



# SPIRIT WORLD.

VOL. II.

BOSTON, SATURDAY, MAY 17, 1851.

NO. 20.

## NATURE.

HUMAN, SPIRITUAL, DIVINE.

(Original.)

### RELIABILITY OF SPIRITS.

BY JOHN ELLIS, M. D.

Friend Sunderland: Permit me, through the "Spirit World," to reply to the following extracts from letters received from a highly esteemed correspondent, who has devoted much attention to the spiritual developments of this day. No question connected with the phenomena is more important than the reliability of spiritual communications; and everything which will throw light upon this subject is of vast moment to all that have to do with them; and if I can be the medium of simply reflecting the light which beams from the spiritual world through the writings of Swedenborg, to the minds of my fellow men, that they may thereby be enabled to direct their course through the dangers, evils, and falsities which beset them in their spiritual investigations, to a haven of rest beyond the grave, my strongest desire will be answered. I have chosen your paper as a medium to notice these enquiries and remarks, from the fact that I have reason to suppose that similar questions have often arisen in the minds of many others.

My correspondent says: "All the spirits, or, if you please, *angels*, who offer me communications are, or profess to be, friends to Swedenborg. They say they love him, and have always placed his writings far above those of any or all other men who ever lived. \* \* \* \* \* Thus far, these angels seem to affirm what Swedenborg taught on the Divinity of Christ, and Atonement, Redemption, &c., while they deny what he taught on the *lowness* of the hells, and the manner in which he said he was taught of the Lord."

In another letter, the same writer says: "No angel or spirit who visits me has ever said or hinted anything adverse to Swedenborg. They have said that in many things he was mistaken; but they put him above all other men. And you must remember that I am *not*, and never was, a receiver of the New Church views. Indeed, when I commenced this investi-

gation, I had scarcely any idea of Swedenborg; \* \* \* \* \* and to this day, I do not receive the New Church views, that is, I am not one of that class, and never was. Now, I ask, how comes it to pass that Swedenborgian angels came to me? I did not attract them by my *sectarian* views, for I had no such views.— And on this ground I now stand. I am ready to believe all and everything which I find to be true."

Yes, my dear friend, and that is the reason why you are visited by such spirits; and just so far as you are ready to believe, and to live according to it, you will be able to see the truth. "Seek, and ye shall find," "Ask, and ye shall receive," is the language of the Lord himself, whose promises are sure; and it is not any the less true that "the willing and obedient alone shall eat of the good of the land;" and that all others "seeing, see not; and hearing, hear not." Neither the Lord, angels, nor good spirits, ever violate man's freedom by compelling him to see or receive truth that he is not willing to believe. In fact, my own experience teaches me that it is almost impossible for any man to see even natural truth, while he is confirmed in error, and is not willing to see it. As a practitioner of Homoeopathy, I frequently come in contact with Allopathic physicians, and by the time they have uttered ten words I am able to judge, with the greatest certainty, whether it will be of any use to attempt to convince them of the truth of Homoeopathy. Although I am just as sure of convincing the sincere inquirer, who has so far laid aside preconceived medical opinions and prejudices as to be able to candidly examine the system, theoretically and practically, as I am sure that to-morrow's sun will rise to appearance; yet I might as well talk and throw my evidences to the winds, as to attempt to convince the man who is confirmed in opposite doctrines, with no desire to know aught else, and ready to combat before he hears.

It is better not to know truth, than it is not to live according to it when we do know it. Swedenborg informs us that the state of profaners, or those who do not live according to the truth they know, is among the worst in the spiritual world; and the Lord guards his truths by a flaming sword, which turns every way, to

keep the way of the tree of life from profanation. It was for this, among other reasons, that the Lord spoke to the "perverse generation," at the time he was on earth, in parables, "that seeing, they might not see, and hearing, they might not understand."

But my object in this communication is to show my friend, in the light of Swedenborg's revelations, why the spirit who communicates with him differs from Swedenborg, and must differ from him, even upon the supposition that he is a good spirit, which I can see no reason for and have no desire to call in question.

There are continually attendant on every man, "angels from heaven and spirits from hell," by and through whom man receives his inflowing life. So long as man's affections and thoughts are in the least evil, as these constitute his very life, it is absolutely necessary that that life be sustained by influx from hell; therefore men are permitted to call around them spirits of a similar quality with themselves. We are told by Swedenborg that "*man attaches to himself* spirits from hell, according to his life. The same spirits do not remain perpetually with man, but according to man's states, viz.: the states of his affection, or of his love and ends, they are changed, former ones being removed and others succeeding."—*A. C.*, 5851.

Swedenborg informs us that spirits which have intercourse with man "know all the thoughts which the man himself knows, and also the *smallest minutiae* of the thoughts and affections, which the man doth not know; yea, such things as it is impossible for him to know in the life of the body." And again, "They enter into all his memory, and into all the sciences of memory which man possesses; thus they put on all things which are man's, inasmuch that they know no other than that those things are theirs; spirits have their prerogative above men; hence it is that all things which man thinks, they think, and that all things which man wills, they will; and vice versa, all things which those spirits think, man thinks, and all things which those spirits will, man wills; for they act in unity by conjunction; Yet it is supposed by both parties that such things are in themselves, so spirits suppose, and so men, but this is a fallacy."—*A. C.*, 5853.

We are informed by Swedenborg that he has occasionally discoursed with spirits concerning the superior excellence of the faculty they have above man, in that, at the instant they come to man, they come into possession of all that man has learned, "and thus with the learned they are learned, with the ingenious they are ingenious, with the skilful, skilful. Hereupon those spirits become elated, for they were not good spirits, wherefore it was given also to tell them, that with the unlearned they are unlearned, with the stupid, stupid, with the insane and infatuated, insane and infatuated, for they put on all the interior things of the man on whom they are attendant, thus also all his fallacies, phantasies, and fables, consequently his insanities and infatuations."—*A. C.* 5856.

I have frequently said before, that man is a free agent; if he was not, he would not be man but an animal, acting out every impulse. In fact, there would be no difference between a sane man and an insane man. It is a self-evident fact that a sane man is free to will to do good or evil. It needs no arguments to prove it; we know it from intuition, and however much we may speculate, and in the use of this very freedom call this knowledge in question, when we come to deal and act with our fellow men, we cannot get rid of the instinctive knowledge that man is **FREE**, and therefore a responsible being; and if this is true, that he may be kept in this freedom, it follows as a necessary consequence, that the following must be true.

