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SPIRITUALISM IN BIOGRAPHY:—MARY  
FLETCHER, AND THE REV. JOHN FLETCHER,  
OF MADELEY.

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Mrs. FLETCHER, of Madeley, was one of the most distinguished members in the circle of Wesley's immediate friends and followers. In the communion founded by him her memory is specially revered as that of a "Mother in Israel." She was eminently conspicuous for zeal, practical piety, and self-denying labours for the spiritual and temporal welfare of her fellow-creatures;—"applying an ample fortune to the relief of the friendless; collecting together and supporting under her own roof, an extensive family, composed of the afflicted, the indigent, and the helpless, but chiefly consisting of orphan children." Her *Diary and Correspondence* are a faithful record, not only of her outward history, but of her feelings, convictions, and spiritual experiences. It has at this time a special interest, as it presents many instances of spirit-manifestation and communion, which have not only a value in themselves, but related, by one whose orthodoxy is so unquestionable, and whose testimony is above suspicion, which add weight to the many testimonies of living men and women who affirm similar facts as within the compass of their own knowledge and experience.

The authoress of *Adam Bede*, speaking of "Methodists" of the "old-fashioned kind," says:—"They believed in present miracles, in instantaneous conversions, in revelations by dreams and visions; they drew lots, and sought for Divine guidance by opening the Bible at hazard; having a literal way of interpreting the Scriptures which is not at all sanctioned by approved commentators." Mrs. Fletcher was a Methodist of this "old-fashioned kind," moreover she had "that belief in visible manifestations of Jesus, which" (the same writer tells us) "is common among the Methodists."

Her editor, the Rev. Henry Moore, in his Preface to her *Life*, anticipates the objection:—"That she too much minded impressions, dreams, and those inward feelings to which religious persons are supposed to be particularly exposed;" and he replies:—"That such things should be condemned *toto genere* is hardly consistent with any true religion, seeing the oracles of God so frequently mention them; and not as attached to the prophetic or ministerial character, but as given to those who walk with God in the humblest path of life. The wisest and best of men have not only spoken of such things with respect, but have made them a part of the religion which they have held forth to ages and generations, to communities and kingdoms."

Her *Diary and Letters* abound with phrases and forms of expression which imply her recognition of "the cardinal fact of spirit-communion and influx," in a kind and manner similar to that with which many of the persons in our days called mediums are now familiar; and which to them will have a special significance and force. Thus, (like the early Quakers,) she uses such phrases as:—"These things were sometimes much *laid on my mind*;" "Those words were in a *peculiar* manner laid on my mind;" "The thoughts that were *presented* to my mind;" "The following thoughts were *impressed* on my mind;" "It was *brought* before me;" "The thought was *suggested*;" "It was *opened* before me;" "The thoughts which *flowed into* my mind;" "I had a *dream* in my mind;" "Something seemed to *whisper*;" "It was *answered in my heart*;" "Those words were *spoken through my heart*;" "I then found, as it were, a *conversation carried on in my mind*." She speaks of "Various *leadings* of Providence both inward and outward;" of "Casting myself on the Lord, to be *guided* by his hand as a mere machine." She says again, "I looked to the Lord, and received, as it seemed to me, the following *direction*;" and another time, "Surely the Lord himself *prompted* and *enabled* me to write, as I had hardly at the time either *sense* or memory." She spoke of the "Clear *leadings* of the Spirit;" and remarks, "Very many were the little *in-breakings* of light, yea, often in a day." She affirms, "Night and day I have a sense of safety; I feel as if the angels of the Lord *encamped round about me*." Again, "There seemed for a moment *such a communion opened between the family below and that above as I cannot express*." "I have communion with my friends above, and none below can harm or injure me."

Sometimes, when in perplexity as to the course she should pursue under particular circumstances, she would open the Bible, taking the first passage she read on opening it as a *direction*, under the impression that she would be spiritually led to open it at a passage applicable to her case. Whatever may be thought of

this practice in general, (and I by no means commend it), in her particular experience such passages had a remarkable adaptation, and as she once said, came to her "as a message from heaven."

