that I saw was on July 3, 1872, at one of Herne and Williams' séances. I had seen Katie's face lit up by fiery fingers as I have described, and when she announced her presence again I expected the same appearance. She came however opposite to me on the table, the upper part of the figure alone materialised, and shewed a new kind of light which she seemed vastly pleased with. It was the self-luminous crystal which has since been associated with John King. It had not then attained the perfect form which it now assumes, but was a cake about the size of a small lemon, and emitted a pale bluish light which rapidly faded. It did not flicker, but paled gradually, and was renewed by Katie's making passes over it. As it is now seen with John King it assumes various forms, but is correctly described as a self-luminous cake or cylinder carried by materialised hands, and surrounded by drapery. It gives a light very similar to moonlight, and distinctly different from the light produced by any form of phosphorus. Mr. Crookes, I believe, has had the advantage of seeing the spirit-light by the side of a lamp of phosphorised oil which he had prepared, and the colour was perceptibly different. I have seen John King's lamp flash up and give out a very much stronger light than any preparation of phosphorus would produce.

Another form of light which I have observed in the presence of Mr. Williams is a little round star of light, which flits about

over the heads of sitters, near the ceiling. It is totally different from the one previously described—scintillates, sparkles like the light from a gem, darts rapidly about, and vanishes quickly. The lamp of John King gives a steady, pale, soft light, does not flicker or flash, but maintains a steady glow till it goes out. This on the contrary, casts out rays of light, scintillates like a star on a frosty night, and is always round, and apparently about the size of half-a-crown. I have seen other lights, but not frequently. Once I noticed points of light darting down to the guitar and striking it, each touch drawing forth a musical sound. Mrs. Everitt has a pretty manifestation at her séances. Questions are answered and a conversation carried on by bright phosphorescent specks of light which flash in the air, and use the code of signals which is employed in rapping out messages on the table.

The first occasion on which we saw the large luminous appearances with which we were for a time so familiar, was on June 7, 1873. By that time we had become very familiar with the floating masses of luminous vapour which I have before noticed; and on several occasions we had seen these masses condensed, so to say, until a distinct objective light was formed. On this evening, however, at an ordinary séance, I felt my chair withdrawn from the table to the distance of three or four feet, and I was partially entranced, but not so completely as to prevent me from recalling what happened. A number of cones of soft light similar to moonlight appeared in succession, until a dozen or more had been made. They presented the appearance of a nucleus of soft, yellow light, surrounded by a soft haze. They sailed up from a corner of the room and gradually died out. The most conspicuous was shaped like a mitre and was 8 or 9 inches in height. This was the first time we saw lights of this description, and we determined to extemporise a cabinet for the purpose of developing them. This was simply done by throwing open the door between two rooms, and hanging in the doorway a curtain with a square aperture in the middle of it. On one side of the curtain a table was put for the sitters; on the other side I was placed in an easy-chair, and was soon in a state of deep trance, from which I never woke until the séance was concluded. What then took place is described in the records of friends who were present. Large globes of light such as I have described above sailed out of the aperture and went into the room where the sitters were placed. They are described as of the same soft, pale hue, like moonlight. They were sufficiently bright to illumine the lintel and door posts, and to cast a strong reflection into the room. Within the gauzy envelope was a bright point of concentrated light, and the size varied consider-



ably. The cone shape predominated, but some were like a dumb-bell, and others like a mass of luminous vapour revolving round and falling over a central nucleus of soft, yellow light. They seem to have been carried in a materialised hand, a finger of which was shewn at request by placing it in front of the nucleus of light. Round each was soft drapery, the outline of which was usually perfectly distinct.

I append an account kindly furnished me by my friend Dr. Thomson, of 4 Worcester Lawn, Clifton.

"The manifestations began with a luminous haze surrounding a small point of bluish light, which latter gradually increased in size apparently at the expense of the surrounding hazy envelope, as it seemed to diminish as the point of light increased, till it attained the size of one's closed fist. At this size it remained for some time until one of the sitters expressed disappointment at its not coming further into the room in which we were seated. The mass of light then gradually enlarged till it became in bulk equal to an ordinary sized water-melon. At the same time it approached us to apparently within 5 feet of where we were sitting. At this time the perfumes which had been brought during the earlier part of the evening were again showered down upon us. The appearance of the light reminded me strongly of what I have seen when an electric discharge is passed through an exhausted tube, with the exception, of course, of the latter being momentary, whereas in the present case the light continued more or less for nearly an hour. During the latter part of the séance, the light emitted from this course was sufficiently intense to light up the whole of the doorway opposite to which we were placed; but it struck me that the intensity of the light was feeble as compared with ordinary light, as it did not extend beyond a few feet from the source."

