

THE SPIRITUAL HERALD;

A

RECORD OF SPIRIT MANIFESTATIONS.

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THE SPIRITUAL HERALD.

THE object of this periodical is to present the subject of spiritualism to the people of England in facts and arguments, and to supply the deficiency of the popular press, which seems determined to keep the public blind to the greatest mental revolution of modern times. These facts will be supplied from the numerous details of the American papers, and from the wonderful phenomena now of daily occurrence in our own English homes, recorded for the benefit and instruction of those who are candid and intelligent enough to investigate the most remarkable crisis that has occurred since the opening of the Christian era.

The modern spiritual manifestations have taken the world by surprise. They were not expected by philosophers in an age of materialism. But perhaps philosophers have yet to learn that progressive movement is conducted by reaction, and that either extreme produces its opposite. When this is understood, it will no longer seem strange that spiritualism should have revived in an age like this.

Spiritual manifestations are familiar to all ages and countries. There is not a province or parish in Christendom which has not its tale of the supernatural. Many, perhaps most, of these are fanciful inventions—the creations of popular bewilderment and timid superstition; but there is a deeply rooted faith in all countries and in all ages that spiritual agency on solid matter, and spiritual appearances in solid form, are possible. A spirit

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is a body *sui generis* (of its own kind)—a spiritual body—perceptible to the senses of the inhabitants of this world under certain conditions. Angels appeared of old in bodily form and ate and drank—they rolled away stones—they drew bolts and opened doors—they struck off chains and fetters. What they did then they may do again, or our faith is vain; for it is founded upon such facts.

When we hear of such things being done as were done of old, what shall we say or do? When the facts are attested by thousands of witnesses, how shall we reject them? Can we believe the old and reject the new? Can we be Christians and sneer like infidels at all spiritual phenomena except those that were witnessed by the ancient Jews? Are Jews alone privileged to see spirits? Balaam was not a Jew, neither was the patient quadruped that he bestrode. They both saw a spirit: why should not we? Nature's laws are unchangeable. He who sneers at spiritual manifestations as *per se* absurd, sneers at all revelation, and is (even if he goes to church and takes his family with him, and reads family prayers at home, and says grace before and after meat) an infidel.

The age wants a test like the one that has come in the form of modern spiritual manifestations. Christian faith has become encrusted with dead matter. Like British goods, it is adulterated in every possible manner. It is even sneered out of literature, which, with popular consent, avoids the subject altogether, and teaches what is called natural religion—a sort of moral philosophy—in its stead. It wants but little to extinguish Christianity as anything but a tradition—an establishment—a vested interest, or some other mundane structure, which stands like an Egyptian pyramid, because it cannot easily come down; but, like the pyramid, is surrounded with a barren desert of creeds without faith, and forms without life—the ruins of a world that once was, and is no longer, a living reality. A series of spiritual movements in such a state of things is refreshing, even if they come from the spirits of darkness. To prove to a materialised world that there are spirits of any sort is no vain mission.

This has been done. In the United States of America materialism and infidelity now chiefly exist in the churches. The tables are turned, and the name of infidel has changed its meaning. An immense number of those who were formerly dead to all belief in a spiritual world are now the most devoted and enthusiastic supporters of spiritual faith, convinced by evi-

dence that they could not resist—by appeals to their senses, their understandings, their feelings, and affections—in the re-appearance of those dear friends who have departed this life, and have communicated with them from beyond the grave, in a manner not to be explained by any supposition of imposture or hallucination. Frivolous apparently some of these modes of communication are, but the scale is graduated from the frivolous to the sacred ; and the highest of all have given utterance to thoughts and to language which scarcely find a parallel, and not a superior, in any department of eloquence, theology, philosophy, or poetry ; whilst the signs and wonders in the healing art by the imposition of hands, as in apostolic times, remind us of the promise, that “ the blind shall see, the deaf hear, and the lame shall leap as a hart.” We hear of healing mediums, whose houses are thronged with visitors and patients waiting to be touched—the very passages crowded as well as the apartments, so as really to make it no exaggeration to say that it is scarcely possible to obtain admission into the house.

The movement has been rapid, compared with other historical movements. In 1844 the first spirit circles were formed, and they were privately conducted for years. A record was kept of the proceedings, and the spirits told the sitters that the time was at hand when their numbers would increase. But there was no appearance of increase till the rappings announced themselves in Rochester, N. Y., in 1848. These at once gave notoriety to the subject. After that all the various forms of mediumship in succession appeared—in writing, drawing, playing on musical instruments, visions, trances, elevation of heavy substances and living persons in the air, spirit hands, spirit voices, spirit healing ; and still the wonders seem to increase, and the facts are acknowledged even by the enemies of the movement, who ascribe to abstract feelings and psychological conditions, and other unintelligible agencies, what can only be predicated of intelligent and superhuman agency.

EXTRAORDINARY WRITING MEDIUM.—The Cincinnati *Spiritual Messenger* says : “A little girl about ten years old, the daughter of a Methodist preacher at New Albany, Ind., has been developed as a writing medium of an extraordinary character. She writes communications with both hands at the same time, and upon different subjects, and while thus engaged can also converse with persons upon subjects distinct from either. The character of the communications thus written out through her are entirely foreign to her own thoughts and above her natural capacity. This presents a new phenomenon, and would seem to indicate that the medium is controlled by two different spirits at the same time. It will defy the powers of the most skilful and ingenious operator of legerdemain.”

EVENINGS WITH MR. HOME AND THE SPIRITS.

THE following eloquent and most interesting letter appeared in one of the London morning papers three or four months ago ; but the distinguished Author, well known in the literary and professional world, has kindly forwarded it for insertion in the *SPIRITUAL HERALD* :—

It was in the spring of 1855 that I was invited by a friend, well known in the literary world, to pay a visit to the lodgings of Mr. Daniel Douglas Home, then recently arrived from America, for the purpose of witnessing certain remarkable phenomena alleged to be from supernatural causes. Many feelings prompted me to accept the invitation ; as, also, did the knowledge that Mr. Home was familiarly known, as a plain, honest man, to Dr. Gray, the first homœopathic physician in New York, and a man for whose character I have the highest esteem.

I went to a house in Jermyn-street, and introduced myself on the appointed evening to Mr. Home, who, I found, was a modest, intelligent youth of about twenty, in ill-health ; and, indeed, as he himself informed me, and as, on inspection, I found to be the case, with the marks of consumption legible upon his frame. My wife accompanied me, and I met in Mr. H.'s rooms three friends, all of them men of talent and integrity. Bent upon narrative, and not upon defence or hostility, I will omit nothing ; and so I here observe that we were, all of us, believers, beforehand, in the possibility of spiritual manifestations.

Before sitting down in "the circle," I asked Mr. Home for some account of his antecedents. To the best of my recollection, he gave the following particulars :—He was born in Scotland, and was taken to America when a child. Very early in life he used to surprise those with whom he was, by spontaneously narrating, as scenes passing before his eyes, distant events, such as the death of friends and relatives ; and these instances of second sight were found to be true telegraphy. It was not his fault—he could not help seeing them. Later on in his career, various noises were heard in the room beside him. This was long before the spiritual "rapping" was familiarly known in America.

He was an orphan, and lived with two maiden aunts, who were greatly scandalised at these circumstances. A member of the Presbyterian Church, these knockings even accompanied him to Divine worship ; and, coming to the knowledge of his ecclesiastical overmen, he was adjudged to be the victim of satanic influences, and either excommunicated, or otherwise banished from the congregation. Afterwards he became a medical student ; but ill-health forced him to abandon the idea of pursuing medicine as a calling. Such were the heads of what I remember that he told us, in answer to our inquiries, about himself.

We were in a large upper room, rather bare of furniture ; a sofa, a large round table, and a little buffet, together with a few chairs, were the fittings-up. One of the party had brought with him a hand-bell and an accordion. We sat around the table, with the hands resting upon it. In a few minutes the table vibrated, or shuddered, as though actuated from within ; it then became still, and instantly every one of us shook in his chair, not violently, but intimately, and like a jelly, so that objects "dothored" before us. This effect ceased ; and now the heavy table, with all our hands upon it, raised itself high up on its side, and rocked up and down ; the raising proceeding from all different quarters, the medium and all the rest of us (excepting our hands and arms, which were necessarily moved) sitting death-still. The lamp on the table seemed as if it must tumble off ; but the medium assured us there was no danger of that—that it was held safely in its place. The hand-bell had been placed upon the wooden rim round the pedestal of the table, and it now began to ring, apparently under different parts of the circle. Mr. Home said that the spirits were carrying it to one of the party, and suggested myself. I was sitting nearly opposite to him, at about three feet distance. I put my hand down under the margin of the table, and in perhaps a

minute's time, I felt the lip of the bell poked up gently against the tips of my fingers, as if to say, "I am here, take me." This palpitation of the bell continued until I moved my fingers up its side to grasp it. When I came to the handle, I slid my fingers on rapidly, and now, every hand but my own being on the table, I distinctly felt the fingers, up to the palm, of a hand holding the bell. It was a soft, warm, fleshy, radiant, substantial hand, such as I should be glad to feel at the extremity of the friendship of my best friends. But I had no sooner grasped it momentarily, than it melted away, leaving me void, with the bell in my hand. I now held the bell lightly, with the clapper downwards, and while it remained perfectly still, I could plainly feel fingers ringing it by the clapper. As a point of observation I will remark, that I should feel no more difficulty in swearing that the member I felt was a human hand of extraordinary life, and not Mr. Home's foot, than that the nose of the Apollo Belvidere is not a horse's ear. I dwell chiefly, because I can speak surely, on what happened to myself, though every one round the table had somewhat similar experiences. The bell was carried under the table to each, and rung in the hand of each. The accordion was now placed beneath the table, and presently we heard it moving along. Mr. Home put down his hand to the margin and the instrument was given to him. With one hand upon the table, and with the other grasping the white wood at the bottom of the accordion, he held it bottom upwards, the keys hanging down over, and the instrument resting for support on, his right knee. It played "Home, sweet home," and "God save the Queen," with a delicacy of tone which struck every one present: I never heard silence threaded with such silver lines. Afterwards, in the same way, we were favoured with "The Last Rose of Summer." The accordion was then taken to each member of the party in succession; we could hear it rustling on its way between our knees and the pedestal of the table; and in the hand of each person, a few notes, but no whole tunes, were played. When in my own hand, I particularly noticed the great amount of force which was exerted by the player. It was difficult to hold the instrument from the strong downward pull, and had I not been somewhat prepared for this, the accordion would have fallen upon the floor. In the course of the evening we all felt either a finger, fingers, or a whole hand, placed upon our knees, always with a pleasant impression at the time. A white cambric handkerchief was drawn slowly under the table, and in the course of a few minutes handed to another person, tied in two knots, and put as a bouquet into the bell. And this experiment also was repeated for nearly all present. While these things were going on, rappings were heard in all parts of the room, in the table, in the floor, and the ceiling; and sometimes they were so loud, that the medium requested the spirits to remember that he was only a lodger, and that these noises might disturb the people in the rooms above and below. They were very unlike the "Great Wizard's" raps, and occurred indifferently, as I said before, in all places and corners of the chamber. Towards the end of the *séance*, five distinct raps were heard under the table, which number, the medium said, was a call for the alphabet. Accordingly, an alphabet was made; and on Mr. Home asking if any spirit was present who wished to speak to one of the party, the following sentence was given by the alphabetic telegraph:—"My dear E—, Immortality is a great truth. Oh! how I wish my dear wife could have been present.—D.C." It purported to be a near relation of one of those present, who died last year. The spelling, "immortality," surprised me at first; but I recollected that the deceased, whom I knew well, was constantly versed in black letter writing, which makes elisions in that way. This ended, the medium fell into an apparently mesmeric trance, from which he addressed some good words of exhortation to each of us; and told one of the party in particular several details about deceased members of the family, which were not known in the circle at the time, but verified to the letter afterwards. These, I forbear to mention, because they were of a strictly private nature. In his address, the medium spoke, not as from himself, but as from the spirit assembly which was present; and he ended with a courteous "Good night," from them.