She relates the following instance of spirit manifestation by voice and vision, which she experienced in a time of great trial:—

"But the Lord graciously helped me, in an extraordinary way. As I lay reflecting on my situation, and weeping before him on account of the darkness of my mind, I discerned an unusual brightness, (yet not dazzling), and a voice came so powerfully, that I can only say I heard and felt it with every faculty of soul and body,—'Thou shalt walk with me in white!' An answer seemed to come from my heart, *independent of myself*, 'Lord, how can that be, seeing I am not worthy?' It was spoken to me again, 'Thou shalt walk with me in white; I will make thee worthy.' This was followed by those words, 'I will roughly purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin!' and,

'Glory is on earth begun,  
Everlasting life is won.'

To this day I have the most lively remembrance of that manifestation; and, in the darkest moments I have since passed through, I could never doubt its being the voice of the Lord." Mrs. Fletcher was a firm believer in supernatural aid in answer to prayer, in temporal as well as in spiritual matters. When she was but about four years of age, a circumstance occurred, from which, she says, "I received, such a conviction that God heareth prayer, that it often administered much comfort to me in seasons of trial and danger." She relates how—  
"Sister Ryan one day said to me, 'We shall have such a sum to pay on Saturday night. Had we not better borrow it of such a friend till your half year comes in?' We attempted so to do, but were disappointed. Being on my knees at prayer, I opened a book before me on the table, and cast my eyes on these words: 'Christ charges himself with all your temporal affairs, while you charge yourself with those which relate to his glory.' I closed my eyes, and continued praying: when, to the eye of my mind, it seemed as if the Lord Jesus stood just by me, and spoke again those words to my heart, with such a power as wiped away every care. Before I got off my knees, I was called down to speak to a man who asked for me; and who, through a providence too long to repeat, brought me just the sum I wanted."

When in her fifty-third year, she wrote:—"My prayers seem to have free access to the throne, and the speedy answers amaze me! I wished for a large commodious place for the people to meet in, as their number greatly increases; and, though it seemed impossible, it is now accomplished. I wished for a hundred pounds to build a meeting-house at the Bank, re-

remembering how much my dear husband desired it. Laying it before the Lord, that word was again applied, 'Thou shalt decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee; and the light shall shine on thy ways.' I subscribed thirty pounds, and have now the whole sum ready, before the ground is prepared to build it on. I desire nothing, in earth or heaven, but for the glory of God. I feel 'the Almighty is my defence;' and, to confirm my faith in spiritual things by temporal, he does give me great 'plenty of silver.'"

On another page of her *Diary* we read:—"I often wish I had more time to attend to my *Diary*—such wonderful answers to prayer are given to me as ought to be recorded."

The reader will probably agree with me that the following is such an instance of this kind "as ought to be recorded." At the time of its occurrence, Mrs. Fletcher, then Miss Bosanquet, and Mr. Fletcher had not seen or heard from each other for more than fifteen years. Though she would not allow her mind to dwell upon it, as they had been but slightly acquainted even at that time, yet the idea of their union would frequently present itself before her; her tender conscience, however, led her to start from the very idea, "lest it should be a stratagem of Satan;" her belief that a single life would enable her to devote herself more unreservedly to the cause of God having led her to reject proposals of marriage very advantageous in a worldly point of view. But hearing that Mr. Fletcher was dying, in the last stage of consumption, she commended him to God in prayer; while still engaged in devotion, she says:—"These words passed my mind, 'The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up,' I said, 'Lord, I dare not ask it; I leave it to thy sacred will: thy will be done.'

The following thoughts occurred to my mind:—"If the Lord should raise him up, and bring him in safety back to England; and he should propose such a step, could I doubt its being of God, after such an answer to prayer?" Yet, fearing a deception, I cried to the Lord to keep me in his narrow way, whatever I might suffer; and felt an unaccountable liberty to ask the following signs, if it really were of him:—1. That Mr. Fletcher might be raised up. 2. That he might be brought back to England. 3. That he would write to me on the subject, before he saw me, though we had been so many years asunder without so much as a message passing on any subject. 4. That he would, in that letter, tell me,—it had been the object of his thoughts and prayers for some years. It came to my mind further, that should this occur in the end of the year 1781, it would be a still greater confirmation; as Providence seemed to point me to that season as a time of hope."