I may add that this point has been noticed by others, and by myself on the rare occasions when lights were presented without my entrancement, viz., that the nucleus apparently absorbed into itself the hazy luminosity by which it was surrounded, and grew brighter in the process. This luminous mist would at times extend round the nucleus to a distance so great as to make the whole appearance nearly if not quite two feet in length, and to give it the semblance of a draped tent with a bright point of light within it. I believe that John King's luminous crystal loosely enveloped in some very fine Indian gauze, or some material like floss silk (only finer and thinner than anything I know) would give an appearance very similar to what I and others have witnessed. But no words that I can put together can convey anything but a very dim notion of this remarkable phenomenon.

Five months after this we had an opportunity of renewing our investigation of these lights under more favourable auspices. We had exchanged the smoke-laden air of London for the pure sea breezes of the Isle of Wight; and the worry and anxiety of daily labour for the rest and refreshment of a summer holiday. Conditions were proportionately improved. The drapery that

surrounded the lights was quite palpable, and was handled by us all at different times. It was governed by the same law which operates in all manifestations, and which I have noticed in describing the varying quality and pungency of the perfumes. Under favourable circumstances it was soft, filmy, and like the finest silk, or rather, finer than any substance I know of. At other times it was coarse, rough, harsh, and more like a bath towel than anything else I can compare it to. The lights at this time were of great size, and flashed about round the circle as we sat round the table with our hands upon it. No secluding in a cabinet was necessary; the lights were formed apparently in the darkness beneath the table, whence they sailed up and touched us, flashing in our faces, and brushing our hands with the drapery. The crystal was frequently rapped on the table at our request, and the sound made was exactly that which I have heard when John King raps on the table with his lamp.

By degrees the character of the light changed. Instead of a nucleus in size like a bean, or in shape like a small triangle, surrounded by luminous mist and enveloped in some sort of flowing drapery, we observed a different kind of light. This was a solid cylinder or cake, self-luminous, and giving forth the same sort of pale, soft light, but surrounded by no haze, and clearly defined in cylindrical outline. Its measurement would be about 4 inches long by 2 inches in diameter. It was, I believe, contained in an envelope, but in a close-fitting one, instead of the billowy folds of soft gauze which apparently encircled the other lights. It was also carried in a hand, to which was attached a forearm—the greatest extent to which materialisation has been carried in our circle.

A curious incidental piece of evidence that same arm furnished to us. It was a lean swarthy arm, the hand thin and brown, the flesh just the colour of an Eastern, the limb such as would belong to a thin and rather old man of an Oriental race. Long before this, the Invisible to whom it was said to belong, had told us who he was, and had given ample details of his life on earth. He had been, he said, an old Arabian philosopher, who had dabbled freely in occult sciences. The arm was exactly that which would belong to an old Arabian, and assuredly no arm anything like it belonged to any human being in the room.

On the particular occasion to which I am referring, this hand and arm holding the luminous cylinder passed leisurely round the circle, then touched us all, rapped on the table with the light and answered questions, sailed up into the air and struck the gasalier over our heads, and finally hit the ceiling above us. It descended again, and darted about in the most erratic fashion round our heads. Its movements were intensely rapid, and its



brilliancy was very intense at times, though the character of the light never changed. At length it rested quietly on the table, and remained there until it gradually faded and died out.

I was struck on this occasion with the permanence of the light, and I requested that further experiments might be made in that direction. Several trials were made, and at length (January 4, 1874) the same cylindrical light remained visible, clear and distinct, during the whole time we were sitting. I regret very much that exact time was not taken. We commenced shortly after 10 P.M. The light appeared very soon indeed, and it never was out of sight until a minute or two before we broke up at 11.30. Of that I am absolutely certain. The light was never renewed, but remained visible during the whole time; nor did it pale as at other times. Usually the light grows dim after a few minutes, and is renewed, apparently by a hand making passes over it, just as John King does. On this occasion no such renewal was necessary. For a considerable portion of the time it remained on, or immediately over the table; but at others it was in motion, rapping out answers to our questions, and striking different parts of the room as we requested. In this way it was carried into the furthest corner of the room, and rapped at the angle formed by the walls and ceiling, *i.e.*, at the point furthest from us. It struck the ceiling in various places, the globes of the gasalier, the mantel-shelf, and, in short, did what I have never seen before or since. It seemed as if the permanence of the light knew no bound, and as if it could be maintained at any distance from the circle. It was at last extinguished at request.

I have reserved for separate description some very remarkable phenomena which occurred at four consecutive séances on August 9, 10, 11, and 12, 1873. I was on a holiday excursion with the same friends who have witnessed from the first the development of the phenomena that I have described. The weather was lovely, the scenery grand, and, mentally and physically, we were in a harmonious condition. Nothing heavier than the *Spectator* had engaged my mind, and my pen had composed nothing more serious than a gossiping letter. No importunate editor clamoured for "copy," and the stifling August heat of London was exchanged for the balmy air of a charming lough in the North of Ireland. Our days were spent in a boat, lazily flogging the water to tempt the wary trout to rise—exercise enough to invigorate without tiring, while the jaded mind took rest, and the body was refreshed by scenes of beauty. It is under such circumstances that the physique is in most perfect order, and the mysterious force which is used for these manifestations is generated most rapidly, while the harmonious

mental state disposes to complete passivity. I do not envy the possessor of a mind so ill-regulated and a body so dyspeptic as to fail of happiness in such surroundings. Accordingly, as might be expected, our invisible friends were not slow to avail themselves of the improved conditions. A synopsis of what actually occurred is carefully compiled from notes written in detail at the time, and which have been kindly placed at my disposal:—