"The spirits attendant on man put on, also, his persuasions, whatsoever be their quality, as hath been evidenced to me by much experience; thus they put on man's persuasions, not only in things moral and civil, but also in the spiritual things which are of faith: Hence it may be manifest that the spirits attendant on those who are in Heresies, in Fallacies, and Illusions, as to the truths of faith, and in fables, are in the like, without the slightest difference. The reason of this is, that man may be in his freedom, and may not be disturbed by any propriety of a spirit."—*A. C.* 5860.

"From much experience it hath been given me to know that whatsoever things spirits think and speak from man's memory, they suppose to be their own and in themselves; if they are told that it is not so they are exceedingly indignant. In order to convince them that it is not so, they were asked by what means they knew how to discourse with me in my mother tongue, when yet in the life of the body they had no acquaintance with it."—*A. C.* 5858.

Although spirits have their own external memory, and can be, and are, occasionally let into it, still they are not usually allowed to use it, "for if it was allowed to spirits to use the exterior memory, that mankind would perish, inasmuch as every man is ruled by the Lord by spirits and angels, and if spirits from the exterior memory should flow into man, man could not think from his own memory, but from that of spirits, thus he would no longer be in possession of his own life and his own right, but would be obsessed."—*A. C.* 2177.

Again, in No. 5858, we are told "they have also their own, but it is not allowed to bring them forth, to the intent that they may serve man by his, and for several other reasons; and because the greatest confusion would ensue if spirits flowed in from their own memory."

In case of man's being obsessed by spirits, to which reference has been made in the above extract, the spirit uses his own memory, and uses the man's external organs to speak, see, and act, in the world, and man has no control over himself. Before, and at the time the Lord was on earth, such obsessions were common, and not unfrequently were permanent; and it appears to me that there is reason to fear that we may have similar cases occurring again soon, especially when we see men voluntarily permitting spirits to use their own organism to write, speak, &c. Most deplorable cases will they be. A word to the wise is sufficient.

Swedenborg informs us that angels and good spirits never induce dogma of religion when they speak with man. "They who speak from permission of the Lord, never speak anything which takes away freedom of reason, nor teach; for the Lord alone teaches man, but mediately through the Word in illustration."—*D. T.* 135.

It is the office of the angels by whom the Lord leads, and also protects man, "to inspire charity and faith, and to observe the man's delight, in what direction they turn themselves, and to moderate and bend them to good, so far as the man's free will enables them to do so; it is forbidden them to act violently, and thereby to break man's lusts and principles. \* \* And they especially call forth the goods and truths *appertaining to man*, and oppose them to the evils and fables which the evil spirits excite."—*A. C.* 5992.

Again we are told "the Divine Law is inviolable, that man shall be in *freedom*, and that good and truth or charity and faith, shall be implanted in his free principle, and in no case in what is forced."—*A. C.* 5854.

Now, if man is to receive truth in freedom, it must be by a voluntary act of his own, and not from the teachings of spirits, for the quality of his associate spirits, even if they are good, is the same both as to good and truth, as the man himself, therefore they cannot teach him any truths which he is not willing to know; for if they could, they would destroy his freedom. If my friend will carefully examine his own case, I doubt not he will find that those doctrines of the New Church which the spirits who communicate with him confirm as true, he first became acquainted with, either directly or indirectly, through the Word or the writings of Swedenborg, and saw through the medium of his own understanding, and was willing to, if he did not, acknowledge their truth, whereas those doctrines which the spirit does not acknowledge, he is not willing to see himself. But if he ever comes to understand and acknowledge them as true, he will then be associated with spirits who will confirm them.—Good spirits and angels, at most, could only, it will be seen, direct a man to

fountains and channels of spiritual truth, such as the Bible and Swedenborg's writings, and perhaps acknowledge to him such truths as are in harmony with his life's love; but this could only be done so far as he is in the earnest desire for truth and is willing to receive it. A spirit, as has been seen, is in a clearer light as to the man's thoughts and real belief, and might therefore call forth the truths *appertaining to man*, when man does not externally acknowledge them, without violating his freedom.

We shall find, by examining the sacred Scriptures, that even the Angel of Jehovah himself, when he appeared to the prophets, to reveal truths, did not violate these principles, but clothed his truths in harmony with the ideas he found in their minds; therefore he appeared to the Jews angry and vindictive. When he desired to reveal higher truths, and could find no receptacle in the minds of men, he wrote them on tables of stone, and took upon himself humanity, that he might reach man in his low estate.

Swedenborg's revelations treat of the spiritual world and spiritual truths; and where I have used the word truths, in this article, I have had no reference to natural truths.

Between the spiritual and natural remains a field which is now being developed where we find the "rappings," clairvoyance, &c., which are upon neither the natural or spiritual plane. In but one or two instances was Swedenborg, as far as I can learn from his writings, in anything like a clairvoyant state. One was when he was aware of a fire at Stockholm, when several leagues distant. And I am not aware that any information is to be derived from his writings, how a clairvoyant is able to see material things without the aid of the natural eyes, or how a spirit is able to see into the natural world, and know natural facts, without using the natural organs of some one whose spiritual perceptions are opened to see also into the spiritual world.

This communication is already too long, yet I have hardly done justice to the subject, in my estimation. But enough for the present.

Detroit, Mich., May 1, 1851.

[Original.]

ANDREW J. DAVIS.

BY J. A. GRIDLEY, M. D.

While this, our mutual friend, has soared almost from everlasting to everlasting; while he has scaled, as it were, the mount of God, like a "seraph on six wings," and descended into the depths of the Infinite, till it seemed he might well nigh reach the centre of Nature; while he has brought to view many truths from higher depths, where they had reposed for an infinity of ages—truths that have awed me with astonishment and admiration, for which I shall ever feel grateful; while he has done much to change the current of thought almost throughout the world;—I say, while he has done, and is doing, all this, it is the more important that he mingle *no error* in his teachings.