Considering that it requires a large apparatus of preparation for the greatest of wizards to effect the smallest part of what *we* saw on this evening, namely, a few raps, one might have expected that Mr. Home would have had rather bulging pockets to do what I have related; but I can assure your readers that he was as meagre and unencumbered as the scantiest dresser need be. He had no assistants, and no screens. When, during the evening, I asked if the jugglers did their tricks by means similar to the agencies there present, the raps said "No;" but in a pronounced manner they said "Yes," when the same question was put with regard to the "Indian jugglers." We also asked the medium why the effects generally took place *under* the table, and not upon it. He said that in habituated circles the results were easily obtained above board, visibly to all, but that at a first sitting it was not so. That scepticism was almost universal in men's intellects, and marred the forces at work; that the spirits did what they did through our life-sphere, or atmosphere, which was permeated by our wills; and if the will was contrary, the sphere was unfit for being operated upon. And the upper part of us, or the brain and senses, were more opposed to spiritual truth than the vital, visceral, or instinctive part, which in this case is conveniently separated from the other by the table. I give his explanation, in my own words, for what it is worth.

It was perhaps a fortnight after this that Mr. Home came, by invitation, to my own house, to sit in the circle of my family. He was brought to the door in a pony chaise by some friends, with whom he was staying, and the little carriage was full when he was in it—a fact which I mention, because again it is incompatible with the paraphernalia of a wizard's art. I watched him walk up the garden, and can aver that he had no magic wand up his trouser leg, nor any hunch in his dress that could betoken machinery or apparatus of any kind whatever. Arrived in the drawing-room, the "raps" immediately commenced in all parts of it, and were also heard in the back drawing-room, which opens into the front by folding doors. The party assembled to constitute the "circle" consisted of Mr. Home, my four children, my wife and myself, and two domestics. We sat round a large and heavy loo table, which occupied the centre of the room. In a minute or two the same inward thrill went through the table as I have described in the first *séance*; and the chairs also, as before, thrilled under us so vividly, that my youngest daughter jumped up from hers, exclaiming, "Oh! Papa, there's a heart in my chair," which we all felt to be a correct expression of the sensation conveyed. From time to time the table manifested considerable movements, and after cracking, and apparently undulating in its place, with all our hands upon it, it suddenly rose from its place bodily some eight inches into the air, and floated wavering in the atmosphere, maintaining its position above the ground for half a minute, or while we slowly counted 29. Its oscillations during this time were very beautiful, reminding us all of a flat disc of deal on an agitated surface of water. It then descended as rapidly as it rose, and so nicely was the descent managed, that it met the floor with no noise, as though it would scarcely have broken an egg in its contact. Three times did it leave the floor of the room, and poise itself in mid air, always with similar phenomena. During these intervals the medium was in a state of the completest muscular repose; nor, indeed, had he had the toe of Hercules for a lever, could he have managed this effect, for he and all of us stood up each time, to follow the mounting table, and he stood with as complete absence of strain as the rest of us. It requires two strong men to lift the table to that height. One person might throw it over, but could by no means erect it.

The travelling of the hand-bell under the table was also repeated for every one present, and this time they all felt the hand, or hands, either upon their knees or other portion of their limbs. I put my hand down as previously, and was regularly stroked on the back of it by a soft, palpable hand as before. Nay, I distinctly felt the whole arm against mine, and once grasped the hand, but it melted as on the first occasion; and immediately a call was made for the alphabet, there being something to communicate. The "spirits" now spelt out, through Mr. Home,

who had known nothing of what I had done under the table, "Do not grasp our hands." I asked why, and Mr. Home said that they had great difficulty in presenting, and thus rapidly incarnating these hands out of the vital atmospheres of those present, and that their work was spoilt, and had to be recommenced when they were interfered with, perhaps as a thought is sometimes broken in twain, and cannot easily be resumed on the irruption of a stranger. During the *séance* I had the border of a white cambric handkerchief just appearing out of the side pocket of my paletot, which was open; and though I could see no agency, I felt something twitching at the handkerchief, and very gradually drawing it from my pocket. Simultaneously with this, my eldest daughter, who sat opposite to me, exclaimed, "Oh! I see phosphoric fingers at papa's pocket;" and now, visibly to all, the handkerchief was slowly pulled out and drawn under the table, whilst at the same time I felt an arm that was doing it, but which was invisible to me. At this time I was at least three feet from Mr. Home, with a person between us, and he was absolutely passive. The feeling I had was of nudges, as distinct as ever I felt from a mortal limb, and that on my breast and arm, which were above the table; and yet, though the operation of abstracting my handkerchief was going on visibly to all, the rest of the circle, as well as myself (all except my eldest daughter), could see nothing. I can swear that there was no machinery, unless the skin, bone, muscle, and tendons of an unseen hand, forearm, and elbow, deserve the name.

While this was going on, and for about ten minutes, more or less, my wife felt the sleeves of her dress pulled frequently, and as she was sitting with her finger ends clasped and hands open, with palms semi-prone upon the table, she suddenly laughed involuntarily, and said, "Oh! see, there is a little hand lying between mine; and, now, a larger hand has come beside it. The little hand is smaller than any baby's, and exquisitely perfect." Our domestics, and two of the children, as well as my wife, all saw these hands, and watched them for between one and two minutes, when they disappeared. I now held my watch at the table side, the key in my hand, the chain and watch dangling from it, and I felt the weight of the watch gradually taken off, the chain being raised horizontally to my hand, and then the key, which I retained, was pulled laterally, and I let it go. It was taken under the table to my youngest daughter, and put on her knee. Whenever objects were thus removed from the hand, they were taken with a degree of physical power sufficient to suggest that the agent was capable of holding the object without letting it fall. An hour and three-quarters were occupied in these and similar manifestations, of which I have mentioned only the most striking, or those personal to myself; and now Mr. Home passed into the trance state, spoke of the spirit life, and the coming knowledge of it on earth, and said a few words apposite to each person present; dwelling also upon the spiritual attendants who were standing beside each. When he came to my wife he lifted up his hands in an ecstasy, and described a spirit with her, most tiny, but beautiful. He said it was a little sister who had gone away a long time. "But," she said, "I never had such a sister." "Yes, you had, though she had no name on earth." On inquiry in the family, an event, such as he alluded to, had happened. This is the chief part of what struck me in *Séance* No. 2.

At 10, p.m., Mr. Home went away on his own legs, so limber that I never so much as thought of any explanation of pasteboard arms or electric batteries concealed about his person.

The next *séance* which I shall describe took place about the third week in July, at the house of a valued friend in Ealing, who had become convinced of the genuineness of the phenomena which accompanied Mr. Home, and with whom that gentleman was now staying. The party sat down to the table with Mr. Home, in the dusk of a fine evening, and were nine or ten in number. Here again I am forced to chronicle chiefly what befel myself, in order that I may be no second-hand witness. The first thing I remarked was a gentle, tremulous flash of light through the room, but what was the cause of it I am unable to determine. When we had sat a few minutes I felt a decided but gentle grasp of a large man's

hand upon my right knee, and I said to Mr. H., "There is a man's hand upon my knee." "Who is it?" he said. "How should I know?" was my reply. "Ask," said he. "But how shall I ask?" "Think of somebody," was his answer. I thought involuntarily of an intimate friend, once a member of Parliament, and as much before the public as any man in his generation, and who died on the 30th of June last. And I said aloud, "Is it —?" Hearty affirmative slaps on the knee from the same hand, which had remained fixed till then, were the reply to my question. "I am glad to be again in the same room with you," said I. Again the same hearty greeting was repeated. "Are you better?" I inquired. A still more joyous succession of slaps, or rather, if I may coin a word, of accussions; for the hand was cupped to fit my bent knee, and gently struck me in that form. "Have you any message to your wife?" whom I shall probably see in a few days?" Again, affirmative touches, five in number, therefore calling for the alphabet. Mr. Home now called over the alphabet, A B C D, and when he called T my knee was struck; again, when he said H and E, and so on until this was spelled out—"THE IMMORTAL LOVES." I remember at the time thinking that this was rather a thin message; but the next time I saw Mrs. — I told her the circumstances, and gave her the words. Her son was sitting with her, and said, "That is very characteristic of my father, for it was a favourite subject of speculation with him whether or not the *affections* survive the body. Of the immortality of the soul itself he never doubted; but the words, the immortal *loves*, show that he has settled the problem of his life." Such was the import which the family of the deceased, quite unexpectedly to me, conferred upon the phrase. To return to Ealing, and that evening: after the last stroke of the hand had indicated the end of the sentence, I said, "If it is really you, will you shake hands with me?" and I put my hand under the table, and now the same soft and capacious hand was placed in mine, and gave it a cordial shaking. I could not help exclaiming, "This hand is a portrait. I know it from five years' constant intercourse, and from the daily grasp and holding of the last several months!" After this it left my knee; and when I asked if there was anything more, there was no response, and the agent appeared to be gone. But in two or three minutes more another hand, evidently also a man's, but small, thin, firm, and lively, was placed in the same position which the former had occupied; and after some preliminary questioning with Mr. Home, I said, "Is it Mr. —?" naming another valued friend, who, after 20 years of suffering, had departed this life almost on the same day as Mr. —. With liveliest finger tips, the affirming hand danced up and down my leg, and upon my knee. I said, "I am glad to find you are so much better." The playful hand beat "yes" again. And this, in reply to renewed questions, for two or three minutes. Then I said, "Have you any communication for your wife when I see her?" There was no response, and that agent there ceased to manifest himself. After another short pause, a totally different hand (a lady's) came to me, rested in my hand under the table, rubbed my hand, and allowed me at leisure to examine the delicate, beautiful, and warmth-raying fingers. It was signified that it was Mrs. —, whom I had known in life, and who wished to greet me. Between and during what happened to myself, many of the rest of the circle were touched, and described their impressions much as I have described mine. Some had merely a single finger put upon their knees. Mr. Home said that the presenting spirits could often make one finger where they could not make two, and two where they could not form an entire hand; just as they could form a hand where they could not realise a whole human figure; and he also said that this was one reason why they did not show themselves above-board, because they did not like imperfect members to be seen.