“On the 10th of August, after some other phenomena, a large globe of light rose from the side of the table opposite to me, and sailed up to the level of our faces, and then vanished. It was followed by several more, all of which rose up from the side opposite to me, and sometimes to the right and sometimes to the left of the medium. At request the next light was placed slowly in the centre of the table. It was apparently as large as a shadow, and was surrounded with drapery. At this time the medium was entranced, and the controlling spirit informed me that he would endeavour to place the light in the medium's hand. Failing in this, he said he would knock on the table in front of me. Almost immediately a light came and stood on the table close to me. ‘You see; now listen, I will knock.’ Very slowly the light rose up, and struck three distinct blows on the table. ‘Now I will show you my hand.’ A large, very bright light then came up, and inside of it appeared the materialised hand of the spirit. He moved the fingers about close to my face. The appearance was as distinct as can be conceived. The power having become exhausted, he exhorted me to wake the medium, make him wash his face and hands in cold water, and to tell him nothing till that had been done. He also insisted on my writing a close account of what had been done.

“On the following evening I placed the paper containing the account on the table, together with a pencil, and asked that the light might be brought down upon it. This was done several times. The medium having become entranced, I requested the controlling spirit to append his signature to the document, if it were possible to do so. He said he would try. He then brought a very large and bright light, and passed it up and down over the face of the entranced medium, so that I could see it distinctly. He told me that the folds which I saw round the light were drapery, and to prove it he brought the light and passed the drapery over the back of my hand several times. It was perfectly tangible. I asked that a light might be placed close to my face. He assented, and told me to close my eyes until told to open them. I did so, and on opening them I saw close to my eyes a large and very bright light, the size of the globe of a Moderator Lamp. He told me to rub my hands so as to generate more power, and very soon another large light, held by a hand, appeared on the table. This time the hand appeared to be outside of the drapery, and moved the fingers about freely, and receded from the light, as though the lamp were held in another hand. After other lights had been shown, I heard the pencil moving, and repeating his admonition of the previous evening, he departed, leaving on the paper a specimen of direct spirit caligraphy.

“I have omitted to say that the way of renewing the light when it grew dim was by making passes over it with the hand. The lights were of the kind described previously, and consisted of a nucleus which was said to be brought by the controlling spirit, surrounded by a luminous haze, and an envelope of drapery. They varied in size and luminosity, and seemed to be more easily and fully developed when I rubbed my hands together or on my coat. At one time a portion of a forearm was distinctly visible, and the hand containing the light was passed very distinctly on mine as it lay



on the table. I may add that all the cases recorded by me occurred when no other sitter was present but myself. S. T. S."

These strange phenomena have now ceased for some time past. The drain on the vital strength of the medium was too great to be continued. As it was, the experiments made were attended by very great subsequent prostration, and the phase passed away, as the levitations described in Chapter I. ceased after a time. In the one case I strongly objected to the manifestation; in the other harm ensued. Both have therefore ceased.

Since the commencement of the present year we have had another kind of light altogether, which is still shown occasionally. It is more like the light shown by Katie King, to which I have adverted above. It is apparently a little round disc of light, which twinkles like a star. It has a dark side, which is generally turned towards me, so that while other sitters have been carrying on a conversation, the answers being given by this light, I have not been able to see it at all. It is very much brighter than the large light, and more like a star. It flashes with great rapidity, and answers questions by the usual code of signals. The manifestation is very pretty, and like what I have heard described as occurring with Mrs. Everitt. The light usually hovers over my head, sometimes coming into the circle, but more frequently floating in a distant corner of the room. It is not apparently solid, nor does it seem to be surrounded with drapery.

On a few occasions, not more than half a dozen, we have observed a bright scintillating light, which apparently rests on the mantel-shelf. It is about the size of a pigeon's egg, and looks like a large diamond lit up with strong light.

I have reserved for the last a description of the most remarkable light, of quite a different kind, that I have ever heard or read of. It appeared in greatest intensity on the eve of the year 1873, and has since reappeared five times. On each occasion it diminished in brilliancy, and when last it was seen had lost almost all its striking character. It has not been seen for more than fifteen months now. In this, as in much that I notice here, I rely for my description on notes carefully taken at the time, and which now lie before me. When the light was first seen I was so far under influence as to render my powers of observation worthless, and before it had attained its full dimensions and brilliancy I was deeply entranced. The description given by the sitters is fortunately very minute. The light was first observed directly behind us. At that time it was a tall column, about half an inch or rather more in width, and six or seven feet high. The light was of a bright golden hue, and