But I must confess that I never read any man's writings where such extremes

met. From his lofty soarings he descends, and sometimes draws the most unwarrantable conclusions of any author I ever read. A few of these I feel disposed to *hint* at for my own health; and your limits will not allow more. In "Nature's *Divine Revelations*" he says, in speaking of the evils, "I must lay the charge to bigotry, superstition, and ignorance." And so nearly every evil in society is asserted, from time to time, as the *cause* of all the others. But these are *themselves* the evils, and not the *causes* of them; they are *effects*, and nothing more. Mr. Davis's philosophy, as well as common sense, teaches that there is no effect without a cause. Did these *effects* generate their own seed before they existed, and sow themselves? They must, if Mr. Davis's testimony is true. He says, page 5th, "The mind cannot be chained," "the mind is *naturally free*." And what is above Nature, in Mr. Davis's philosophy? I ask. And yet he immediately declares that "Man has not been permitted to enjoy the free and uncontrolled exercise of its powers and intellectual endowments." Why not? Mr. D. says, "Nature has offered no impediments," and "nothing but good flows upon us from the spheres above." *What, then, has bound man?* God has not—Nature has not—man has not bound himself—"is not and cannot be bound," Mr. D. says; and yet *sectarian* usurpation must bear the charge of **HAVING BOUND** him for unnumbered ages! All this, and much more, Mr. D. declares in the limits of a couple of pages. But from what part of God's world did "sectarian usurpation" come? Whose offspring is she? Again, he says, page 5th, "The mind cannot be chained;" and page 6th, "The mind is *enslaved*, so that no power of truth and virtue has been able to break its chains!" Similar contradictions may be found throughout the book. I never read a book with more profit or with more pain.

His objection to Joshua's statement of the sun and moon standing still, is *peurile* in the extreme. How often have school boys, virtually, with a couple of mirrors, made the sun stand still in the bottom of the deepest well, all day, if they chose? And Joshua's language implies nothing more. And men who know that angels can beat to any tune, and handle any solid substance, from the "stone at the door of the sepulchre," to "Peter's chains" and the city gates, which freed him from his enemies, might do the same thing without infringing the laws of the universe. The same is true of what he says of the account of the *star* said to have led the wise men to the birth-place of Jesus. Mr. D. says, in substance, that it is unlikely that any star left its orbit for such a purpose. I have seen a meteor, in the "day time," move horizontally to the earth, from the east, and pass in a straight line, westward, as far as the eye could trace it—going apparently not more than six feet above the ridge of our church, while I stood within six or eight rods of it. I was not the only witness. This meteor passed over an extent of several miles, in my sight, and I never thought of any interruption in Nature's laws. In speaking, at different places in his writings, of the

innocency and purity of the human family, up to a given time, he says, that "when their language became more perfect, they began to *deceive*." These pure, loving, holy hearts, as soon as a channel was opened for their love to flow through, became wicked—this mere *channel* changed the *fountain* from holiness and purity, to deception and corruption. This weakness is only equalled by his declaration that the "good and loving spirits at Dr. Phelps's *hung* his boy to prevent his doing himself a greater injury"—a boy that these spirits had tormented with vexatious fear till his flesh wasted from his bones, and life itself had become a burden. "Perfect love *casts out* fear," I know without a revelation; and these loving hearts ought to have composed and quieted him.

Mr. D. thinks some of the mischief might be attributed to the boy himself! Did he ever attempt any mischief to himself or others, before he was beset by his tormenters? Although Mr. D. has excused the "devils" for attempting and well nigh succeeding in hanging the boy, he had not sufficient courage to cite their attempt at **STRANGLING the sick daughter, while asleep on the bed, with a small cord, tied so tight as to be imbedded in the flesh, and produced a suffocating respiration,** which must inevitably have ended in **DEATH**, had it not been timely discovered by the father! What cautious devil could have taken more pains to accomplish his end, and prevent detection? A tape was drawn over the cord, and a ribbon over that, and then a "pillow and the bed clothes drawn over the face as fast as the father could remove them." Here was such *manifest malice* that Mr. D. could not, and I think, *dare* not, deny it; though he had not honor to confess it, as he could not possibly reconcile it with his favorite theory. The *silence* of a philosopher, at such a point, who attempted and pretended to solve these facts, needs no comment. Where does an army want its commander, if not at the place of attack? And where do we want the philosopher, if not in the solution of the most difficult part of the problem?

Mr. D. says, (page 51, "Philosophy of Spiritual Intercourse,") "The wanton destruction of property is referable, in most cases, to emanations of vital electricity seeking its equilibrium in the external atmosphere." "In this manner, window panes are broken," &c. "Vital electricity," (a substance so subtle, rarified, and sublimated, that, Mr. D. says, in another place, "it will not in the least affect the nicest galvanometer,") is so condensed by these spirits, and sets in *so strong* a current from Dr. Phelps's apartments, that it takes up tongs from the fire-place and candlesticks from the mantel piece, and drives them, with great violence, through *thick panes of glass*—a substance, by the by, through which no pressure can *force electricity*! Oh! "tell it not in Gath," nor publish it in the streets of Boston. Verily, if these spirits have such power over the elements, their ability has not diminished, nor their moral qualities improved, since they brought "a wind from the wilderness, blew down the house, and killed Job's children."

But in confirmation of this view of the subject, he adds, "In Woodbridge, N. J., a young lady was afflicted with a disease which gave rise to similar phenomena, [undoubtedly her disease brought her nervous system into a condition that made her a "medium for the action of spirits,"] and "another sickness, he says, cured her," that is, [brought her back to her healthy normal state, through which the spirits could not act.] He then proceeds and flatly denies that it is, after all, "the *different state* of the atmosphere," but it is *the spirits* taking advantage of these *different states*, and so they are enabled more efficiently to act through them! Such acute angles I never saw in any book. He cannot be pardoned, only by confessing, like our esteemed friend, Fernald, that he has been often mistaken. He must know that *effects*, or *occasions*, are not always *causes*. "The origin of evil" is a mere tissue of weakness, a running back of *effects*, from one link to another, till the mind of the unaccustomed thinker is tired or confused, and then he boldly strikes a link off, still farther back, and says, *this is the cause*.

In his revelations, page 504, he says, "It is supposed that Christ was designed as a *medium*, by and through whom man might escape eternal condemnation;" "this is believed, and flourishes to the greatest extent where folly, superstition, and ignorance exist in abundance." "It is no less notorious, that as the human mind discards preconceived opinions, and becomes intelligent, this *horrible and unrighteous dogma* recedes." "It originated in darkness, was conceived in darkness, and is itself so exceedingly dark, that it cannot approach the serene and brilliant light that surrounds the throne of an enlightened reason." And yet, in the "Great Harmonia," he says, "that all the hope of the redemption of the world" is in this very dogma; that this "Christ is co-essential and co-eternal with the Father," and through him alone it is possible for men to escape from the prevailing evils of the world. Never did invaders make more serious breaches in the walls of a fenced city, or Moscow more completely destroy itself at the approach of Bonaparte, than Mr. D. has his theology.