These phenomena occupied less than an hour; and now the circle was broken up, and reconstituted, nine persons, to the best of my recollection, being arranged at the table. The table was placed opposite a window, and the bright moonbeams streamed down upon its side. There was no candle in the apartment. The space of table which fronted the window was not occupied by sitters; but the company sat round about three-fourths of it, leaving the rest vacant. The right

wing of the party was terminated by Mr. Home; the left by the son of the host. In a few minutes' time, close beside the latter gentleman, there emerged into sight above the rim of the table, in the vacant space, a delicately beautiful female hand and part of the forearm, apparently of ghostly tenuity. As I was sitting exactly opposite the vacant space, I had a fair opportunity of watching this hand as it projected against the moonlight; it was a filmy-looking woman's hand, with the fingers drooping forwards from left to right as I sat. The hand curved up over the table margin, deliberately grasped a hand-bell placed near, and carrying it partly down, let it drop upon the floor. It then rose to sight again, and took away a cambric handkerchief also placed near, which was tied in two knots under the table, and presented to one of the company, who had been strongly moved from the time that this hand was first seen. I forbear to give the further details of this hand, because they seemed to be of a private nature; suffice it to say, that it caused no little emotion to a gentleman who seemed concerned. On its disappearance, another hand, large, strong, and with the fingers extended, and pushed bolt up in the moonlight, rose above the table near to Mr. Home. He cried out, "Oh! keep me from that hand! it is so cold! Do not let it touch me!" Shortly it also vanished, and a third hand was seen at the other side of the vacant table edge: this hand was in a glove. Then presently a fourth hand ascended on the extreme left—a lady's hand, of beautiful proportions—and traversed the entire vacant space from left to right, rising, and displaying the forearm; and then, as it neared Mr. Home, the entire arm. When it reached him, the hand was level with his forehead, upon which it laid its palm, and with its fingers put his hair back, and played upon his brow for perhaps half a minute. I was sitting next but one to him, and leant forward past my intermediate neighbour, at the same time requesting that if the hand belonged to my friend Mrs. —, it might also be laid on my forehead. This was deliberately done; and I felt its thrilling impression as the palm was laid flat upon my brow, where it remained for several seconds. It was warm and human, and made of no material but softest flesh. During the interval in which I felt it, I had abundant opportunity of examining most closely the arm and forearm. The forearm sleeve appeared to be of white cambric, plain and neat, and it shone like biscuit-porcelain in the moonlight. The sleeve of the dress up the arm was darker, but I do not remember the colour. And bending over, as I did, to the vacant rim of the table, I saw how the arm terminated, apparently in a graceful cascade of drapery; much as though an arm were put out through the peak of a snowy tent, the apex of which thus fell around the shoulder on every side. On leaving my forehead, the arm at once disappeared, and I watched it go. It was drawn into the same drapery; but so natively that I can only liken it to a fountain falling down again, and ceasing into the bosom of the water from which it rose. And I also saw the drapery itself vanish, apparently by the same dissipative process. And now the spirits spelt out "Good Night."

These events occurred in the house of one of my oldest friends, whose superior in integrity I have never known, and of whose talent and sagacity I never heard a doubt entertained, until he endorsed these unpopular manifestations. I make this remark also as a part of my life's experience. His character, I know, will stand the world's rack and laugh, for his honesty has already withstood its temptations.

Such is my experience. One hope I have in putting it forward is, that others who have seen Mr. Home may do the like, and thus make their contribution to the facts of the case.

In conclusion, I will observe that Sir David Brewster, and others almost as eminent, appear to me to make a scientific error in one respect—viz., in their estimate of the value of a man's character. They seem to think that charging a man of good antecedents, and with every appearance of blameless life, with lying and imposture of the most systematic kind, is positively the easiest account that can be given of any rare phenomenon out of the pale of their own previous philosophy. I submit that this is not, for their own credit, the very first hypothesis

of the case that ought to rush into their minds. Neither, parallel with this, is the other hypothesis that men of ability in all other things, and till then known to be shrewd and searching, are infatuated dupes, to be commended as a proper valuation of what is rare and valuable in the human species. The rule of law, that "a man must be supposed innocent till proved guilty," is also the rule in such scientific explorations. This rule loves facts, and hates slander. I differ, therefore, with Sir David Brewster in his mode of exploration, and also in his valuation of presumptive honesty and human testimony, which always hitherto has been the most substantial word in the world, and a pillar which Divine Providence has not disdained to use in supporting the canopy of his revelations.

This rule I would especially press upon the great Sir David Brewster, a man of position, wealth, worldly repute, great talents, a name no one dares assail, and withal, responsibility to Heaven and his generation, when he is dealing with the orphan, Home, a man apparently as blameless as himself, but with neither riches, nor health, nor station, nor any possession if not honesty, and a ruinous peculiarity of gift. It is not, I say, the easiest way out of a difficulty to call this youth a cheat. There are cheats of our own household, cheats in our own heads, sometimes called prejudices, which might be suspected *first*, without violating any rule of scientific inquest or humane valuation.

The experience of others in these matters has, perhaps, differed very widely from my own, and I desire to see this experience also brought forward. At other *séances* I have seen only a part of the phenomena which I have described as taking place on the three evenings which I have selected as being the fullest and best. And once or twice, when persons were present whom it was most desirable to convince, almost nothing occurred. This, I submit, is one of the strongest arguments in Mr. Home's favour. Were the phenomena a trick, they might always be produced to order without variation. "The Great Wizard" never fails. But, as he himself says, the spiritualists always fail in his company. Let this suggest that there is a total difference between him and them. It does not surprise me that spirits and their gifts should retire to a great-gulf distance from where "the Great Wizard" is.

It seems probable, from experience as well as reason, that, granting the phenomena to be spiritual, the presence of determined scoffers at, and disbelievers in, them, should, in case the said persons be preponderant in their influence in the circle, render the manifestations imperfect or perhaps null. The known laws of human sympathy, and the operations of our own spirits when antipathetic persons are near us, may also be cited in proof of this. I conclude, then, that to the scoffer and the strongly prejudiced, who want no evidence, and to whom evidence has no appeal, evidence is, for the most part, not forthcoming. This simplifies the position; but what still remains is the peculiar Christian politesse of this century, viz., the necessity of good manners and the agreeing to differ. On the part of those who believe, this may be best secured by letting the other party be. Providence can convince *them*, too, as easily as ourselves, when the time and their function comes, but by snatching at them prematurely before they are ripe, we may evoke, on a great scale, two of the most formidable spirits of this world—WRATH and FEAR.

As a final remark, let me caution the public against being led by Sir David Brewster, Mr. Faraday, and other men of great names in their own departments, in this matter, which is not obviously within their field. We hear much of not choosing Crimean generals on old Peninsular qualifications. But to select a Faraday or a Brewster for opinion on this case, is a far worse error; for all generals, past, present, and to come, are in the military line; but these great men are not, and never were, in the line upon which they have professed to decide. They are so alien to the subject, that they do not know the first condition of prosecuting it, viz., a gift of sympathy, and openness to conviction. Their very specialty of excellence in physical explorations, is against them in this new walk, which is combined spiritual and physical. The common observer, with little in his mind, with no repute to support, and no case to uphold, may perchance be equipped by

nature for these revolutionary sciences, where the *savans* are stupid upon them. Twelve fishermen, and not the High Priests, are the everlasting resource of Providence. I therefore invite the unattached laity of all descriptions, the willing fishermen, to remember that they have no overmen in this department; that it is an untrodden field; and that by the grace of God, there is at last a freedom for us all from the pressure of big names; because "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong."

VERAX.

THE HEALING MEDIUMSHIP.

THE healing mediumship of modern spiritualism is analogous to that of the early Christian gift. It is chiefly exhibited by laying on of hands. There are also manipulations resembling those of mesmerism; but in general it is by the firm touch of the hand that the cure is effected, and the name of mesmerism is entirely abjured—the cures are ascribed exclusively to spirit influence. Almost every species of disease has been repeatedly cured in a manner so quick and so decided as to compel our assent to the influence of some extraordinary agency. When cancers are healed, crooked spines made straight, and the sight and the hearing restored, even by common medical remedies, the cases are recorded as marvellous demonstrations of medical skill. But when such things are done without skill at all, merely by the application of the human hand, what can we say but that there is greater healing virtue in a hand than in a drug? Perhaps they are not spirits that perform these cures; but it so happens that they are performed by those who believe in spirit agency, and ascribe them to it. The healing power has belonged, and still belongs, to a great variety of sects and faiths. The Brahmins in India do wonders with the touch; the descendants of the Prophet of the greater Desert are also remarkable for the cures that they effect in this manner. The Prince Hohenlohe, not many years ago, astounded all the Western world with his therapeutic miracles, by touch and prayer alone. His complete restoration of the Princess Matilda of Schwartzenburg, a young lady of 17, who had been 9 years a cripple, who could not turn herself in bed nor stand on her feet, is one of the best-attested miracles in history. The Prince commanded her to rise, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and she rose instantly, walked into the garden, and was thoroughly healed. His power declined, and finally left him; but there can be no doubt, notwithstanding the unwillingness of the Protestants to admit the truth of his mediumship, that it was a reality. He was a Roman Catholic, and the Protes-

tants thought that, by admitting the facts of the Prince's miracles, they must admit the truth of Popish superstition and all its ritualism—an absurd and illogical conclusion; but so they reasoned. Valentine Greatrakes, as remarkable a healing medium as Hohenlohe, was a Protestant. The power appears to be independent of creed, and gives no attestation of the doctrinal orthodoxy of him who holds it. The Author of Christianity has decidedly said that many shall do mighty works in his name, and yet he shall say to them at last, "I never knew you." But still the works are facts, and the mediumship is a fact, whatsoever the creed or the conduct of the medium.

We do not subscribe to a spiritualist's creed because he has one of the gifts. Properly speaking, spiritualists have no creed of a special or formal character. They believe in the agency of spirits, with every possible variety of doctrine. Spiritualism is not a new church, nor a church at all, but it is a confirmation of a truth which ought to be held by all churches that have any life in them; and if it be objected that these cures are done by spirits, and not nominally by the Lord himself as of old, it should be remembered that he promised that what he did we should do also; for we are all one in him. This the spirits acknowledge, all in some way or other.

The revival of the gift seems to have begun with the Roman Catholics, in the person of Prince Hohenlohe, about 40 years ago. Immediately after its decline in his person, it appeared amongst the Protestants, about 25 years ago; no church accepted it as a fact, but the congregation of Edward Irving, of the Scotch Church, received the manifestations with respect, and gradually became a separate body in the usual Protestant fashion. Mrs. Maxwell, lame for 23 years, and using crutches for three years and a half, was cured instantaneously; Miss Fancourt, Miss Hughes, and Elizabeth Hall, were all similar cases of marvellous and sudden restoration, which excited public attention; and these were but a few of the many cases of spirit-healing, most of which were concealed by the veil of private domestic life. Similar cases still occasionally happen amongst the same people. After that, the healing virtue appeared to confine itself for some years chiefly amongst the mesmerists. Then it seemed, after a few years, to decline amongst them, the power being far less vigorous in many than it used to be some years ago. Travelling through the different phases of principle and faith, it arrived at the spiritualists of America,

where it has shown for the last few years greater vigour, and on a more extensive scale, than it ever has done in historical times. With them the power is not occasional only, but resident in the mediums, who act with great confidence and faith, and meet with a success that can only find its historical parallel in apostolic times, and even in those the modern gift was not surpassed except in the persons of one or two individuals.

This gift is naturally very popular amongst the spiritualists, and makes a strong appeal to the senses and the selfishness of man. It was the first pillar of the Christian faith, and is very powerful in converting minds who argue from the outward to the inward, as most men do. But it is never absolute or certain in its employment, except in Christ the Master alone. It fails with spiritualists as with the Apostles themselves.

John Scott, formerly a pilot on the Mississippi River, and for many years a confirmed atheist, has now for the last few months left the river, and, an atheist no longer, but an agent, as he believes, of healing spirits, he has his house filled daily with patients ready to be touched; and cancer and crooked spine and stammering speech are cured by the simple stroking of his consecrated hand. Some are partially, others wholly cured. Charles Main feels the diseases of the affected in his own person before he relieves them by imposition of hands. Mr. Alfred Kyser, blind of one eye and nearly blind of the other, and afflicted with poisonous sores over his body, was in twenty minutes restored to the full and painless use of his eyes by the simple touch of Mr. Eaton; whilst the ulcers began to subside perceptibly and immediately. John Spear, John Sherman, Mrs. Mettler, and many others, are equally remarkable for this healing gift. A curious case, which reminds us of one of the fantastic hopes of the old alchemists, we give as a sample in the words of a clergyman, the Rev. J. B. Ferguson of Nashville, Tennessee, whose daughter Virginia, aged 14, was the medium; quoted from one of the spiritualist papers:—

“At the close of the last session of her school in June, she and a younger sister and brother were sent on a visit to our friends, in Maryville, Ky. Her mother expected to have followed in a few days, with a view of spending the summer at that hospitable mansion of tried friendship. She was detained by sickness. After a delay of six weeks, we were enabled to visit them, when, to our surprise, we were informed, by every member of the family, of the following wonderful manifestations through our own child.