did not illuminate objects in its neighbourhood. For a minute a cross developed at its top, and rays seemed to dart from it. Round my head was a similar sort of halo to that which clair-voyants describe round the heads of some persons, only, in this case it was perceptible by natural vision, for one of the sitters put out his hand to ascertain the locality of the rays which he saw, and placed his fingers directly on the top of my head. At this time I was not so deeply entranced as to be unable to hear what was said, and, at request, I moved my body from side to side. As I moved, the ray moved with me, and the removal of my body discovered to the opposite sitter a cluster of scintillating light, of an oblong shape, about the size of a saucer, at the foot of the long pencil or ray before described. As my body resumed its position it hid the lower part of the long ray of light from view. Soon, however, the cross—as it had then become—commenced to move, and gradually travelled from my back to my right hand, always on or near the wall, until it had passed over an arc of  $90^{\circ}$ . My friend, who had been watching this strange phenomenon with absorbing interest, requested to be permitted to examine it more closely. Leave having been given, he rose from his chair, went to the light, put his face close to it, and passed his hand through it. He detected no odour, nor did the light disappear as he touched it. No warmth came from it, nor did it light up the room perceptibly. Both the long ray and cluster remained visible until the séance was concluded.

*(To be continued.)*

## THE TRINITY.

AMID cloud-banks, says Dr. Lazarus, tinged with gold and purple, whose imperfect media refract and decompose without entirely obstructing the luminous solar rays, we meet the mystery of the Trinity, guarded so zealously by the dragons of the Church for so many ages, like a royal palace by the soldiers who never pass its threshold; since its meaning has been as little understood by the priests as by the laity to whom they announce it.

The science of harmony reveals to us in the Trinity three principles essential to every form of life, and inseparable in their very nature.

Around and within us we find this triad:

1st, Principle, active or moving—attraction, passion, love, or desire.

2nd, Principle, passive or moved—matter.



3rd, Principle, neutral or arbitral—mathematics, order, or law.

The first Principle, active or moving, corresponds to the Solar Ray, in which it is visibly and sensibly concrete, and through which it excites all the manifestations of life, movement, and happiness on the earth within our cognizance, and reasoning from analogy, on all the planets of the solar system.

In its connection with the passive and neuter principles for the evolution of organic and vital beings the Solar Ray exhibits a second Trinity.

The caloric element, corresponding to love or affection: the luminous element, to truth or intelligence: and the electric or chemical element to use or practical ultimatum.

The luminous element corresponds to the mathematical principle; it gives us the perception of form and order, and as the intellectual ray is concrete in the sensible ray, and practically identified with it, our appreciation of truth and of law, is due to the same sight element which determines the form and organisation of every substance from the crystal in the mineral sphere up to the highest forms of animal existence.

The electric or chemical element, most active in determining those chemical or molecular changes and transformations which exhibit electricity in use or material ultimates, appears in the successive stages of that progression through which matter passes, intending to become organised, under the different forms of electricity, galvanism, magnetism, and the neuraura or nervous magnetism, which are all characterised by opposite states, or by a double polarity, in virtue of which discriminate elective assimilations take place between the particles, either of inorganic matter or of organised bodies, whose solid tissues are nourished by the assimilation of their vital sap or blood.

The luminous and electric manifestations are intimately connected with those of caloric. They invariably occur when heat reaches a certain intensity, and heat is reciprocally evolved in chemical changes occurring under the influence of light, at the same time that cements of voltaic or galvanic electricity are set in motion.

This corresponds with the phenomena of the passional life, where love, the parent principle, potentially contains truth, or the order of its own manifestation and expression in practical use, the generated principle or only begotten Son of God.

God manifests Himself in the creation,—

1st, As love.

2nd, As love incarnating itself in material forms and facts.

3rd, Love attaining harmony in its expressions under the laws of supreme wisdom or mathematical order.—*The Trinity Analysed and Illustrated.*

## UNDER CRIMSON SKIES:

## A POEM.

*By the Author of "Poems and Sonnets."*

THE dawn and all its coming wealth I sing,  
A message of high hope and peace I bring,  
And I would lift pale English souls to see  
The wonders that shall surely, shortly be.  
In truth we are a lame and timid crew  
In England—underneath the greyish blue  
Of British skies: it seems we need an air  
Keener and brighter, purer and more rare,  
In which to originate a bold emprise—  
American or soft Italian skies.

Mazzini nourished on Italian air,  
Might, dwelling here, have taught us how to dare—  
Or we might mark Walt Whitman's lurid form  
Swimming through clustered wreaths of thunderstorm,  
Or hear brave Parker crying in the West,  
"With *us* the sweet muse builds her latter nest,  
Migrating from the Grecian mounts and hills  
To the soft grassy sides of Western rills—  
Greece cannot keep her! neither can strong Rome  
Provide for that sweet muse a lasting home;  
But she is present in each yearning heart,  
Inaugurating there a house of art  
And temples fairer than the dreamy East  
Erected to her; she is in the least  
Soft plant that mixes with the Western winds,  
And sings through Western stalwart-sinewed minds,  
Not pausing now to trumpet forth a strain  
From Homer,\* or desiring to retain  
The pleasant memory of a bygone day,  
Treading with rapid foot the *forward way*."