In the brief period intervening between his penning the "Revelations" and the "Harmonia," by his own testimony, he has "fallen into folly, superstition, and ignorance in abundance." He has "discarded intelligence and receded into a horrible and unrighteous dogma that originated in darkness, was developed in darkness—a dogma that is so exceedingly dark that it **CANNOT** approach the serene and brilliant light of an enlightened reason!" If this testimony is true, eternal progression is in the wrong direction for him and his theory, and he is already damned, irrevocably, to an eternal darkness, though every other spirit in the universe may be redeemed. He has given himself a more terrible sentence than I should be willing to subscribe to. I rather love and honor him for writing according to the light he has *to-day*, though it contradicts every word he said *yesterday*. If he has been under the necessity, however, of writing a second book, to

overthrow and neutralize the errors of the first, he ought to learn a lesson of modesty, and write the second with greater caution, lest he have to write the third to destroy the second, and so on to the end of his "intended series."

Some three hundred and thirty pages in the "Revelations" are devoted, mainly, to the overthrow of the "Christian religion," and about ten pages in the "Harmonia" are as clearly devoted to its *establishment*, and to a *foolish attempt* to make them appear not decidedly to contradict each other. Surely, Mr. Davis might wish, (as friend Ambler says Swedenborg does,) that one of his books might be burned.

One word, now, about "bad organization." Friend D. utters the truth, when he says, the "spirit forms the body—it is the aura of the seminal secretion or spiritual principle which is absorbed and produces impregnation, the substance of that secretion acting only as a base to the spiritual, immortal principle, as water is the base of alcohol, which enables us to handle it and carry it in cups and bottles, otherwise it would be an invisible vapor,—this spiritual principle being absorbed seeks its chemical affinities in the vesicles of the female ovaria, and thus, in an incredibly short time the immortal germ is occupying its present, and, for a time, its future habitation. It immediately commences enlarging its house, which loosens from its foundation, and by its appropriate duct it is conveyed, house and all, into the uterine chamber, where it has ample room for its further developments, by attracting materials from the circulation of the mother. Here it manufactures its tools (organs) by which it is afterwards to reduce the elements of nature, through food, air, light, &c., to its own specific use. When these are completed, it is ushered into its new existence." The spirit, the immortal germ, has *done it all*; and the organs of the new-formed body are exactly adapted to the *demands* of the original spirit. It is easy to see that if any of the elements of the spirit unduly preponderate, the habitation, or part which that element is to occupy, will be proportionally large. If it is acquisitiveness, combativeness, or benevolence, the organ would be largely developed. A bad organization, then, is no more responsible for a bad spirit, than is the house of wood or brick, in which the man lives, responsible for the good or bad qualities of its tenant. And yet Mr. D., after admitting this truth, speaks of a bad organization in a way to *excuse* a bad spirit, as phrenologists always have. Why, the truth is, and must be, as Mr. Fernald says, if the spirit is bad, it will form a *bad house*, either in this world or any other. The propensities no more lie in the body than they lie in the walls of a church-yard; neither do they lie in circumstances over which man *holds the power*, as Mr. D. says (in Revelations, page 8,) though he denies it mainly in his "Origin of Evil." And if the hearts of a whole community were holy in their primary element, as he affirms, how long do you think it would take such a community to arrange and reduce their "circumstances" to a proper and holy use? And yet, for ages with

this Holy Centre, as Mr. D. says, "Man has been held in the slavery and bondage of corruption." "Ignorance" is one cause of all this, he affirms; and yet he says, for a long period, man was *innocent* and *happy* until he advanced so as to get a "more perfect knowledge of language." God ought to, and *must keep* men in eternal ignorance, in spite of the laws of progression, if he would have them happy, according to this statement.

The conclusion of the whole matter is, as long as there are *bad spirits*, there will be bad organizations, and bad marriages, and bad circumstances—and all the reasoning and advice of Mr. Davis and phrenologists under heaven, will not, *cannot*, improve them. And this furnishes the reason that Mr. Davis has admitted "that no incarnated portion of the Divine Mind should embody itself in a human form—an essence co-existent and co-essential with the Father," and sufficiently subtle and penetrating to enter into and purge the *seat of life*, "out of which proceed evil thought, adulteries, fornication, thefts, and all other evils." We have theories enough, speculation enough, and intelligence enough—we lack *only the life of God*, and the hope of that, as Mr. D. and the Bible say, is only found in *Christ*. This admission opens a tremendous breach, and exposes Mr. D. to a terrific fire. What does man want saving from? "With thousands of years of experience and progression—with holy and eternally expanding elements in his nature—WHAT does man want *redeeming from*? From where did evil come? WHERE? Mr. Davis's philosophy, reason, common sense, and the Bible, agree in *one thing*, that the "same fountain cannot yield sweet water and bitter, salt water and fresh." While the orthodox notion of the devil being a fallen angel, who has conceived the idea of measuring his strength, and actually dividing the spoils of the human family with the Eternal, is too revolting for thinking men. The true Bible idea of a devil, however, is an *entirely different thing*, and on to that I am inevitably compelled to fall back till something, (I will not say better,) but till something *else* appears.

Southampton, Mass., April 30, 1851.

[Original.]

#### THE SPIRITUAL BATTLE.

Dear Sir,—Here in Kalamazoo, all, as yet, is dark around us, and no angel comes to cheer us on our way to the spiritual world. But your paper, the Spirit Messenger, Buchanan's Journal of Man, and even Greeley's paper, come to us like so many angels of light; and we can see in them, as in a mirror, those dark clouds of superstition that have hung over the world so long, and produced so much ignorance, sin, and misery, are beginning to clear away; and we fancy we can already see the grey dawn of morning appear in the East. We hail the coming day with that heartfelt satisfaction and joy which none but the most favored among you can appreciate and understand.