“While the family were seated in the parlour, in conversation upon the probable sickness of the country, Virginia, suddenly and unexpectedly to all, came under spiritual influence; assuming with much dignity and pleasantness the character of a physician; alternately addressed them in what appeared Indian dialect and English, and otherwise entertaining and astonishing all present. At this time a

negro boy came in from the field, complaining of a severe pain in the shoulder, and inability to use his arm. She instantly took hold of him, and described the circumstances under which he had been injured; relieved him by hard but comparatively painless manipulations. She then called for a clean cup and spoon. She required it to be washed in the presence of all. No one anticipated, or could anticipate, what she intended. She took the cup, and with the spoon seemed anxiously mixing some liquid. After a few moments, she held it before their astonished gaze, when it was seen to contain a mixture of the consistence of thin paste, oily to the touch, and of dark colour. All were satisfied, for all was conducted in the broad daylight, and without moving from their presence. She added some water, and gave to every invalid on the premises, each one of whom described its taste, some of them not having witnessed and not knowing how it was produced. This was repeated every day for two weeks; each invalid but one has recovered; and the boy who could not lift his hand, as if the arm was dislocated, was made in a few hours to raise it as readily as the other, and any heavy weights, such as chairs upon it, outstretched.

"When these things were related to me, despite my experience, I confess I could not believe. The most reliable men and women I had ever known in all my intercourse with mankind, and simple-minded negroes and children, were the witnesses. I heard with surprise, and strove to be incredulous. In the midst of my disturbed reasoning upon what was related, she came into the room and at once our friends said, 'Be quiet and you will see.' Her mother was sitting near me, quite feeble, and was evidently somewhat alarmed at the appearance and manner of Virginia. She spoke with a most impressive dignity and sweetness of manner, and seemed to remove the very atmosphere of fear. She spoke of herself as a second person, and her mother instantly recognised her spiritual guides. She gently manipulated her mother's region of the lungs; gave directions to myself and others as to the necessity of an upright posture of the body for health, and having engaged the attention of all, called for her cup and spoon. In our presence she made a coloured liquid with no materials near her, apparently from the atmosphere; and an ointment which she used on the neck of a neuralgic gentleman present. We saw, we felt, we tasted. We were not, for we could not be, mistaken. This we witnessed every day for a week, until every invalid, save one, was restored. If it is esteemed necessary to refer to names, I would mention W. D. Meriwether, Esq. and his mother Mrs. B. Meriwether, Mrs. King and daughter, Mrs. Williamson, and the servants of the family.

"She is now with us at home; goes regularly to school; we never suffer her to be asked to submit to this influence; but almost every day, some one comes in, unconscious of her powers, for whose benefit she is made the subject of this influence, and always for the benefit of the sick. Her mother is again restored.

"I have no comments to make on this brief narrative. It is beyond my comprehension, confounds my ignorance, but excites my hope. I believe my senses, therefore have I spoken. Of her I have only to say, that from a child she has been devotional, cheerful, truthful to an eminent degree; loved by all; of good mind, but nothing above that of girls of her age; certainly deficient in what is usually called talent. She was born February, 1841; is a child in all her tastes."

No truth is self-evident, save that of man's immortality. Everything else requires the concurrent testimony of numerous witnesses, but this great truth is of itself so majestic and so grand, that all corroboration from or by that which exists outside of itself, does but obscure it as with darkening clouds. Trumpet-tongued, the soul proclaims its own immortal destiny, until the whole universæum is filled with the swelling diapason.

CLAIRVOYANCE.

Extract from a Letter from a Friend.

I HAD put the girl into a mesmeric sleep, for the purpose of making a special inquiry, having frequently tested her varied powers; and before awakening her, I just thought of a letter which had been given to me before leaving the city, which a friend of mine had received from Florida, America, requesting information of a chest of plate which an ancestor had left, about 40 or 50 years ago, in some bank in London.

'The writer was a Mr. H——. I put the letter into her hand folded, and did not give her the slightest clew by observation or otherwise. I merely requested the clairvoyant to give me, if she could, the history of that letter. She held it for a few minutes and then said—"I have come, as you wished, to New York; but we are not going to stay here. Now we are at the old gentleman's plantation, with ever so many little Topsy's. How strange these negroes don't speak English! What are they saying? I think they are speaking Spanish," &c. "Now we must go back to London. Come with me to the city. Now here we are in this busy street facing the Royal Exchange. There is a church to the right hand, with a projecting clock, and you wish me to go into the large house opposite. This is a place where they change money. Come down stairs, and I will find the box. There it is. Shall I open it? Oh! what a beautiful service of plate! How valuable! Each piece has a gold coin inserted in the centre," &c., &c. This, in brief, was the substance of her remarks; and, as it will be seen, she had completely followed the history and traced the object of the inquiry. One point is very striking. She said the negroes spoke Spanish. I thought she was wrong in this respect; but I was reminded afterwards that Florida was originally a Spanish settlement, and it, therefore, made the description more complete than anything that was passing in my own mind.

Being strongly impressed with the singular accuracy of the clairvoyant's description, I went on the following morning to Lombard Street, and traced as nearly as I could the position she had described—the church with projecting clock on my right, and C——'s banking-house was opposite. I walked in. I made my inquiry respecting a chest of plate supposed to be left there some 40 or 50 years ago, &c. I was asked in what

name? I said H——. They requested me to call again. I did so, and was told that they had a chest of plate there in the name of H——, which had been with them 45 years; but they added, we know to whom it belongs, and do not think it can be the one you are seeking. I thanked them, and said I would make further inquiries from my correspondent. I immediately sought my friend, and told him, much to his astonishment, the whole story; but he asked me why I had used the name of H——. The owner of the property was named B——. H—— was the writer of the letter requesting the inquiry to be made. This dispelled the confidence I had felt in having traced the plate; for, notwithstanding the remark of the bankers, I made no doubt of its being the identical chest. Subsequent inquiry, however, proved that it was not so, as they had no such name as B—— in their books.

I give you the simple facts as they occurred. I wish I could have completed it by saying we had got the chest; but I think it is sufficiently corroborative of the clairvoyant power. The coincidence of my using a wrong name, and the tracing a box in that name, is curious and striking.

SIR CHARLES ISHAM ON SPIRITUALISM.

THE following letter from Sir Charles Isham appeared in the *London Critic* of November 15, 1855:—

Lampport Hall, Northampton, Nov. 4, 1854.

Sir,—Having during the past three or four years directed my attention to the phenomena of the supposed spiritual manifestations, and having during that period been a constant reader of the weekly journals and other works devoted to the subject which have issued from the American press, treating both sides of the question, I beg to offer a few remarks. And, first, may I be allowed to bear testimony to the good faith and honesty of Mrs. Hayden and Mr. Home, and to corroborate the facts recorded in the late numbers of your journal, as having also, with some variations, occurred in a house I lately occupied in London, and in the house of friends, not only during the attendance of the latter gentleman, in presence of myself and others, but on three several occasions, was a hand distinctly felt by three persons, each of them unbelievers, some hours after he had left the house.

I perfectly agree in the usual affirmation, that the fact of a table moving, or the appearance of a hand, should not at once be considered a *per se* demonstration of the presence or agency of departed spirits; but when the numerous phenomena, in their totally dissimilar and ever-increasing phases, are taken into consideration and duly weighed, the theory that it is entirely the result of the minds of the parties present or not present, will appear almost as inadequate to a rational solution of the matter as Mr. Anderson's foolish exhibition of a table. The action of embodied mind, voluntary or involuntary, is naturally the first suggestion of the philosopher, and this concession carries us unintentionally some distance towards the spirit theory; for if mind is allowed to be capable of moving matter independently of the bodily organs which were created for that special purpose, the affirmation that a departed spirit could not by any possibility exercise a similar power, loses considerable weight.

That the supposition of spiritual agency is subversive of preconceived notions, appears upon closer examination to be without foundation. We need only consider ourselves in possession of an additional fact, the manifestation of a law hitherto obscured through want of sufficient knowledge, and we are acquitted of the charge of having outraged the reasonable preconceived notions of any man. Those who rest on mundane causes for a solution, must, indeed, make fundamental concessions of preconceived ideas. They must prepare themselves, judging of present aspects, for disorganisation of the union of mind and body, which it is anything but satisfactory to contemplate; whereas those who recognise in the phenomena a foreshadowing of a more intimate connection between this world and the world of Spirits, however insignificant many of the evidences may hitherto have proved themselves, are in harmony not only with the spirit and promises of Holy Writ, but with the highest and most exalted aspiration of human nature. Those who have had opportunity of studying the beautiful introduction which has been prepared for it by the newly recognised faculty of mesmerism, may be led by imperceptible steps to the very verge of the portals of spiritualism. These persons behold an extension of the laws of nature; the others must rather recognise a threatened subversion. With the decision of those who say, "Spirits, or no Spirits, it is dangerous to meddle with it," I, in acknowledgement of the principle that misdirected power must engender

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evil consequences, fully concur; and would for that reason recommend all who are rightly disposed, to set a due value on this latent faculty with which we are endowed, and which, when guided by *wisdom*, must from its nature contain the germ of great and lasting benefit to the human race. To require a defined line of demarcation, by which we may unerringly distinguish the operations of a spirit in and out of the flesh, would be an unreasonable demand. The naturalist looks in vain for such boundaries in nature, and it is his great delight to trace the different kingdoms through their imperceptible gradations, and rejoice at the discovery of another and another, until they thoroughly blend, revealing to his mind additional evidence of unity of design in the creation; and that we should ever be mindful of this universal law when investigating spiritual matters, is the desire of—Yours, &c.

C. E. ISHAM.

Every man has a right to form, to cherish, and to express his own opinions, and if errors of the understanding are to be the subject of reproach and hostility, there is no man, however upright and talented, who can escape denunciation and proscription.

There is a great deal of cowardice these latter days. Men are afraid to give free and full utterance to the truth they feel rising up within them; rising, too, from the deep wellspring of intuition. Reader, speak your soul's great thought, even if hell gapes to devour you. Truth will make you free, if you only let it speak itself.

In some discussions, a wise man will be silenced by argumentation, only because he knows that the question should be determined by considerations which lie beyond the reach of argumentative exhibition. Indeed, in all but purely *scientific* questions, arguments are not to be submitted to by the judgment, as first in command; rather they are to be used by auxiliaries and pioneers. The judgment should profit by them to the extent of the services they can render; but after their work is done, it should come to its own free survey. I have seldom known a man with powers of argumentation abundantly indulged, who could attain to an habitually just judgment.—*Henry Taylor*.

POWER OF GENTLENESS.—No bad man is ever brought to repentance by angry words; by bitter and scornful reproaches. He fortifies himself against reproof, and hurls back foul charges in the face of his accuser. Yet guilty and hardened as he seems, he has a heart in his bosom and may be melted to tears by a gentle voice. Whoso, therefore, can restrain his disposition to blame and find fault, and can bring himself down to a fallen brother, will soon find a way to better feelings within. Pity and patience are the two keys which unlock the human heart. They who have been most successful labourers among the poor and vicious have been the most forbearing. Said the celebrated St. Vincent de Paul: "If it has pleased God to employ the most miserable of men for the conversion of some souls, they have themselves confessed that it was by the patience and sympathy which he had for them. Even the convicts, among whom I have lived, can be gained in no other way. When I have kissed their chains, and showed compassion for their distress, and keen sensibility for their disgrace, then have they given glory to God, and placed themselves in the way of salvation."—*New York Evangelist*.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION ON SPIRITUALISM.

LECTURE AT THE LONDON MECHANICS' INSTITUTION.

AN interesting public discussion on the subject of spirit manifestations took place on the 11th ultimo, at the London Mechanics' Institution. Such discussions are periodically held in connection with one of the classes of the institution; and on this occasion, the novelty and interest attaching to the subject for debate, attracted an unusually large audience.