So might brave Parker fearlessly have said,  
Bidding us leave the graveclothes to their dead,  
And tramp right onward in our fearless march  
Through Time's triumphal and perpetual arch,  
That carries crowns for victors, and for those  
Whose conquered corpses 'neath its shades repose,  
Seeing that the Victor and the Victim are  
But *one* sweet figure in the golden car

---

\* "Come, muse, migrate from Greece and Ionia;  
Cross out, please, those immensely overpaid accounts,  
That matter of Troy, and Achilles' wrath, and Eneas', Odysseus' wanderings;  
Placard '*Removed*' and '*To Let*' on the rocks of your snowy Parnassus;  
Repeat at Jerusalem—" &c.  
WALT WHITMAN.



Of Time, who blends into one perfect whole  
The conquered and the glad victorious soul.

And Emerson again, upon whose mind  
God breathed soft secrets through the Western wind,  
And sent him forth to testify to all  
That *still* the showers of inspiration fall  
Upon the humble and receptive heart :

Can we not gather courage from *his* art,  
And so originate some singing here  
That shall not wear the pallid tint of fear,  
But shall sound like the foot upon the floor  
Of some strong god who threatens at the door,  
Bidding us quickly open and admit  
The marvellous face with soft love-yearning lit,  
Even the face of Freedom—who shall reign  
O'er hill and river-side and lake and plain ?

Can we not gather courage and abjure  
The past?—and every soul of us be pure  
As Jesus, holding strong communion high  
As he did with that Power in the sky  
Whom he preferred to call “the Father”—whom  
We recognise in Earth's impassioned bloom,  
And in the showers, and in the pleasant wind  
Of summer, and each spirit well inclined,  
And whom we call the Mother of Mankind ?

Can we not make our loves as large as those  
Which like great golden orbs of light arose  
Illumining the dark clouds of the past ?  
Why should we link our banners to the mast  
Of any foreign vessel—Hebrew, Greek,  
Or Roman—why not let our own hearts speak ?

Why not obey the Intuition high  
Which tells each spirit that he cannot die,  
Which bids him be original in speech  
And love and fire of yearning—bids him reach  
His hot arms if it may be to the stars,  
Pulling the horseless planets off their cars  
With very strength of passion—why not tell  
The world with happy voice that “all is well,”  
That loves as bright as Dante's may be known,  
That women's voices with as soft a tone  
As Beatrice's may be heard—that we  
Walking beside the grey-blue English sea  
May mark soft whispering spirits no less sweet  
Than those which thronged the Hebrew youth to meet ?  
We are slaves of custom ; let us burst his chain,  
And be strong sons of the living God again,  
Not bending any slavish supple knee  
To Jesus—the Incarnate Purity

Is not in any single son of man,  
 But rather in the bright majestic span  
 Of stars and suns and human spirits—God  
 Is present in each blossom of the sod,  
 And every woman is a daughter fair  
 Of God;—*all* heroes his high gifts do share,  
 And round the swaying cradles even of each  
 Throng golden angels of celestial speech.  
 The Daughter of God is Woman! she shall rise  
 As to a heaven of light before our eyes,  
 Becoming Man's fair equal, and a queen  
 Nobler than any in past ages seen.  
 The Daughter of God is Woman! oh, fair form,  
 Thou shalt outride the ages' sullen storm,  
 Thou shalt achieve thy queenhood in the end;—  
 Towards that high goal the lingering seasons tend.  
 Thou art the Daughter of God; thou art the bride  
 Of Man, the Son of God—and by his side  
 Thou shalt through an eternity of years  
 With tenderest kisses soothe his sobs and tears.  
 The Bride of Christ, the fables used to say,  
 Was that slow Church that rose from day to day,  
 The Church of true believers—now, a thing  
 Of kinglier import and more pure I sing—  
 Collective Woman is the truer wife  
 Of the male aggregate of Human Life.  
 Humanity is born with double powers  
 As if a rose-bush offered us twin flowers,  
 One red, the other white—God in the bush  
 Burns, as before pale Moses, with rich blush  
 Of a superb creative ecstasy,  
 And his creations are these flowers we see,  
 The Woman and the Man—*all* flowers pour  
 Their scents through these bright forms for evermore,  
 And in the meeting of these sides of life  
 Each faculty achieves its proper wife.

Therefore let all men struggle to transcend  
 The Past—let Jesus o'er the ages bend  
 With tenderest sympathy; but think of those  
 Through whom God's burning present message glows,  
 The Apostles and the Preachers of our time  
 Who preach through books and work and humble rhyme,  
 Begetting vast Republics with their thought,  
 Let not their toil, I pray you, go for nought.  
 They are not martyred openly—but none  
 The less by agony their work is done;—  
 Misrepresented, cursed, reviled, abused,  
 Mocked, scoffed at, slandered—harassed, hardly used,  
 They sometimes half desire a ready stake



To hurl their spirits over Death's dim lake.  
For these the visionary teachers who  
Are drunk with splendid visions of the new  
I ask consideration—in that they  
Are doing Christ's work in the present day,  
But in their own strange God-inspired way.