If history speaks truly, spirits have manifested themselves to some of the in-

habitants of earth, in all past time; but more recently, when they manifested themselves to some of the inhabitants of Christendom, they have been treated in such a rude and insolent manner, if they had fled the earth forever, it would have been nothing strange. As Wesley, the founder of the Methodists, was about to take a wide range over the world, and influence many minds, they manifested themselves to him, and with the highest and holiest of motives. Their desire was to give him more light, and a better hope, so that he could do much to redeem his race. But how did he treat them? He, or his father, stormed and raved, and called them the imps of hell; and with a violent stamp of his foot he bade them begone. But, notwithstanding, they hung around him, and did all they could do to make their mission known to him. But his treatment continued the same; and they finally became disgusted with him, and left him to grope his way in the dark, as best he could. Since then they have manifested themselves to other persons, at various places and at different times, but everywhere the treatment was the same. Quite recently they appeared to Priest Phelps, of Connecticut, and with the same intentions, and received like treatment as from Wesley. He not only called them the imps of hell, but he told them that they were doing the work of the devil, and that they had come to destroy sects, &c. But the spirits were determined that neither disgust or affright should prevent them from executing, in a measure, their mission at this time; and accordingly they laid siege to his castle, and after seven months of hard warfare carried it by storm. During the siege they hurled brickbats, brass candlesticks, and various other things, at his head. They threw his clothing, in great confusion, about his rooms. They tumbled his chairs and furniture about the house. They collected his papers, and put them upon a bed and set fire to them. They took a large pot from his cellar and used it for a bomb shell, and dashed it to pieces. They hung one of his boys on a tree, and choked his little girl almost to death; and by one brave manœuvre they dashed more than one hundred panes of glass from his windows—when the old priest became alarmed, cried "Enough!" and yielded the conflict.

Some four years ago, spirits manifested themselves to three sisters, at Rochester, in Western New York, and by them they were received in a friendly way, and treated kindly. And this was the first treatment of the kind they had met with from this superstitious world, for many long centuries. But their troubles did not end here, for the learned professions, as they call themselves, fell upon them without mercy; and they were backed up by editors, deceivers, liars, and slanderers, without number, and for a season the battle waxed warm between them. But the spirits kept on in the even tenor of their way, and gained ground daily over this whole array of human stupidity and knavery, until they were completely vanquished.

But there was more trouble ahead, still. They now had to encounter an entirely

new mode of warfare. Such a one as was never heard of before, and I presume will never be heard of again: It was a small squad of too-snappers and knee-crackers. But as a giant would move a feather, so they, with a gentle wave of the hand, brushed them out of the field, and now the spirits have an open sea before them. And what we desire most of all, now, is that they be treated by their friends in a high, dignified, and courteous manner, the same that you would treat the highest and most intelligent circles in the flesh; and if so, there can be no doubt but that their love will become so ardent and positive for us poor, ignorant, and sinful mortals, that like an electric spark from a summer cloud, it will flash, and keep flashing, upon the world of mankind, until every soul will be filled with the power of the Holy Ghost, the very spirit of truth, and a demonstration will come to all that they are to live on and on, in a substantial and perfect human form, and that, too, for ever and ever. And when all know, by intuition, that in that land to which we are all travelling, they will rise high or sink low in exact proportion to their inclination to do good or evil to others, then it will do to preach reform and teach the doctrines of Jesus, to do unto others as you would have them do unto you, and love your neighbor as yourself, and every blow you strike then will tell to advantage; and the wealth that is now piled mountains high, by money sharks, monopolizers, and misers, around which so many millions have suffered with cold and starved to death, will, with great pleasure and by the universal consent of all, be used in a prudent way for the benefit and comfort of all.

And when all shall become thus enlightened, it will be a pleasure to all to have the wisest heads plan and lay out the work; and the less wise heads, having the strongest muscles, will with pleasure execute it; and with the aid and assistance of all the labor-saving machinery, every one's task will be easy, and none will find fault and complain, for all will know that it is the work of God, and for the benefit and comfort of all. One will then care for all, and all will care for one; and self love and social love will become the same; and the earth, the great and equal mother of us all, will yield abundance and to spare, and man will then be happy as happy can be; and both body and soul will be developed to its highest perfection, and the spirit will be nobly fitted and prepared to glide away into the spiritual world, and there be forever blessed.

O, ye guardian angels, who have hovered around this earth for these four years past, and who are increasing in numbers, daily, now that all opposition has subsided, leave us not until every old superstitious bigot, those who have preached hell most and most deserve it, are filled with the holy spirit of plain and unsophisticated truth, and are made reasonably honest. Teach them to know that a little of the milk of human kindness will not only lubricate and expand their gross mortal bodies here, and give better play to their souls, if they have any—but that

it will make the weak superstitious heads around them more innocent and far more happy.

And now, my good old friend of the Spirit World, you who was among the first in the field, and we hope will be the last out of it—put on your best touches, and do what you can to assist the spirits to open the coming day, with all of its simple truths and resplendant glory; and let those who choose darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil, hide themselves as best they can; and if other places will do as well as Kalamazoo, your paper shall not go down for the want of support. J. HASCALL.

*Kalamazoo, May 1, 1851.*

## EDITORIAL.

BOSTON, SATURDAY, MAY 17, 1851.

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

A correspondent of the Boston Traveller of May 5th, gives the following account of a murder said to have been committed the day previous, in Cranston, near Providence, R. I.

"Yesterday, a young girl of thirteen years, named Almira Benzley, was examined on a charge of killing her half-brother, John Benzley, only fifteen months old, by administering arsenic. A post mortem examination showed the arsenic in the stomach of the deceased. One witness, the Sunday School teacher of the accused, testified that she had confessed to him that she sent a boy for some arsenic, which she put in the drink of the deceased and his little sister, but the boy only died. She stated that she had been a medium of spirit rappings, and had not felt right in her mind since she first became a medium. The money to buy the arsenic was procured from persons who came to hear the rappings. She exhibited no antipathy to the child. She was fully committed for trial."

We have been expecting some reliable account from our friends in Providence, of this affair, but as yet we know nothing except what is said above.

We suppose it true, as we have seen the same account in the Providence papers. The girl is represented as being very ignorant, and low in her intellectual powers. If she was a medium for communications from the spiritual world, as it would seem, the friends of truth will naturally desire to know how such an event could have happened? And especially if all spirits are good, truthful, and harmonious, in the sense we have been told.

Of course, we cannot suppose that this event would have happened had that child been born with an evenly-balanced mind, and surrounded with the truthful and good, in both the spiritual and external worlds. And especially if it be true, as Swedenborg says, that evil spirits are not permitted to control infants and weak-minded persons. We have given an account [Spiritual Philosopher, No. 13,] of an apparent attempt

made by spirits to cause the death of two mediums. The details we described were not of things done by those innocent children. And all we can say is, that what was done (as we suppose,) by spirits, had the appearance of a wish to cause the death of those children. We do not say it was so; but such was the appearance of what occurred.