The question submitted was—"Are 'spirit'-rapping, table-moving, and other similar phenomena attributable to preternatural agency?" The debate was opened by Mr. T. A. Reed, who, as will be seen by our report, maintained the affirmative of the proposition.

The chair was taken at half-past eight o'clock, by Mr. Beachim, who said—

Ladies and Gentlemen—It is generally considered to be a great recommendation in a subject for discussion, that it should give scope for considerable difference of opinion and variety of view; and I imagine that the subject which is to engage your attention this evening peculiarly possesses this quality. Upon the question as to the causes to which spirit-rapping, table-moving, and similar phenomena are attributable, there certainly prevails a great deal of difference of opinion, and many explanations have been offered. Medical gentlemen have come forward with one opinion, men of science have come forward with another, and perhaps a professor of legerdemain has come forward with a third. Some people seem to regard it as a question of theology, and others resolve it into a mere trick of conjuring; and it now appears likely to afford a good subject for debate. It is not my province to do more than announce the subject, and the conditions of debate. The discussion is open to all persons present; when Mr. Reed, who

is to introduce the subject, concludes, it will be competent to any gentleman present to express his views, and, if necessary, to propose an amendment to the resolution that Mr. Reed moves. Mr. Reed will be allowed half an hour in the expression of his views, and any subsequent orator will be allowed a quarter of an hour; eventually Mr. Reed will be allowed a quarter of an hour for his reply.

Mr. REED then addressed the meeting as follows:—Mr. Chairman, ladies, and gentlemen—The remarkable phenomena of action and reaction have long been observed, not only in the mental and bodily constitution of man, but in society at large. It is in reference to the latter that I desire to refer to it for a moment, by way of introducing the present discussion. It has been often remarked that the habits, customs, and opinions of one age have been thoroughly uprooted by men of the succeeding generation. Increasing light has exhibited to view the follies and errors of the past; but, in renouncing these, men have too often overlooked the truth that may have been mixed with the false, and the good that may have been present with the evil; thus the wheat and the tares have been alike rejected, and society has not had the full benefit of advancing knowledge. (Hear, hear.) Instances of this kind of reaction are too familiar to you all to require any specific mention from me. I will only refer to its manifestation in regard to the question to which our discussion this evening has reference—I mean the possibility of an intercommunication between the inhabitants of the spirit world and ourselves. Our grandfathers and great-grandfathers religiously believed in the possibility of such a communication: they peopled the air with ghosts and hobgoblins, sprites, fairies, and demons of all sorts, sizes, shapes, and vocations. Any tale of *diablerie* gained with them a ready credence; and the commonest calamities of life they attributed to witchcraft, which, as you know, was visited with the highest penalties of the law. With the advance of intelligence many of the absurdities of the past were exploded; but while men denounced the persecution of the witches

and could not help seeing the exaggerations and perversions then so rife in the matter of supernatural agency, they ran just into the extreme which we might expect, denying the exercise of any spiritual influence on the affairs of men, and contending stoutly for a physical explanation of all the phenomena on which an opposite opinion might be founded. Thus the present age has become essentially materialistic. Men of education now curl the lip at the bare mention of spiritual manifestations, which they class with the adventures of "Jack the Giant Killer," or those astounding performances of "Old Bogie," which were the terror of our younger days—(laughter)—applying the most uncomplimentary epithets to those of us who, not alarmed by the ugly ghost of "superstition" which they have invoked only to exorcise, venture to dispute their theory, and question the soundness of their judgment. Hence, I feel that I am taking an unpopular view of this agitated question, and shall be in no way surprised if I am set down as an ignoramus for my pains. I shall rely, however, upon your good sense and courtesy to afford me an opportunity of freely stating my views and some of the reasons which lead me to entertain them. (Applause.) Let me now state that in this discussion I shall take for granted the existence of a spiritual world, inhabited by rational beings. Notwithstanding the tendency of the age to which I have been alluding, I believe the existence of that world is not generally denied; and if I were to leave that question open, there would be a difficulty in limiting the debate to a conveniently narrow point. Now, what are the facts connected with these spiritual manifestations? I am persuaded that in England they are not generally known, or we should not hear such strange opinions expressed respecting them. I shall first allude to the phenomena recognised as table-moving and rapping. Within the last few years it has been observed, that if a few persons form a circle round a table, placing their hands lightly upon it, the table will move sometimes in one way and sometimes in another, swaying backwards and forwards, turning round rapidly or slowly, "tipping" with one or other of its legs, and, in fact, going through a series of *gyrations* and gymnastics perfectly astounding

to behold. I have seen a table of my own rotate rapidly under such circumstances. On one occasion I invited a few friends to my house for the purpose of forming a "circle." We sat down, six or seven in number, round a circular table in the manner I have described, and after patiently waiting for about an hour, the manifestations commenced. The table turned at first slowly, then more rapidly, until at length we had some difficulty in following it. Our hands were resting gently on the edge of the table, and we directed our attention frequently to the fact that we made no absolute pressure. In addition to the rotatory movement, the table gradually moved from one end of the room to the other, and then back again several times. I requested a lady present to play a tune on the piano, which she did, when the table began to "tip" backwards and forwards, keeping exact time to the tune. Several other tunes were then played in succession, and the movements of the table were always promptly changed as required in order to keep time. Several heavy articles were placed on the table, which it was requested to remove; and invariably the request was complied with by the table inclining forward on two of its three legs, so that the top was slanting in such a way that the articles could no longer remain on. Money was placed on the table, and, at request, it was made to jump up and down by rapid jerking movements of the obedient piece of furniture. A gentleman was present, not forming one of the circle, but simply a spectator, whose christian name was known to no one in the room but himself. I accordingly asked him to repeat several names, including his own, and requested the table to "tip" at the right one. The gentleman, who, I should say, was decidedly sceptical, then repeated several names slowly, and at the mention of his own, the table tipped, as directed thus giving the "circle" an item of information which not one of them before possessed. I then asked a gentleman present to put all the money he had in his pocket on the table, and which he did. The pieces were placed in the centre in such a manner that no one could possibly count them as they were, and the gentleman himself (also a little sceptical) said he did not know the number of pieces. We then asked the table to intimate that number to us. We all

carefully counted, and the table tipped sixteen times; and, on examining the money, it was found to consist exactly of sixteen pieces. (Applause.) Some other questions were also correctly answered—the truth of the answers (I call your special attention to this) having to be ascertained *after* they had been given. These and other similar facts, which I might relate if I had time, I have seen with my own eyes, and they have taken place, not in the presence of any medium, but amongst my own relations and intimate friends. (Hear, hear.) Let me now mention to you two or three other manifestations which have been witnessed and related by other people; for unless we have these facts pretty clearly before us, it will be impossible to come to any conclusion as to the cause by which they are produced. The following is related by an eminent physician in London, with whom I have the pleasure to be personally acquainted, and of whose integrity, intellectual capacity, and power of observation no one ever entertained a doubt. [Mr. Reed here read several extracts from a letter which we insert entire elsewhere, and to which our readers are referred. See p. 4.] Another fact I find related in a journal devoted to the subject of spiritualism which has lately been put into my hands; and I quote it, not because of its novelty, but because it is only a relation of a class of manifestations to which many thousands of intelligent and upright persons have testified:—

“A gentleman residing at the west part of the city, of the fullest reliability, informs us that, a few evenings since, receiving an unexpected call from two lady mediums, he drew out a table in his own parlour, for the purpose of sitting for spirit-manifestations, when, lo! as he let go of the table, it went back to its former position against the wall without visible agency! Then the empty chairs about the room commenced a general frolic, advancing and retreating, upsetting and exhibiting a variety of pranks unusual in these staid pieces of furniture. The table was afterwards placed in the centre of the floor, when it was lifted, the hands of the company being *upon* it, as high as they could reach while standing, and lowered gently to the floor. After a variety of other singular performances, as the ladies were about leaving, a mat by the door was suddenly rolled up at one end, without

human agency; and on being unrolled rolled up again from the opposite end. A hat was thrown from the table, when no person was near, and when it was replaced another hat from the other end of the table was thrown down. On both being replaced the table-cover seemed to be seized by an invisible hand, and all its contents were drawn off and thrown upon the floor. The door bell was ringing very violently, and on opening the door, no one was there. While they were standing upon the steps, so that no one could approach the bell-knob, it was pulled several times more without visible agency.” (Much laughter.)

My next quotations shall be from a work recently published by Dr. Hare, a well known American Professor, on Spirit Manifestations scientifically demonstrated. These quotations I take almost at random, and you must receive them as samples of hundreds of others which I might read had I time; all of them relations of facts of a similar kind by persons of the highest integrity and respectability:—

“At a request, the table commenced its motion, with moderate speed, occasionally halting, and then gliding on a foot or two at once. It seemed as if its motion would have been continuous, if the hands above it had followed along *pari passu*. On reaching the folding-doors dividing off the two parlours, and which were open, it rose over an iron rod on which the door-trucks traversed, and which projected half or three-quarters of an inch above the level of the carpet. It then entered the other parlour, and went its whole length until it came near the pier glass at its end—a centre-table having been pushed aside by one of the party to allow its free course. At request, for they during this time spoke as if to actual beings, the motion was reversed, and it returned until it again reached the iron rod. Here it stuck. The table hove, creaked, and struggled, but all in vain; it could not surmount the obstacle. The medium was then ‘impressed by the spirits’ to write, and seizing a pencil, hastily wrote, that if the fore legs were lifted over the bar, they (*i.e.* the spirits) thought they could push the others over. This was done, and the motion kept on. Once or twice Dr. Bell requested all to withdraw a little farther from the table, ‘to see how far the in-

fluence would extend.' It was found that whenever a much greater distance, say two feet, was reached, the movement ceased and a delay of three or four minutes occurred before it recommenced, giving the idea that, if broken off, a certain reaccumulation of force was needful to put it in motion again. The table reached the upper end of the parlour, from which it had started, but was left some four feet from the medial line of the room. Dr. Bell expressed the thanks of the company for the very complete exhibition with which they had been favoured, but remarked that the obligation would be enhanced if the 'spirits' would move the table about four feet at right angles, so that the chairs would come right for their late occupants. This was immediately done, and the performance was deemed so perfectly full and satisfactory that nothing more was asked at this session."—(Laughter and applause.)

Elsewhere Dr. Hare quotes the following from the pen of a French philosopher, M. Agenor de Gasparin, in the *Gazette de France* :—

"I will not insist on this point. The phenomenon of rotation, if alone, would not appear to me entirely satisfactory. I am mistrustful, though not an academian, and I admit that it may be possible (at a pinch) that a mechanical impulsion might be communicated. But the rotation only serves to *present* other phenomena, the explanation of which it is impossible to refer to any kind of muscular action. Each of us in his turn gave orders to the table, which it promptly obeyed; and I should succeed with difficulty in explaining to you the strange character of these movements, of blows struck with an exactness, with a solemnity, that fairly *frightened us*. 'Strike three blows; strike ten blows. Strike with your left foot; with your right foot; with your middle foot. Rise on two of your feet; on only one foot; remain up; prevent those on the side raised from returning the table to the floor.' After each command the table obeyed. It produced movements that no complicity, involuntary or voluntary, could have induced; *for we should afterwards have tried in vain to place it on one foot, and keep it there by the pressure of the hands, resisting incontestably the efforts to press it down*. Each one of us gave orders with equal

success. Children were obeyed as well as grown persons."