And let the thinkers who have grace to see  
The wonders that shall surely, sweetly be,  
Rejoice and band together; Life is short,  
Death brings all vessels of all flags to port.  
We have been forsaken—many hearts have quailed,  
Full many a woman's tender soul hath failed  
For very fear to mark the strong red sun  
That climbs from ocean—here and there is one  
Who hath accompanied her lover far  
To meet the bright edge of that crimson car  
Appearing in the East;—but others sit  
Preferring the wild wastes by moonbeams lit,  
The rough exteriors of the barren hills  
Of custom that no tender sunbeam thrills,  
Nor any pleasure of the morning star—  
They mark these lights and pleasures from afar,  
But they shall not possess the daylight land,  
Nor shall they by the airs of morn be fanned.

The morning breaks! a sound upon the deep  
Arouses our tired mariners from sleep:  
The morning shines! a noise upon the waves  
Wakes all souls slumbering in custom's graves:  
The morning gleams! a shout upon the foam  
Remindeth all tired travellers of home.  
Soon shall the warriors whose strong souls have fought  
Through the black storm-winds of this age be brought  
To join the warriors of a former age,  
In whose dead names the boisterous Churches rage.  
The worship of the Past shall not for long  
Turn to a bitter tune our planet's song,  
But Progress shall assert her mission true,  
And mould all hearts and all desires anew.  
The spirit of Christ is with the thinkers now,  
Not with the Churches—though the Churches vow  
A blasphemous allegiance many times,  
Seeing that they carry out the very crimes  
Of those who nailed his body to the Cross,  
Finding therein not gain, but endless loss.  
The spirit of Christ is passing to the West—  
Tired of the East, he makes a novel quest;  
Weary he is of silent Galilee,  
And, o'er the purple wild Atlantic sea,  
He passes to invigorate the free!

## STARTLING FACTS IN MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

THE great merit in a writer is honesty, more particularly so when the subject treated is either the dominant idea of the multitude, or the fledgling of the few. Every popular cause is surrounded by sycophants and inflated representatives, who exult over every triumph, and embellish every feature to distortion. The new idea, the struggling truth, can find no favour with such. Their object is not to assert the right, nor to establish justice, but to fawn upon the wealthy, and sit under the patronage of the mighty. When these slavish-minded ones, however, under some favourable inspiration, become the devotees of a principle which is in the minority, their partiality at once becomes as apparent and offensive as their prejudice was formerly. A struggling cause is damaged much more by those fervid apologists, who assign to it every virtuous quality under heaven, than by the most unscrupulous attacks of its enemies. From these disadvantages Spiritualism has suffered much. A large proportion of its adherents have acted with more enthusiasm than judgment. Every crowd thinks its own chick the fairest, and these fervent apostles have seen nothing to censure in the conduct of the numerous disciples attached to their movement. Only say "you are one of us," and our arms are open to receive you, our tables are spread to regale you, and our purses overflow with means to promote your mission.

This wholesale and fraternal invitation, based as it is in a truly laudable stratum of human nature, is liable to be turned to the grossest abuse. That generous conduct which produces wholesome emulation in one class of mind, gives rise to baseless pretensions in another. When an individual, from whatever motive, openly, and with apparent candour, becomes one of a fraternity, his brethren naturally relax that strict scrutiny which is exercised towards the alien or the novice in his probationary stage. A species of clanship is called into operation, and the band of so-called brothers, instead of being one in motive and in action, become a sect loosely tied together by the rotten cords of a conventional shibboleth, which sooner or later relaxes its influence, and the organisation or brotherhood falls into discordant elements.

The picture which we but faintly outline has reproduced itself thousands of times in the history of the world, and not unfrequently of late years in the promotion of Spiritualism. Accepting as genuine the pretensions of abnormal speakers, these mediumistic instruments have been allowed to exercise their assumed gift without question or test, giving the greatest scope for hypocritical pretension and imposition, and entirely obstructing the work of discovering stern facts and the elements of a new science. This practice has, indeed, introduced a new form of belief—namely, a faith in the pretensions of unknown adventurers. Amidst it all, it is astonishing how Spiritualism has made the great progress which has characterised its short history. Impostors and pretenders of



all kinds—phenomenal, intellectual, moral, and social—have preyed upon its vitals, and it has had to bear the blame of numberless heresies and immoralities, yet it lives, it thrives, its truths shine brighter day by day, and its true ministrators exhibit such sterling qualities as to atone for the multitude of inferior minds who furnish the shady side of the picture.

In the history of this new movement, short as it has been, there have been a cheering succession of epochal minds who, if occurring only once in a century, would mark their age as furnishing a feature worthy of remembrance by succeeding generations. Amidst all that can be truthfully said of modern society, it speaks much for the moral wealth of the time that so many worthy examples of human character can be found living on the earth contemporaneously—all, in their several departments, the helpers forward of a new and spontaneous movement. Such a fact in itself is a phenomenon of mighty import. A universal stirring up of the most advanced minds throughout civilisation occurs all unsought for, and in every clime and nation. Those men and women are ready to occupy the onerous positions which the exigencies of the new movement demand.