Now, if we suppose that the young girl in Cranston was a medium for spiritual communications; and further that she was surrounded by spirits who were good, in a high sense of this word, it seems natural enough to ask why she was not saved from the commission of that horrible crime? She may, indeed, have been surrounded by discordant or vicious mortals; but where were the vigilant and good guardian angels all the while?

Swedenborg has assured us that certain communications from spirits are "attended with danger to the souls" of those who receive them. And perhaps the use in this lamentable event, is to teach mortals the truth of this statement. At any rate, whatever may be the design in the Divine Providence, it seems, now, manifest that this and the other occurrences to which we have referred, must for a time have this tendency.

And here, perhaps, it may be in place for us to refer to the great desire which certain persons have to become "mediums" for spiritual communications. How very often do we hear this question asked, "Am I a medium?" "Shall I become a medium?" We are aware, that mortals who put this question to spirits do not know that it is one which spirits cannot always answer, any more than mortals can. Nor do they know that becoming a "medium" may be "attended with danger to their souls." We have an account of two lads in Vermont, who were subjected to fits, on becoming mediums, and they became demented in this way.

We are compelled, therefore, however reluctantly, to admit that many persons may become mediums who would not, themselves, be benefitted by the manifestations, for a time, at least. They become "nervous," as it is called, extremely sensitive, irritable, ungovernable, notional, opinionative, and visionary. We do not mean that all are equally liable to be thus injured, for a time; but some, we know, are and have been injured in this manner, as we have often known susceptible persons to be injured by ignorant operators in Mesmerism. If highly susceptible persons happen to fall under ignorant or vicious influences, what should we expect as the result? It makes no difference, whether we suppose those influences originate in spirits in

the body or out; nor whether the spirits out of the body are not often *influenced* by mortals, so that when the two (mortals and certain spirits) come in conjunction, the results are discordant and evil.

True it is, "facts are stubborn things!" And it is with facts that we chiefly have to do. To what peculiar views or theories they may lead us, in respect to the spiritual world, is yet to be determined. We might, indeed, shut our eyes to these facts, and refuse to hear the concurrent testimony which spirits utter of themselves. We might attempt to account for moral delinquency by attributing certain phenomena to "Magnetism" or "Electricity." Or we might attempt to interpret them in the dim light of some theological creed, perhaps, which was concocted years ago, and long before the phenomena to which we refer, were ever known or thought of. However, our position will permit neither of these expedients. The better way, probably, is, to wait till the SPIRITUAL WORLD shall have told its own story—till it shall have fully made itself known. Those who have passed into that world must know better than any mortals ever did or ever can know. Why not hear them? Why not hear them all? If in different localities the spirits seem to tell different stories about the world they inhabit, it is not unreasonable to infer that these discordant communications come from spirits who are in different degrees of goodness and intelligence. The spirits agree full as well as clairvoyants do. And as it would be premature to judge of clairvoyance, merely by what we have from one person, so we should allow all spirits to be heard. Is it not best to hear what they all say, and after comparing the whole, then to judge? Or shall we take the *ipse dixit* of some one man or spirit, and so make an oracle of him, and then, when anything strange occurs, attempt to make the facts support a pre-conceived theory? And thus:

"This iron bedstead they have fetched  
To try our hopes upon—  
If too short, we must be stretched,  
Cut off, if we're too long."

**DOUBLE NUMBER.**—Our next, and perhaps the succeeding number, will be double. The press of matter on hand makes this desirable, having now more than we can publish in two months.

We can but hope that sufficient patronage will not only enable us to continue this paper for another year, but also to enlarge it in size. Surely this ought to be done.

If the communications furnished us by numerous kind friends, therefore should not appear in our columns, they will understand that it is for the want of space. This often compels us either to shorten articles that are sent us, or not to publish them at all.

#### CUI BONO?

What good will these so-called "spiritual manifestations" do?

Answer: Even admitting that they are not what they purport to be, they have already done what must be admitted to be good. 1.—They have attracted the external world to the consideration of the spiritual. There has been more thought bestowed upon the spiritual world, within the past year, certainly, in this country, than was ever bestowed upon it by the same number of people before. 2.—Multitudes of skeptics who doubted any and all conscious existence of man, after death, have been convinced of their error. Gentlemen of the medical and legal professions, and others of well known intelligence and scientific attainments, who have visited our house skeptics, have, after days and weeks of patient and candid investigation, avowed their belief in the spiritual world, and what they had never confessed before.

A gentleman who is known to (be, if not at the head of the medical profession, in this city, he is certainly acknowledged as one of that class who) stand the highest among the most elevated in the practice of the healing art, declared at a sitting here, recently, that he knew of numbers, (some six or more,) who had been converted from skepticism to a belief in the spiritual world, solely by the manifestations they had witnessed here!

Numbers of intelligent men, and men in the different walks of life, have confessed to us that the manifestations they have witnessed in our family have done more to bring them into a belief of a conscious existence after death, than all the books they ever read, or all the preaching they ever heard.

The truth is, the Divine Lord is doing what the so-called clergy could not do, and the results are manifest. We firmly believe that, not hundreds, but thousands of *infidels* have been converted from a state of utter skepticism by these spiritual manifestations, during the last three years. To them, the future was one dark, eternal night; but now they have hope, and no longer doubt of an existence after death. Is not this a positive good? And where are the clergy? Where are the *professed* believers in a spiritual world, that we do not hear them giving thanks to the Beneficent Father of all these wonderful manifestations, for his goodness to the children of men?

W. S. COURTNEY, Esq.—We have two excellent articles from this gentleman, on "The Relation of the Natural to the Spiritual World," which shall appear as soon as we can possibly find room for them.

**DEATH OF COMMODORE BARRON.**—Com. Barron, the oldest captain in the United States service, died at Norfolk, Va., April 21st, in his eighty-third year, after a long illness.

He entered the service the 9th of March, 1798, and his commission bears date May 22d, 1799. He was a man of considerable scientific attainments, and but for the duel with Decatur, in 1820, in which the latter was killed, his talents would have placed him high in his country's favor. It is said he carried a bullet in his body, till the day of his own death, which he received in that duel.