The following, from the same work, is an account of an incident that occurred at a *séance* described by Dr. W. Geib, who was a disbeliever in spiritual manifestations :—

"Hearing much of physical demonstrations, but having witnessed only the concussions, vulgarly called the raps, the question was put to my friend, the gentleman already referred to, if a demonstration could be had to gratify my curiosity, and strengthen my assurance, when the following dialogue occurred :—'Will the spirits be so obliging as to make a physical demonstration?' Answered by three raps on the table, which were responded to by an affirmative expression from the whole circle. My seat was at the side of the medium, a married lady of considerably more than ordinary weight. *Ques.* Will the spirits move Mrs. D. in her chair?—*Ans.* Yes. As this demonstration was intended for my special benefit, and our invisible friends were fully committed for its performance, my attention was riveted on the lady who was to be the subject of it. 'Madam, will you please put your feet on the spar of the chair?' This being fully accomplished, 'and your hands in your lap,' was added. As her hands dropped, *the lady left my side*, passed about two feet backward, and immediately returned to her former position at the table."

Among the most remarkable of these phenomena are what are called alphabetic communications. These are given by calling over the alphabet slowly, or pointing to the letters in succession on a slip of paper. At a certain letter there comes a "rap" or a "tip." That letter is then written down: the alphabet is again repeated, and another letter is indicated. In this way entire sentences are produced. I have myself seen these manifestations, and am perfectly convinced of their genuineness. Only two or three days ago I had a circle at my own house, consisting of myself and a few intimate friends (some of whom I see present) and members of my own family. After sitting for some time, and almost despairing of any result, the table tipped five times (which is the usual call for the alphabet), and on the alphabet being repeated in the way I have described, we had the follow-

ing communication:—"Do not trouble those who would rest." We then had some other, what appeared to us rather surly, answers, as though we were considered troublesome; and, to be candid, I ought to tell you that the spirit, supposing it to be one, was disobliging enough to say that it did not approve of my appearing before you as I do this evening. (Laughter.) On asking the name of the spirit, we were informed (by the alphabet) that it was *Monad*. This certainly took us all by surprise; and if it was not a joke on the part of the spirit at our expense, monads are endowed with properties that Leibnitz never dreamed of. (Hear.) Among the facts which I find narrated in connection with manifestations are—the playing of music by invisible agency, the writing of foreign languages by ignorant persons under supposed preternatural influence, the ringing of bells, the appearance of hands, arms, and other parts of the body, and their sudden dissipation, and a thousand other similar phenomena, which I cannot now specify. Some of these are graphically related by the physician from whose letter I have already quoted, and with whom I am well acquainted. [Here Mr. Reed read a paragraph from page 8, beginning with 'These phenomena, &c.']. One other extract, and I have done." It is from a letter written by Judge Edmonds, of America, whose character, as an able lawyer and an upright judge, Lord Brougham has expressed a very high opinion.

"Intelligence was a remarkable feature of the phenomenon. Thus, I have frequently known mental questions answered—that is, questions merely framed in the mind of the interrogator, and not revealed by him or known to others. Preparatory to meeting a circle, I have sat down alone in my room, and carefully prepared a series of questions to be propounded; and I have been surprised to find my questions answered, and in the precise order in which I wrote them, without my even taking my memorandum out of my pocket, and when I knew that no person present knew that I had prepared questions, much less what they were. My most secret thoughts—those which I never uttered to mortal man or woman—have been freely spoken, as if I had uttered them. I have known Latin, French, and Spanish words spelled out through the

rappings; and I have heard mediums, who knew no language but their own, speak in those languages, and in Italian, German, and Greek, and in other languages unknown to me, but which were represented to be Arabic, Chinese, and Indian, and all done with the ease and rapidity of a native. I have seen a person who knew nothing of music, except a little that he had learned at a country singing-school, go to the piano and play in perfect keeping, as to time and concord, the several parts of an overture to an opera. When I was absent last winter, in Central America, my friends in town heard of my whereabouts, and of the state of my health, seven times; and, on my return, by comparing their information with the entries in my journal, it was found to be invariably correct. I went into the investigation, originally thinking it a decept on, and intending to make public my exposure of it. Having, from my researches, come to a different conclusion, I feel that the obligation to make known the result is just as strong. Therefore it is, mainly, that I give the result to the world.—J. W. Edmonds."

Now, what are explanations of the facts? First, we are often told that the whole thing is a fraud, or a delusion; that the narrators have been imposed upon, or are wilfully misleading the public. Now sir, I do not think I belong to the *genus irritabile*; but I must confess that this explanation almost puts me out of temper. When I remember that in America there are as many as thirty thousand media, and three millions of believers in spiritual manifestations, many of them persons of the highest position in society, and whose integrity has never been questioned—when I remember that in this country thousands of persons have witnessed and related these things—when I remember that this theory supposes that fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters, the nearest and dearest friends and relations, little children of six or eight years old, have been, and are engaged in a senseless, wicked, wide-spread plot to deceive each other, and that without the least assignable motive—when I remember the fearful skill which this supposition places in the hands of the deceivers, or the outrageous ignorance and stupidity which it imputes to the

deceived, I own the explanation, if it deserves the name, is to my mind perfectly monstrous. Further, when I recollect that the most rigid tests have been applied by men of intelligence, who have at length yielded their almost unwilling testimony to the genuineness of the phenomena, and remembering the many manifestations which I have myself seen under circumstances which utterly exclude the idea of collusion, I confess, if I could bring myself so far to disbelieve my own senses, and to discredit the testimony of my neighbours, I should at present be in very grave doubts as to whether I am really addressing you this evening, and whether the war of England and France with Russia is not a gigantic delusion—a figment of men's imagination. (Hear, hear.) The next theory that men fly to, is unconscious muscular action. This seems at first a little more reasonable; but, supposing it to account for *table-turning*, what becomes of the raps? What muscular action, voluntary or involuntary, could make a table rise, and remain suspended in mid-air? How will this account for intelligent answers—answers frequently unexpected by the circle? My own table has moved in a contrary direction to that desired by all the persons touching it, and clearly, therefore, *against* any unconscious muscular force which may have been exercised. (Hear, hear.) But what shall we say of magnetism, of the Od force, and a variety of other subtile fluids, which have been called in to aid us in our researches in this matter? Why, sir, like the muscular action theory, they do not account for a hundredth part of the phenomena; so that, supposing them to apply to a few of the very simplest forms of manifestation, they cannot help us out of our difficulty. The great feature which is yet unexplained is that of *intelligence*, and intelligence is inseparably connected with humanity. I see no other conclusion, therefore, to which I can arrive, which will satisfactorily explain the facts of the case, than that they owe their origin to the action of spiritual beings—beings who, having left this world, are still bound to it by ties which we cannot fully understand, but which, as we see, enable them to hold communion with those whom they have left behind. I admit freely that most of

these manifestations are of a comparatively low order, and are not to be compared with the trances and other spiritual communications, which my time does not permit me more fully to explain. I see my time has expired, and I will only say a word or two as to the character of spirits through whom these communications are made. Some of them are clearly not of a high order; the communications which they make containing nothing but unmeaning sentimentalities, and silly platitudes, which might have emanated from some spiritual boarding-school for young ladies. Some are positively bad, and convey doctrines and principles of a most mischievous character; others appear to be of a high order, and some of their communications, as delivered in the trance state, have a most beneficial and elevating tendency. Persons have erred in thinking that spiritual communications, though genuine, must necessarily be true. In these, as in all other matters, we must exercise our own judgments and “try the spirits,” according to apostolic direction. I have said thus much simply by way of caution to those who, from want of thought, might be inclined to resign blindly their reason and intellect to beings who, because they have become spiritual, are erroneously supposed to be infallible. I have now only to conclude, by moving the following resolution:—“That the phenomena commonly known as spirit-rapping, table-moving, and the like, may be, and often are, produced by preternatural agency.” (Applause.)

Mr. HENKEN said it had been remarked by certain sages, that scepticism with respect to wonders was wisdom and advantage; and with respect to many of the wonders which had been presented during our short existence, this would appear to be true. That it was wise nobody would doubt, inasmuch as it was calculated to drive those who advocated and circulated such wonders to give good evidence, or to produce all the evidence they possibly could, in favour of their particular notions, or of what they wished people to believe. And there was also an advantage in this course; because, while we doubted these things, we were safe. Witness the idiotic throng, ready to believe everything! Gentlemen from the far West had but to assert a thing, men of supposed character had but to say

that such a thing took place, and the credulous snapped at it in an instant; increasing light, however, caused such individuals almost invariably to become incredulous to inconsistency. (Applause.) Spirit-rapping and table-moving had certainly created a wonderful sensation, and he had been highly amused by the facts which had been brought forward. (A laugh.) But he did not admit those facts—(applause)—and he would tell them why: because they were pre-eminently extravagant, contrary to what we understood by natural laws, and were not supported by names and characters sufficient to enable him to rely upon them. What was it to him that certain individuals, bearing certain names, and possessing certain reputations, stated certain things, if those things were contrary to what he experienced in every-day life? He must of necessity suppose that they were egregiously mistaken, or else were cheats; because he had no means of judging of the truthfulness of an assertion but as he found it in accordance with the facts and circumstances with which he had been familiar from his infancy, and which he had been taught by those with whom he was associated. Otherwise a man might state the most absurd and ridiculous things in the world, and we should be compelled to believe it, or at any rate supposed to believe it, because the individual who stated it was a man of character, or was believed to be a man of character by other persons. Spiritual manifestations were not proved; and they were contrary to our daily experience. However earnestly we might wish to have communications with departed friends, we had no opportunities of doing so; but a few individuals, enthusiastic even to madness, he had almost said—(oh! oh! and applause)—had brought themselves to believe that they had been put into communication with unseen spirits, and the world was called upon to *believe them*. He thought he might with reason say that he doubted the “facts” which had been narrated; he considered that they were exaggerations; but looking at them as they were presented, were ever such ridiculous things seen! He could hardly sit without laughing while they were being mentioned. When the young lady’s hand was said to have been seen tapping the forehead of the young man,

he thought that even the gentleman who introduced the subject would blush, but he did not; and when it came to the finely proportioned arm, that arm was certainly so very material that he began to question the propriety of sitting in the theatre at all. (A laugh.) Again: so paltry and contemptible were the little things the spirits had done, according to these “facts,” unsupported by evidence, that he really began to be ashamed of the spirits themselves. If this world was governed by a Divine Providence, did it not reflect upon such a Providence that spirits, possessing intelligence, and being brought into communication with intelligent beings, should be found idling and wasting and fooling their time away about such trivialities, when they ought to be either singing praises to their Creator, or suffering that which they deserved? (Hisses and applause.) He would ask, also, whether the media derived any pecuniary advantage from those who applied to them! He would not say that, if it was so, it might be used as an argument for the falsehood of these notions; but it should certainly be looked at as one of the facts of the case, when such extraordinary things were presented for our notice and belief. It had been stated that we could not explain how these things were done; but if we were bound to explain everything we did not believe, we should have enough to do to explain every absurdity that was presented to us. It was quite enough to attend to ordinary matters without attempting to explain extraordinary. The burden of proof lay upon the individuals who advocated them; and they should prove them so distinctly that there should not be an individual able to doubt. They were bound in honour, without being paid, to prove it; and mankind in general were not disposed to disbelieve the truth, although they disbelieved that which had not sufficient evidence. Admitting, however, that some of the facts were true, the gentleman said we could not explain them; but at the same time he said, some of them might be accounted for by occult action of the brain, and by something which has to do with the calves of the legs, or something of that sort. [Mr. REED— I did not say so.] Professor Faraday said something about muscular action; and Mr. Reed admitted that some of the facts might be

explained in this way. He (Mr. Henkin) supposed that we should only have to wait a little longer, and we should be able to account for the whole of them. Something had been said about the respectability of the individuals who brought these things forward; but they remembered the time when thousands of persons were seen gazing upon a winking virgin. That remarkable phenomenon was explained to have arisen from the trickery of certain individuals, learned, it might be, but artful and selfish, who were accomplishing their purpose; but thousands who beheld the image, wrapped in devotion, as they saw the wink, believed it; and was it to be supposed that, amidst that crowd, there were not individuals of respectability and intelligence? They were learned in many respects; but they had that unfortunate state of mind, a too ready faith—a faith ready to believe anything and everything. Certain persons had presented the wonder to them, and as they could not explain the “facts,” they felt that of necessity they must believe it. That affair had been entirely exploded; and he would not flatter the ladies and gentlemen now present, but he would entreat them, as intelligent beings, not to be prepared to debate themselves by supposing for a moment that the phenomena which had been brought before them to-night would not be explained. Thousands of things had been presented to them by their fathers, which men had not understood at the time, but which increasing light had revealed to be merely the effects of natural causes. There was no such thing as these preternatural or supernatural manifestations. The Creator worked through means and laws, and proper laws. He (Mr. Henkin) concluded by again entreating the meeting not to believe the statements which had been brought forward. There were some points in them we could not explain. Science was explaining them; the gentleman said so. Science would explain the rest. Let them wait, then; but let there be no blind belief. (Loud applause.)