Such an epochal mind—such a special worker—is Napoleon B. Wolfe, M.D., author of “Startling Facts in Modern Spiritualism.” Even the simplest facts of the spirit-circle become mighty weapons of truth in the hands of such a man. No facts are great unless reflected from a great mind. Neither the perceptions nor the utterances of the mediocrity are of the slightest importance, however grand their opportunities. The inspiration of truthfulness and genius touches with the living fire of divine radiance even the most trivial fact alike with the rarest prodigy. Dr. Wolfe’s opportunities have been remarkable, but his book is more indebted to the author than to his surroundings. In it we have not a mere literary production, but we have the soul of a true man fully developed in the manifold phases of his character. With the tenderness of a woman there is exhibited the stern discipline of a general; the reverence of the highest adoration is strengthened by the boldness of the iconoclast; an intuitive faith reaching up into the loftiest secrets of existence finds a sure footing in a form of scepticism—if that be a true term for it—which will have facts alone as a basis for deduction; and the burning enthusiasm of an investigator, who in two years devoted thirty weeks to close experimentation with one medium, is well supplemented by scrutiny which left no tests unemployed which ingenuity could devise to certify the phenomena.

Dr. Wolfe begins with a sketch of his boyhood, and unusual phenomena, which occurred in his district before the advent of Spiritualism. His early experiments are carefully traced—his experience with trance mediums is detailed, and here there is matter both for amusement and painful regret. Some of the situations are what may be called funny, yet it is to be deplored that so much of that which is manifestly spurious should be foisted on the world

as the control of spirits. We think, however, that the Doctor is rather severe in his generalisations on this point, however well deserved his criticism may be in special cases. We think the author has, perhaps, had more experience with physical mediumship, and the direct control of matter by spirits, than he has had of the mental phenomena; and we hope he may, in the immediate future, have opportunities for extending his experiments, and doing for the latter phase of mediumship that which he has so well performed for the former.

Dr Wolfe has spared neither pains nor expense in the production of his book. Whenever illustration could be rendered available to enhance the descriptive matter, it is prodigally introduced. On many pages there appear diagrams of rooms, spirit music, direct writings, wood engravings, portraits on steel, &c., &c. The seances with Mrs Hollis, whose introduction to Dr. Wolfe is given in the chapter quoted by us last month, embraces every phase of the manifestations. The book is written in such a manner that the value of the facts, in meeting objections, and establishing truth, is turned to the very best account. The style is also light and fascinating. The interest is sustained with the attractions of a romance. Dialogue, repartee, and satire relieve the more inflexible facts, so that no class of mind can lay the book down when once taken up. A well-digested philosophy pervades the whole. The author has been for more than 20 years a reader of the Harmonial Philosophy; and the book comes like a strong champion, able to do manful battle with the host of petty encroachments, which, like destructive parasites, seek to fasten themselves upon a pure and rational Spiritualism.

We present a few extracts which indicate the author's views on important points which influence our movement, in this country as well as in America. Of the relative merits of the mental and physical phenomena, he says:—

It is evident to the careful observer that mediums for mental phenomena frequently represent what may be called mixed influences. That is, a spirit may get a partial control or power to manifest itself through the organisation of the medium, while the will-power is but partially abeyant. When such conditions exist, the spirit and the medium will jumble their ideas, and the communications will be limp and unsatisfactory. This is an undeveloped phase of mediumship, and never to be relied upon. Indeed, the more thought I give this class of mental manifestations, and the more I see of them, the less confidence do I have in their trustworthiness. Still I by no means denounce them as entirely unreliable. I cannot forget that to this class of mediums originally belonged Mr. Davis, when his great work, to which I have already called attention, was given to the world. I also remember that, while in profound trance, the grandest poem of the nineteenth century, "The Lyric of the Golden Age," was given to mankind through the organisation of Mr. T. L. Harris. Others of almost equal distinction and value to the world could be cited, to show my appreciation of mental phenomena; but when I reflect on the many miserable shams I have seen, simulating spiritual control, I am almost led to exclaim against them all. If we had nothing better than mental phenomena to demonstrate the



fact that the spirit-world was in communication with this, we might be satisfied with the testimony it furnishes; but as we have more direct, positive, and less equivocal evidence of this grand truth furnished by physical phenomena, it would be no great loss even were mental phenomena dropped entirely from sight.

When we see a chair move without a visible power to change its position, we must seek to discover the cause of its motion by every means we can employ. If we fail to discover the source from which motion is obtained through the channels of sense, or the ordinary methods of reasoning, then we must employ new agencies in the investigation of the phenomenon. It does not enlighten us any to say that "the devil has a hand in the business;" neither does it improve our understanding to allege that "the chair is bewitched," or that a "wizard has woven a spell about it." Such shifts only show the poverty of your mind and the extremity of your resources. If you want to establish a reputation for ability and fair dealing, you must meet the case with clear ideas. These alone will secure confidence and favour. Do not dodge the *fact*, for it will outlive all your sophistries, and triumph in the end. The chair moves! Explain the law of motion as you may. Facts are the foundation of all philosophy. What philosophy can you offer to explain this simple fact?