During my visit to Norfolk, in January, 1847, I became acquainted with Commodore Barron, under circumstances that very much interested me and others, at the time. He had just lost a large quantity of jewelry, money, and valuable papers, to the amount of some fifteen thousand dollars, supposed to have been stolen by one of his slaves. Believing in clairvoyance, the Commodore called on me, with an urgent request that I would entrance a relative of his, and see if I could not assist him in finding his property.

I assented to try, though not by his method, on condition of his sending his slave to my room, as I thought it probable I might have clairvoyance enough of my own, to recover his property, if I could place my eye upon the real thief.

The slave came to me, under the supposition that I wanted his services. As soon as he had entered the room, I closed the door, and told him who I was, and what I proposed to do. But the poor fellow could not wait for me to explain. He darted out of my room as if his life was in danger. In less than four hours afterward, the Commodore called on me to say that his desk, which contained his valuables, had been thrown into his yard, and all the property restored, except some four hundred dollars, in money, which the thief had probably spent, and could not restore.

**SINGULAR CASE OF SOMNAMBULISM.**—During the services in the Tabernacle Church, on Sunday evening last, a boy about twelve years of age, who was in the sleeping state, arose from his seat in the congregation, and steadily walked up the main aisle to the platform surrounding the pulpit, where he stumbled and fell. He readily regained his perpendicular, and stepped up into the pulpit and grasped the officiating minister by the hand. Some gentleman near him soon saw that he was in the somnambule state, and quietly conducted him back to the seat from whence he came.—*St. Louis Times.*

During the first sermon ever delivered by the editor of this paper, which was in Walpole, Mass., June 9, 1823, a number of persons were affected in the manner above

described. There are persons now living, and who are members of churches, that were entranced in this way, under my labors during a ministry of twenty-one years. I could refer to one who is now the wife of a Methodist clergyman, who was entranced during a sermon I delivered in Scituate, Mass., in 1824.

### CORRESPONDENCE.

Ripley, O., April 28, 1851.

Dear Sir,—I see by an editorial notice in your last number, that it depends on the number of "pledges" you receive between this and the last of May, whether the Spirit World will continue or not. But the paper must not stop. I will be "one of a thousand" to give you a pledge of ten dollars. For so long as these communications are kept up between the two worlds, we should have a "medium" for the diffusion of such disclosures as are of general interest to the whole human family; and I believe there have been many such. The truth is, public prejudices are fast giving way in this community, on the subject of these demonstrations.—When the Spirit World first made its appearance here, it was thought to be a perfect humbug, and its readers badly deceived; but now it is read by many, and the scoffer is silent. In a short time after the Spirit World made its appearance here, the spirits also came to my house, and "rapped" for admission! The door was opened, and they entered.—They commenced rapping on a box in the house, and then on the floor, and continued for at least one hour; and every evening, for nearly three weeks, it returned to the same room, though we could get no intelligence from it.

We have a remarkable spiritual clairvoyant in my house. When questioned on the subject, she says "Be patient. It will converse with you in time. It is not ready, or you have not faith enough to receive it yet." The demonstrations still continue. Occasionally, our clairvoyant answers in the place of rappings, as spirits frequently make use of her as a medium, through which to communicate to their friends. WILLIAM NORRIS.

**SIMPLE CURE FOR CROUP.**—If a child is taken with croup, instantly apply cold water—ice water, if possible—suddenly and freely to the neck and chest, with a sponge. The breathing will almost instantly be relieved. As soon as possible, let the sufferer drink as much as it can; then wipe it dry, cover it up warm, and soon a quiet slumber will relieve the parents' anxiety, and lead their hearts in thankfulness to the Power which has given to the pure gushing fountain such medical qualities.

**VANITY REPROVED.**—"I am thankful that my mouth has been opened to preach, without any learning," said an illiterate preacher, in speaking against educating ministers to preach the Gospel. A gentleman present replied, "Sir, a similar event took place in Balaam's time."

## MISCELLANEOUS.

SCIENCE, EDUCATION, HEALTH.

[Original.]

### MY BROTHER.

To my Brother who left the External Form, as soon as he was born, June 29, 1796.

Why did you leave your body here,  
A lovely form of lifeless clay?  
No infant wail, or sigh, or tear,  
Betokened living spirit near,  
For that had passed away.

Who was that gentle angel there,  
To take your infant spirit home,  
And guard you with a mother's care,  
And all your childish pleasures share,  
Where'er your feet might roam?

Who gently led you by the hand,  
Through all the living garden bowers  
Which beautify the spirit land,  
Where swelling buds to bloom expand,  
Of amaranthine flowers?

Who taught you first to lisp the name  
Of Him whose name all worlds adore?  
Whose glory all his works proclaim,  
Throughout the universal frame,  
Jehovah, evermore?

Who taught you, in your youthful days,  
In language, wisdom, and in song?  
Who tuned your harp to heavenly lays,  
To chant the great Emanuel's praise,  
With the celestial throng?

Now more than fifty rolling years  
Were numbered, gone, had passed away,  
No tidings came to quell our fears,  
Or wipe away our falling tears,  
Till that auspicious day.

Then, when I called, "responses" came,  
Like music to a saddened heart;  
I felt your presence through my frame,  
Which caused me to almost exclaim,  
We now no more shall part.

E. T.

Dedham, Mass., April 22, 1851.

### "THE WORK OF NATURE."

BY JANE EYRE.

All the house was still; for I believe all, except my cousin and myself, were now retired to rest. The one candle was dying out; the room was full of moonlight. My heart beat fast and thick; I heard its throb. Suddenly it stood still to an inexpressible feeling that thrilled it through, and passed at once to my head and extremities. The feeling was not like an electric shock; but it was quite as sharp, as strange, as startling; it acted on my senses as if their utmost activity hitherto had been but torpor, from which they were now summoned, and forced to wake. They rose expectant; eye and ear waited, while the flesh quivered on my bones.

"What have you heard? What do you see?" asked my cousin.

I saw nothing; but I heard a voice somewhere cry, "Jane! Jane! Jane!" nothing more. "Oh, God! what is it?" I gasped. I might have said, "Where is it?" for it did not seem in the room, nor in the house, nor in the garden; it did not come out of the air, nor from under the earth, nor from overhead. I had heard it—where or whence, impossible to know. And it was the voice of a human being—a known, loved, well-remembered human voice—that of Edward Fairfax Rochester; and it spoke in pain and woe. "I am coming!" I cried. "Wait for me. O, I will come." I flew to the door, and looked into the passage—it was dark. I ran out into the garden—it was void. "Where are you?" I exclaimed. And the distant hills sent the answer faintly back, "Where are you?"