A gentleman who did not give his name said,—The gentleman who had just spoken confessed that he was not acquainted with the subject. He (the speaker) was a little acquainted with it, having sat at fifty or sixty circles; and he must say that he had not yet come to such definite conclu-

sions. He was an investigator of the subject; he could not explain the phenomena; he was waiting, as the preceding speaker advised, for an explanation, and he hoped the explanation would come; but he should be very sorry indeed to accuse any of the media he had seen of imposture. (Hear, hear.) He was personally acquainted with several media, and he considered them amongst the *élite* of his acquaintance. The manifestations were certainly exceedingly teasing and perplexing to the understanding; it was evident to all who were acquainted with them, that it was almost impossible to coax them. They tried the patience very severely. (A laugh.) Last Wednesday evening he was at a *séance*, where there was rapping, and also table-tipping. He preferred the table-rapping, because it was more demonstrative; the table-tipping being of a more suspicious character. The persons present wanted the raps on the table; but they had them on the floor, in answer to all the questions. He entreated them frequently to rap on the table; they always promised to do so, but they did not fulfil their promise, and he had generally found that it was very difficult to keep them to their word on all occasions. He had heard tunes beat on the table, and all the possible modifications of sound, on wood and also on the wainscot, and that too in such a mysterious way that it was quite impossible for him to explain them upon any supposition of imposture. On one occasion, when he visited Mrs. Haydon, he asked if his sister Elizabeth was present. There was an exceedingly feeble and delicate sound, like the fluttering of a butterfly's wing on the table. It was exceedingly beautiful. Mrs. Haydon did not know the reason for this delicate sound; but the reason was, that his sister, whom he had never seen, died when she was a baby, two or three weeks old; and this delicate sound was expressive of the infantile nature of the spirit, when it left this world. This occurred three years ago. On the evening before last he asked of another medium, who never saw Mrs. Haydon in her life, whether his sister Elizabeth was present; and the same little fluttering sound on the table was heard. He did not ask the meeting to believe it; he did not want to persuade them to believe anything they had not seen or heard; they might believe it or not as they

pleased; he stood there in defence of his own belief—not in defence of theirs, or of any other persons'. (Applause.) He had come to the conclusion that there was something in these manifestations beyond imposture, because as a reasonable man, he saw no other logical conclusion practicable; and he should consider himself an unreasonable being, if he had not come to that conclusion. They might say they were caused by the Odic force, or the Odyllic force, as many did; he knew nothing about that force; he never saw the Odic light, or the Od, as it was called. He could not explain the rapping phenomena but on the supposition that there was some intelligent power speaking to him by the table. For some time the table was tipping, in the circle already alluded to; but a lady in the circle, whom he had known for twenty years, was suspicious, because the table always tipped towards the medium; and she inwardly said, as she told him afterwards, "I wish this table would move towards me, for the medium seems to be moving it herself." The table immediately moved on her side, and answered twelve inward questions to her. It then came round to him, and nudged him on the side. He asked the medium the meaning of this. She said to him, "The table wants to speak to you;" but she said, at the same time, "Inquire inwardly, I do not want to hear your questions," and she proceeded to talk with the friends around her. He spoke inwardly to the table, and put three distinct questions, and the table answered him from his inward thoughts in such a manner that he went home with very sad reflections, because one was a rather disagreeable as well as remarkable answer. These were some of the facts he had observed, and they were reasons for his faith in the manifestations, as something superhuman. He would not call them preternatural, nor supernatural because he believed it was philosophically incorrect. If he called them preternatural, he would be saying that they were beyond nature; and he did not believe that anything was beyond nature. If he called them supernatural, he would be saying that they were above nature; and he was inclined to think that everything was in nature, and that there was nothing above it. God himself was in nature and not above it. St. Paul

said that he was in all, and through all, and that by him all things consist. He was rather disposed to call them preterhuman. They were beyond our sphere, and were caused by some power that we were not acquainted with, and over which we had no control. He could relate numerous facts and narratives relative to these manifestations; he received two papers every week from the United States, the *Spiritual Telegraph*, of New York, and the *New England Spiritualist*, of Boston; and he could say, notwithstanding what was asserted of the movement by its enemies, that it was now in a more flourishing state than ever it was. He went last night to Covent Garden Theatre, and heard the Wizard of the North boasting, as usual, respecting the great feats he had performed in America, and the extinction of spiritualism by him in 1853. At the same time, however, he said, he (the Wizard) was rather too late in going there, because there had been 7,500 lunatics, and 360 suicides sacrificed to the monster Spiritualism. But all that was done away with now, of course, because he extinguished it in 1853! Therefore, he (the speaker) calculated, guessed, and reckoned on the spot, that for the last three years there must have been no lunacy and no suicides, occasioned by spiritualism, in the United States! The Professor was not willing, certainly, to acknowledge that conclusion; but it was a legitimate, logical conclusion, from his statements. Now he (the speaker) read this very week, in the *Spiritual Telegraph*, an explanation of these 7,500 lunatics. It was a very curious fact, illustrative of the inaccuracy of the greater part of inimical reports respecting any cause. Party spirit was always one-sided, and always uncharitable. The matter was explained in a letter of Mr. Charles Partridge, of the firm of Partridge and Brittan, booksellers and printers, 300, Broadway, New York. (A paper was handed to the speaker saying his time had expired.) In a paragraph of the *New York Herald*, in the year 1853, it was stated that 75 spiritual lunatics—the persons made lunatics by spiritual manifestations—were confined within the Blackwell Island Lunatic Asylum. Mr. Partridge, immediately on reading that paragraph, rode down to Blackwell Island Asylum, in order to see whether

the report was correct, and he was told that it was not true, and that the physician had just written a letter to the editor of the *New York Herald*, to contradict it. Professor Anderson was at that time in New York, in Metropolitan Hall, performing his magical operations, and also exposing spiritualism, with his rapping table. He took up this report in the newspaper, added a cypher to the 75, and called it 750 lunatics, and mentioned about 17 suicides, which nobody had ever heard of before. It astounded all those who heard it; of course, they discredited it, and they hissed him. Last night, he (the speaker) heard him say, that it was 7,500 lunatics and 360 suicides! This was an explanation of the manner in which such false reports were got up. Therefore, if there was falsehood and imposture on the one side, there certainly was falsehood on the other; and it was well for all rational people just to put the balance in adjustment, and not try to keep one side of the scale always empty, and the other full. They should not prejudice the matter, but wait, as the preceding gentleman had said, but not without a liberal and inquiring spirit, until the matter explained itself, or until such minds as might be appointed by heaven to explain these wonderful phenomena should appear, and set the question at rest. (Applause.) (The speaker was prevented, from want of time, from giving the intended conclusion to his speech.)

Another gentleman present moved the following amendment to the resolution:— "That spirit-rapping, table-moving, and similar phenomena, are not attributable to preternatural agency." Mr. Reed had cast censure on our grandmothers and grandfathers for believing in ghosts and hob-goblins; but he really thought the people of the present day, who believed in such things as table-moving and spirit-rapping, were much more to be censured. He did not believe that the spiritual world exercised any influence over the natural world; but that all these influences were produced by natural laws. The extracts which had been read were not of much importance, because books could be written to prove anything; and with regard to the "facts" which had been brought before them, he should say that they were exaggerations. He did

not mean to say that they were altogether false; but although they might not have been written with the intention to deceive people, there had been, in a great many instances, a mental delusion, similar to that of Martin Luther, when he thought so long about the devil, that he fancied the devil came in and took up his ink-bottle to throw at him. (Applause.) He should like to ask how a spiritual being could have a material hand. He thought the person who tried to prove that tried to prove too much. Our ignorance of the causes that produced these things was attributable to a want of knowledge. (Much laughter.) He believed that in some future times these causes would be found out. We had only just to look at the knowledge we possessed now, and at what was possessed by our grandfathers and grandmothers, and we might hope that in our own time much more might be explained. The fact was, Professor Anderson had exploded the matter. (Laughter.)

Mr. DEBENHAM said he should not have offered any remarks on the subject, if no one had spoken in defence of Professor Anderson. He could not understand how any reasonable man could defend him, for he professed to be an impostor. All his pretended enthusiasm about spirit-rapping was merely got up to tickle the public ear. Anybody who noticed his attitude, his manner, upon the stage, could tell it was all "a flam." They might know what Professor Anderson was by his bills, about "the sea-green bonnet," "the two hundred tall young ladies," and the like. It had been said, "Why should we be too credulous?" It might be said, with equal force, "Why should we be too incredulous?" It was not necessary to cite instances from history to show how scientific discoveries, which had been pooh-poohed and laughed at at first, had been ultimately believed. The public excitement against spirit-rapping was sufficient evidence of the prevailing scepticism. Ignorant people would a great deal rather say a thing was all nonsense than take the trouble to look into it. He had witnessed extraordinary manifestations of spirit-rapping and table-turning, although not such strange things as had been related by Mr. Reed. With regard to the designation, he thought that preterphysical, or pretermaterial, or preter-

mechanical would be the most expressive ; and he felt convinced that a motion couched in such moderate terms must meet the approbation of many thinking persons.

Mr. WALLINGTON said he was very much pleased with the moderate manner in which Mr. Reed had brought the question forward. He had seen a little spirit-rapping, or something of the kind ; but he was sorry to say that he had not seen it satisfactorily. He went to see an American medium, who happened to be close by him, and was received very courteously, without being required to pay for his visit. He either did, or thought he did, discover at first how the effect was produced ; but being an enquirer after truth, he thought it advisable to say nothing about it. Whether the parties were guilty of knowingly tipping the table, or whether it was done by involuntary muscular action, he was not prepared to say ; but that it *was* done by muscular action, he was perfectly satisfied. The medium always took care, he observed, to sit on the side of the table at which the support projected the least from the centre. On another occasion, he visited a writing medium four or five times, and he must say there were some very extraordinary questions answered, which it would almost puzzle a philosopher to answer ; but he conceived that the answers might have been produced by what was called an abstract state, on the part of the medium. He asked several questions that would admit of various answers ; and each answer seemed to be perfectly satisfactory. On another occasion, he was lying on a couch, and was able to see how the table was rapped, though he could not tell how the answers were given. This certainly did not prove the falsehood of the general principle ; but he must say that part of the exhibition which he had been fortunate enough to see, had certainly gone the wrong way to prove its truth. He should be very happy if any lady or gentleman could demonstrate to him something that was more satisfactory. He wanted truth, and he was perfectly willing to wait for it. He had been waiting a long time for truth ; he had got a little of it, and what he had got he intended to hold fast. He considered that most of what had been narrated, might be brought about by

persons anxiously expecting the manifestation, and fully believing that it would come. If they were sitting an hour, as Mr. Reed had mentioned, perhaps the majority of them would get into a state of psychology, and the very slightest thing would make an impression upon them. The least movement of the table would be sufficient to make them say it was going, and the very saying it was going would make it go. He (Mr. Wallington) should be glad to know Mr. Reed's opinion of Professor Faraday's apparatus.