This was in August, 1777, the sequel is thus related by Mrs. Fletcher :—

June the 8th (1781) I received a letter from Mr. Fletcher, in which he told me that he had for twenty-five years found a regard for me, which was still as sincere as ever; and though it might appear odd he should write on such a subject, when but just returned from abroad, and more so without seeing me first, he could only say that his mind was so strongly drawn to do it, he believed it to be the order of Providence. In reading this letter I was much struck. So many circumstances all uniting: 1. The season it came in. 2. His writing on the subject before we had met, after an absence of fifteen years; and without his having the most distant suspicion of my mind being inclined towards it. 3. His mentioning that for twenty-five years he had had the thought. All these particulars answered to the marks which I had laid down. His unexpected recovery also, and safe return, so plainly pointed out the hand of Providence, that all ground of reasoning against it seemed removed. . . . So on Monday the 12th of November, 1781, in Batley Church, we covenanted in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, "to bear each other's burdens," and to become one for ever.

During the interval between her receiving Mr. Fletcher's letter in June and her marriage in November, she was one day conversing on the subject with an intimate friend, a Mrs. Clapham, of Leeds; when the latter said, "I will tell you what has passed in my mind concerning it. When I was some months since at Scarborough, as I was one day in private, praying for you, and much distressed out in laying your trials before the Lord, I was as if taken up by myself, and saw by the eye of faith both Mr. Fletcher and you; and that you were designed for each other, and that much glory to God would arise from your union. But at the same time I saw there were various obstacles in the way; but the chief was the want of money. It seemed to me, however, if you would believe, and obey the order of God, all would be made clear before me. Then I saw a tall young man, (it seemed to me it was your youngest brother,) who poured down bags of gold, not once only, or twice, but several times. Some were small, others seemed large sums; one was very large; and it was impressed on my mind, that all your trials of that kind were over, and that you would never experience those difficulties any more.' She then asked, 'Have you more brothers than one?' I replied, 'Yes; I have two; and the youngest is tall. But I never received anything in particular from him; nor have I the least reason to expect it.'"

In her *Diary* for 1812, Mrs. Fletcher has the following entry :—

April 20.—Since I wrote last, my dear brother William died. . . . He hath been a kind brother to me; and referring to the extraordinary communication of Mrs. Clapham; I feel a desire to explain in what a singular manner the whole has been fulfilled. When I married, he sent me one hundred pounds as a wedding present.\* After the death of my dear husband, he came down to me,

\* The circumstances under which this sum was presented were these:—On her marriage she sold her property, having to remove with her husband to

and with the greatest tenderness and affection brought me forty pounds. Some time after my uncle Claudius Bosanquet died, and left each of my brothers eighteen thousand pounds, and several of his nephews and nieces five hundred each; but neither my sister nor myself was mentioned. My brother William at that time divided one of his thousands between us. This was a great help, as I had some money still to pay off. Since that time he has helped me yearly for my poor's expenses, and, for some time, has given me forty pounds a year. At this time of distress, when trade is so low, and the poor so straightened, this loss would have been a great one; but he hath left me two thousand pounds, so that my income, instead of decreasing, will be enlarged. I cannot reflect on this circumstance without wonder and praise. When Mrs. Clapham told me, about a fortnight before we married, of these great helps, I declare I did not expect one penny. O, how exactly has all come to pass! I remember, she said, that the last sum that she saw laid down was much larger than any before. How often has my heart cried to the Lord that he would restore him a hundred fold! I trust it is so. I have a strong confidence his cup is full in glory.