I listened. The wind sighed low in the firs; all was moorland loneliness and midnight hush. "Down, superstition!" I commented, as that spectre rose up black by the black yew at the gate; "this is not thy deception, nor thy witchcraft; it is the work of Nature. She was roused, and did—no miracle—but her best."

The next day, Jane left her residence at three o'clock in the afternoon, and soon took the coach to convey her to Thornfield, which she reached on Thursday morning, after a journey of six-and-thirty-hours. She got out of the coach, and after making the necessary arrangements, she started for Thornfield Hall, two miles distant, across the fields. Notwithstanding her doubts and fears, as she walked and almost ran across the fields and threaded lanes, she resolutely continued her journey, and soon reached the court-yard walls—the back offices—the house itself still hid by the rookery. She soon had a full view of—not a noble castle—but a heap of blackened ruins! After looking in vain for some sign of life, she returned to the inn where the stage had left her, and after having breakfast, the host gave her all the information she wanted about the destruction of the hall and the fate of the inmates. Mr. Edward, the man she was in search of, was then living at Ferndean, about thirty miles distant. She immediately engaged a post chaise, and reached there about dark, travelling the last mile on foot, in a cold, drizzling rain. The first living object that met her gaze, was Edward Rochester! She drew near the house, and soon was welcomed by the inmates, to whom she was previously known. The parlor bell rung, and she bid the waiter, "Tell your master that a person wishes to speak to him, but do not give my name." By a little managing, Jane entered the room of Mr. Edward, who was blind from the injuries he received at the time of the destruction of his mansion by fire—and soon found occasion to speak in reply to a question of his, which produced a high state of excitement in the poor man. She tantalized and vexed him, as well as humored him, until a late hour in the evening, when, with a half-told story, she left him for the night.

The next day she continued her narration, until four o'clock in the afternoon

reminded them of dinner. But Mr. Edward was so full of joy at the discovery and actual presence of his once lost Jane, that he still continued his story:

"Some days since—nay, I can number them, four—it was last Monday night—a singular mood came over me; one in which grief replaced frenzy—sorrow, sullenness. I had long had the impression that since I could nowhere find you, you must be dead. Late that night—perhaps it might be between eleven and twelve o'clock, ere I retired to my dreary rest, I supplicated God, that if it seemed good to him, I might soon be taken from this life, and admitted to that world to come, where there was still hope of rejoining Jane. I was in my own room, and sitting by the window, which was open. It soothed me to feel the balmy air, though I could see no stars, and only by a vague, luminous haze, knew the presence of the moon. I longed for thee, Jane! Oh, how I longed for thee, both with soul and flesh! I asked God, at once in anguish and humility, if I had not been long enough desolate, afflicted, tormented, and might not soon taste bliss and peace once more! That I merited all I endured I acknowledge; that I could scarcely endure more, I pleaded; and the Alpha and Omega of my heart's wishes broke involuntarily from my lips, in the words, "Jane! Jane! Jane!"

"Did you speak those words aloud?"

"I did, Jane. If any listener had heard me, he would have thought me mad, I pronounced them with such frantic energy."

"And it was last Monday night—somewhere near midnight?"

"Yes; but the time is of no consequence. What followed, is the strange point. You will think me superstitious; some superstition I have in my blood, and always had. Nevertheless, this is true—true, at least, it is, that I heard what I now relate.

"As I exclaimed 'Jane! Jane! Jane!' a voice—I cannot tell whence the voice came, but I know whose voice it was—replied, 'I am coming; wait for me!' and a moment after, came whispering on the winds, the words, 'Where are you?'"

"I'll tell you, if I can, Jane, the idea, the picture, these words opened to my mind; yet it is difficult to express what I want to express, Ferndean is buried in a heavy wood, where sound falls dull, and lies unreverberating. 'Where are you?' seemed spoken among mountains, for I heard a hill-sent echo repeat the words. Cooler and fresher, at the moment, the gale seemed to visit my brow. I could have deemed that in some wild lone scene, I and you were meeting. *In spirit, I believe, we must have met!* You, no doubt, were, at that hour, in unconscious sleep, Jane. Perhaps your soul wandered from its cell, to comfort mine; for those were your accents—as certain as I live, they were yours!"

Reader, it was on Monday night—near midnight—that I, too, had received the mysterious summons. Those were the very words by which I had replied to it!

Fossil remains on the Ohio prove that it was once covered by the sea.

**ON DANCING.**—Dr. Fitch, in one of his lectures on the uses of the lungs, and on the mode of preserving health, says: "Dancing is the king and queen of indoor exercise. It is suitable for all classes and ages of both sexes. It is a most elegant and exhilarating exercise. It is one of the most ancient, and one of the most salutary. I do not speak of it as a dissipation, but as an exhilarating and valuable exercise. Among the exercises it is second to none. It is extremely suitable for the sedentary, for invalids, and for consumptives. I have known one of the worst cases of consumption I ever knew, cured by dancing alone, practiced daily for many months. The cure was permanent and complete.

"It is deplorable that dancing, and amusements of nearly all kinds, should have fallen under the ban of the clergy, and should be preached against as sinful. It is doubtful whether the morals of mankind are benefitted by forbidding all amusements, and it is most certain the health of thousands is sacrificed by it. Who are those that sink earliest into consumption among ladies? Allow me to say, it is those who take the least exercise and refrain from all amusements—who, at school, at church, at home, are marked as models—whose looks are demure, whose walks are slow, and whose conversation is always on serious subjects."

**FEATS OF MEMORY.**—We once knew a lady who would, from sheer memory, take down a sermon, word for word, after the lapse of several hours. She could not report it as the preacher spoke, but she could afterwards. She wrote out, for instance, a sermon some three quarters of an hour long, and sent it to the preacher, who, on comparing it with the MS., found not a particle altered. We have known a man who had some dozen of the classics by heart, and when in stupid company, would throw himself back in a chair, and read Euripides off from his own mind. Mr. Smeed should have alluded to the extraordinary instances of memory exhibited by diseased minds. The case is well known of a servant girl, who, when mad, could repeat half a grammar. She had merely heard her master, a German student, recite it at intervals, and could not remember a word when sane.—*London Paper.*

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