Mr. RAYNER moved an amendment to the effect that the phenomena which had been attributed to spiritual influence were too frivolous to have been produced by beings who had passed into another state of existence. He said, the corporeal arm had settled him. He should like Mr. Reed to say how spirits could really have an arm of flesh and blood.

Mr. JEARY asked if there would be any objection to prolong the discussion for half an hour? He had attended a very extraordinary meeting, and he should like to give some account of it.

[Several other gentlemen were also anxious to narrate the particulars of spirit manifestations of which they had been witnesses.]

The CHAIRMAN said he should have no objection, so far as he was concerned personally ; but it was necessary to act in accordance with the rules of the class, which required the reply of the gentleman who introduced the subject at a quarter past ten.

Mr. REED—I regret, Mr. Chairman, that a little more time has not been allowed for discussion, because I know there are gentlemen present who have witnessed these manifestations, and who would have gladly related them. We must, of course, abide by your decision, though I should have been glad to have been fortified by additional facts and arguments, which, I think, would have been brought forward. Now, sir, in briefly replying to the observations which have been made, I say most distinctly that the facts I related in my opening have not been in the least degree met. They have been called "frivolous," it is true ; but does that disprove them? Frivolous! A fact is a fact. All our opinions are founded on

facts; and any fact, however trifling it may seem, whether it be the appearance of an arm, the tipping of a table, or the winking of an eye, ought to be taken rationally into consideration, and not called "frivolous." The first speaker was Mr. Henken; and I have been trying to bring to a point the drift of that gentleman's argument, which appears to me to be this: these manifestations are contrary to Mr. Henken's experience, and therefore the whole thing is a delusion. (Laughter.) He calls them pre-eminently extravagant. Well, does that account for them? I say, what he says is pre-eminently extravagant; and now we are on a par in that matter. First, he seems to say that names are of little value in this question, and then he wants more names and more facts. Why, would he have me read to you the whole book from which I quoted, and keep you here till to-morrow morning? Yet, in no other way could I have done what he desires. I narrated what I have seen myself, and brought forward a few other facts, stated on good authority, merely as samples out of a perfect mass of undeniable evidence collected on this matter. The truth is, Mr. Henken is so dead-set against the facts, that he seems determined not to believe them on any amount of testimony, or, at any rate, not to allow them to influence his opinions. He reminded me of what I have heard of a Frenchman, who was somewhat dogmatically laying down a theory, when some one said, "But facts are against you." "So much the worse for the facts then," said the Frenchman. (Laughter.) I am not surprised, however, at the attempts which have been made to discredit these phenomena, and I only take them as furnishing additional proof of the materialistic tendencies of the age. But I am told that these things are a reflection on Providence. Whatever they are, they are facts, and it is of no use calling them ugly names. All facts are either permitted or ordained by Providence; how, therefore, any fact can be considered as arraigning the Divine Providence, which permits or ordains it, I leave Mr. Henken to tell you. I am told that these things are attended with a waste of time. That is a question foreign to the debate, which only concerns the origin of the manifestations. But if it is a waste of time, why

cry out for "more facts," which could only be obtained by a greater waste of time? It is idle to talk thus. If men are led by means of these manifestations (as I know they often have been) to renounce their materialist views which they have entertained for years, and to accept cordially a belief in the existence, long denied, of a spiritual world; if by these things a blow is struck at that cold, withering, miserable, comfortless, doctrine that "When we die we are done with;" if a distinguished authoress has admitted that these phenomena have been a pillow to her old age which nothing earthly could have given, and that she has enjoyed much pleasure in her life, but never happiness like this—tell me not it is a waste of time to think of them. I believe, indeed, that the existence of another world can be demonstrated on higher grounds than these; but then I know that there are many minds to whom those higher grounds cannot appeal; there are some who, like the Apostle Thomas, want the evidence of their senses. To him such evidence was granted: and shall we say that it is a reflection upon Providence, or a waste of time, if palpable, sensible evidence of the existence of the spirit world is given to the Thomases of our own day? (Hear hear, and applause.) Then I am told that what I have related is "ridiculous;" to which I can only say, that what is considered ridiculous in one age turns out to be just the contrary in the next. I have been asked if the mediums derive any pecuniary advantage from their doings? I think that is an unkind reflection upon a highly respectable class of persons, amongst whom one gentleman has already told us, that he has found the *élite* of his acquaintance. The same insinuations have been made against ministers of religion, who, because they are paid, have been supposed to be unworthy of our credence or regard. But there are very many mediums who receive no pecuniary advantage whatever, often occupying positions which render them independent of any compensation for their services. But these manifestations often take place without the presence of recognized mediums, as I have myself frequently seen. A reference has been made to the winking Virgin of Rimini, between which and the spiritual manifestations an unjust parallel has been drawn. In the one case

tests have been applied, and the fraud has been soon discovered; in the other, the most stringent tests have failed to discover anything approaching delusion, collusion, or imposture. I am told that it is possible to have a too ready faith; to which I can only say, that it is equally possible, as has been abundantly demonstrated this evening, to have a too ready disbelief. Mr. Henken tells us that Providence works by laws—"proper laws." Who ever doubted it! But is Mr. Henken here to tell us what are "proper" laws? and are we to adopt with "a too ready faith" his notions of propriety? (Laughter.) The next speaker was somewhat in favour of spiritual manifestations; but he yet waits for an explanation. I venture, however, to submit that he will wait for a century till he finds so satisfactory an explanation as that for which I now contend. Another gentleman told me that I had censured our grandfathers for their folly. I had no intention of doing so. I merely said that they were led into perversions and exaggerations, which we should do well to avoid, without running into another error in the opposite direction. The same gentleman, I believe, said it was easy to write books. True; but it is not easy to produce facts which have never occurred. If they are not true, why are they not denied by the thousands of persons who are said to have witnessed them? An allusion has been made to Martin Luther, who, in the evening twilight, thought he saw the Arch Fiend himself in his room and courageously launched his inkstand at the intruder. Now, supposing that was "mere imagination," is such a case to be compared with the manifestations now under our consideration? Luther was alone; no one witnessed the appearance but himself. But when a dozen persons are assembled in a room, and all of them witness the same phenomena—phenomena which none of them expected—shall we say that these are mere creatures of the fancy? Can a dozen intelligent men and women be so deluded as to think that a table rises many inches from the ground, when in reality it is motionless? The idea is grossly improbable. Mr. Anderson, I am told, has exploded the matter; but my friend, Mr. Debenham, seems to think that Mr. Anderson is in a fair way of being exploded himself, which seems to me to be the more probable result of the two.

Mr. Wallington gave us some reasons for supposing that a fraud had been practised upon him; but he did not enlighten us as to how he thought the effects were produced. Mr. Wallington, I believe, is a great advocate for mesmerism. Now he ought to know, and no doubt does know, that under the name of mesmerism the greatest deceptions have been practised; but do these disprove the genuine mesmeric phenomena? Not in the least; nor, supposing a fraud was really practised in the case he mentioned (which he has given us no ground for believing), that cannot set aside the evidence which has been adduced from other quarters. Why, sir, ten thousand frauds would not disprove the reality of ten genuine, well authenticated cases. (Hear, hear.) He thought the result might have been produced by an abstract state on the part of the medium. I really think he must have been in a very abstract state when he made the assertion, for I cannot conceive what he meant by it. (Laughter.) He intends, he says, to hold fast the ideas that he has. Well, so long as he persists in that determination, I cannot expect that any contrary principles will enter his mind; therefore he is losing time by arguing. Table-moving, he thinks, is brought about by expectation, and "saying the table moves makes it move;" that is droll enough; but what shall we say to this variation—"Saying the table rises makes it rise?" (Laughter.) I am asked about Faraday's apparatus. I saw that apparatus when it was exhibited in this theatre, by Dr. Lancaster, and, I confess, it produced no change in my opinions. It only had reference to table-turning, and could not in the least degree have any bearing upon any other manifestations. But let me say that, at present, we do not fully know under what conditions these effects are produced, nor how far Professor Faraday's apparatus may exercise a disturbing influence on such conditions. These results, however, have been obtained under tests even more stringent than those imposed by Faraday. Thus, tables have often been moved without the least contact of any persons present, and sometimes by putting the hands in bowls of water placed on the tables, without touching the bowls. (Hear.) I am sorry to think that that

arm should have so completely knocked my friend Mr. Rayner down. Now, I did not say it was a real, corporeal arm of flesh and blood, and sinew and bone; nor did the writer whom I quoted. What was described was the appearance presented. How it was produced it might be difficult to say, nor is it necessary now to inquire. But my time is up. I believe I have noticed most of the points brought forward by the various speakers; and I will conclude by again saying, that I have myself seen many of these manifestations; that I could vouch for their genuineness in any Court in Europe; and that no amount of denial on the part of those who may not have seen them, no contemptuous epithets, no amount of ridicule, will induce me to disbelieve the evidence of my senses. (Applause)

The CHAIRMAN then put Mr. Rayner's amendment to the meeting. The show of hands for and against it was about equal, and accordingly a second show was taken, which was declared to be in favour of the amendment. The original resolution was consequently lost.

ATHEISM.—The vulgar lay not the imputation of Atheism only upon physicians, but upon philosophers in general—whom, for that they give themselves to understand the operations of nature, they calumniate, as though they rested on second causes, without any respect to the first. Hereupon it was that in the tenth age, Pope Silvester II. passed for a magician, because he understood geometry and natural philosophy. There is no *sanctum sanctorum* in philosophy. The world was made to be inhabited by beasts, but to be studied and contemplated by man: 'tis the debt of our reason which we owe unto God, and the homage we pay for not being beasts. Without this, the world is as though it had not been; or as it was before the sixth day, when as yet there was not a creature that could conceive and say there was a world. The wisdom of God receives small honour from those vulgar heads that rudely stare about, and with a gross rusticity admire his works: those highly magnify him whose judicious enquiry into his acts, and deliberate research into his creatures, return the duty of a devout and learned admiration. —*Sir T. Browne's Religio Medici.*

THE MESSAGE TO THE DEAD.

Thou'rt passing hence, my brother!

Oh! my earliest friend, farewell!

Thou'rt leaving me, without thy voice,

In a lonely home to dwell;

And from the hills, and from the heath,

And from the household-tree,

With thee departs the lingering mirth;

The brightness goes with thee.

But thou, my friend, my brother!

Thou'rt speeding to the shore,

Where the dirge-like tone of parting words

Shall smite the soul no more!

And thou wilt see our holy dead;

The lost on earth and main;

Into the sheaf of kindred hearts,

Thou wilt be bound again!

Tell, then, our friend of boyhood,

That yet his name his heard

On the blue mountains, whence his youth

Passed, like a swift bright bird.

The light of his exulting brow,

The vision of his glee,

Are on me still—oh, still I trust

That smile again to see!

And tell our fair young sister—

The rose cut down in spring—

That yet my gushing soul is filled

With lays she loved to sing.

Her soft deep eyes look through my dreams,

Tender and sadly sweet;

Tell her, my heart within me burns

Once more that gaze to meet!

And tell our white-haired father,

That in the paths he trod,

The child he loved, the last on earth,

Yet walks, and worships God.

Say, that his last fond blessing yet

Rests on my soul like dew,

And by its hallowing might, I trust

Once more his face to view.

And tell our gentle mother,

That on her grave I pour,

The sorrow of my spirit forth,

As on her breast of yore.

Happy thou art, that soon, how soon,

Our good and bright will see!

Oh, brother! brother! may I dwell

'Ere long with them and thee!

—*Hemans.*

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