While both phases of spiritual manifestations present claims for the recognition of their genuine character, I am free to declare I have more confidence in the physical than in mental phenomena. The first crystallises itself in facts, the second diffuses itself in fancies. A fact is a central truth already established. The philosophy of a fact may be corrupted in the whirligig speculations of an erratic idealist.

After affirming that "*Men do their own thinking*," and consequently do not require spirits to direct them in that matter, when facts as a basis are presented, he touches upon ground which the dogmatic portion of the movement seek to occupy.

The mental phenomenologists are already clamoring for organisation. A new worshipping sect is proposed, and chartered rights are invoked for their protection. Let sturdy men be alert, and slow to encourage the organisation of a spiritualistic Church. This proposition comes from the "Greeks," those who would be high-priests in the new synagogue, or from pitiful incompetents. What does organisation mean but the surrender of your manhood into the hands of your officers? *Men* don't think alike. Why should they act alike? Bigots and dogmatists form societies, and build churches, and curse the world. Truthful, honourable, noble men and women are not clannish. Truth is as free as the air, as pervading as the sunshine.

To surrender this science into the hands of a wily priestcraft, is to betray the dearest interests of humanity to its worst enemy. The fact is not changed, the guilt no less, or the enormity of the act mitigated in the least, because a multitude of crazy imbeciles or zealots do this degrading thing. The *vox populi* is not the *vox dei*.

Spiritual priests are no more to be trusted than others who claim in an orthodox way to be spiritual teachers. He shuts his eyes, and then, with a "thus sayeth the Lord" authority, harangues his disciples. Whether he says wise or foolish things, is not to the purpose; the objection is to the special privilege he has to speak without contradiction. No right to reply to a pulpit falsehood is granted, no matter how grossly your judgment may be insulted. The priest, it is asserted, is simply a medium through whose organisation a returned spirit speaks. His assumption may be true, or it may be false. How are we to determine? We cannot even "try the

spirit," as the privileges of the order debar your questionings. That is the point of danger. A hook is put into your jaw that it may not open. "Believe, or be damned," is the language of our moral pirate. Beware of organisation! As well tie your neck to a mill-stone, and plunge it in the sea, hoping to swim, as to freight your manhood with a creed and expect it to live. Consecration to the Church is death to the soul's development. Accept the benison of the priest, and you become a slave for life. The spiritual priest, while under the influence of "Jesus," "Swedenborg," or "Socrates," demands the surrender of your judgment and the homage of your heart. He will soon make a similar demand when no such influence is claimed. This mischief will follow closely upon the heels of the first absurdity.

Last month we quoted a chapter which illustrates the author's narrative style, while the extracts given above show that he is a thinking Spiritualist as well as the observer of phenomena. We may return to this work again. It is far from being exhausted.

The Author has made the Spiritual Institution a present of a large parcel of his work. The selling price is 12s.; but, that our readers may participate in the gift, "Startling Facts in Modern Spiritualism" is offered to the purchasers of *Human Nature*, for this month, at 7s. 6d., post free, 8s.

**A REMARKABLE MAN.**—A man named John Rosebury, a hawker, aged 105 years, of Leeds, recently applied at the Halifax borough police office for the purpose of having his pedlar's certificate endorsed. He was born at Whitby on the 30th April, 1769, and has lived in Leeds since 1793, the year in which his father died, at the age of ninety-eight. In addition to his father and his wife, he has buried at Leeds seventeen sons and five daughters. His wife died on the 20th April, 1869, at the age of ninety-nine. He followed every one of them to their graves. The oldest of his children died at the age of eighty-one on the 5th November, 1872, and the youngest at the age of twelve. His residence at present is at Leeds. He has a surprising memory. For four years he lost the use of both eyes, but the sight of one has returned. He never travels by coach or rail, but walks all his journeys.

**CHINESE SPIRIT CIRCLES.**—In the Fung-sheen-shoo, it is said, a certain emperor wanting to hold intercourse with spirits, built the Palace of the Sweet Fountain, in the midst of which he made a room for the Altar; and he delineated thereon the spirits of Heaven, Earth, and the Great Unity. Into this place he caused sacrificial instruments to be brought, that he might induce celestial spirits to approach. The historian says, however, that though he resided there a year, these spirits did not come. So far the Fung-sheen-shoo. This emperor's ambition was too high. Celestial spirits cannot visit the earth. There are spirits on the earth, in the earth and waters, and in the air; and by these a spirit-circle may be formed, and may be visited: but no spirit that has once passed beyond the influence of terrene attraction, can ever again visit it as a spirit. A man cannot fly into the sun: neither could a spirit from the sun come to the sphere of man. The zone of each is impassable by each.—AO.