Mrs. Fletcher relates the following instance of spiritual suggestion, or of clairvoyance, spiritually induced:—

My husband having appointed to preach one Sunday at a church about fourteen miles off, I felt some concern for his riding so far, and doing the whole Sunday's duty twice; especially as it was necessary for him to return home the same night. The evening being exceeding dark and wet, I was strongly led to commend him to God in prayer. While I was doing this it was suggested to me that his horse was fallen, and had thrown him over his head; and the whole scene appeared to be clearly represented before my eyes. "My God," said I, "he is Thine! His life, his limbs, his health are all Thine! I commit him to Thee by faith." Immediately that word was impressed on my heart, *The righteous is in the hand of the Lord: and there shall no evil touch him.* And it filled my soul with such a sweetness, that I could feel no fear. The night was uncommonly bad, which occasioned many friends to continue with me. And while they expressed their uneasiness at his staying two hours longer than we could well account for, I was obliged to hide the calmness I felt by silence, lest some should have supposed it insensibility. At last he came well, and praising God, but asked for water to wash himself, because his horse had fallen and thrown him with great force over his head. Yet, glory be to God! he was no way hurt, except having a little skin grazed from one of his fingers. As he set the Lord always before him, so he found His help in every time of need.

She gives many relations of spirit-communion in dream. The following are instances. When about twenty-three years of age she had a dream which evidently made a deep and lasting impression on her mind. She says:—

One night I dreamed I was in one of my houses there, in company with all kinds of people, rich and poor, most of whom appeared very ungodly. It was strongly impressed on my mind to speak to them; but I started from the thought and said, with emotion, "Lord, what do I here among this people; for they are not thy people, and what am I to do with them?" I then beheld the Lord Jesus stand as just before me. The awful majesty of his presence had such an

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Madeley; but "the money was not to be paid in immediately for the estate; we were therefore," she says, "rather at a loss to settle all our accounts before we left the place, and to give that assistance to our friends we wished to do. On an exact calculation, we found a hundred pounds were wanting. We laid it before the Lord; and the next post I received a letter from my youngest brother, with a bank-note of one hundred pounds enclosed as a present; though he knew nothing of our particular want, nor had I the least reason to expect his assistance; except the extraordinary communication by Mrs. Clapham, which I have related."

effect on me as I cannot express! It seemed to me I sunk down before him as if I were sweetly melting into nothing. I saw no shining brightness, or anything dazzling to the eye. He appeared only as a man clothed in white; yet to my mind there was what I cannot put into words. It was a sense of his purity! It was the glory of holiness which so overcame me! There seemed but one yard's distance between my Saviour and me,—when he spake, with a voice clear and distinct, these words:—"I will send thee to a people that are not a people, and I will go with thee. Bring them unto me; for I will lay my hand upon them, and heal them. Fear not, only believe." When the immediate presence of my Lord was withdrawn, I thought that I repeated, with tears, to the people what he had spoken to me. . . . . I found myself in a sweet, delightful place. Soul and body seemed all attracted into a divine harmony.

Writing in 1768 concerning the recent death of her friend, Mrs. Ryan, she says:—"I had sometimes conversed with her on the subject of departed spirits having communion with us; and she used to say, 'If it be the will of my heavenly Father, I should rejoice to communicate some comfort to you, either in a dream or any other way.' But I never had even the slightest remembrance of her in any dream for some months, though she possessed so great a share in my waking thoughts. I often wondered at this, till one night, I think six months after her death, I thought she was hovering over me, as in a cloud, and from thence spoke in her own voice some lines in verse; but I could only retain the latter part, which were these words:—

' Mingle with earth we can no more;  
But when you worship God alone,  
We then shall mutually adore.'

By which I understood she meant, I was not in that purity which was requisite for communion with heavenly spirits; but it raised in my heart an expectation that such a season would come."

In her *Diary* of January 1, 1801, speaking of a dear friend she had lately lost, she writes:—"I sometimes feel her as being present with me. We had all things in common here; and I trust I shall partake of her heavenly inheritance. Thinking of that, one night, when I was very sad, in a moment all the gloom went off, and such a sweetness came over my soul as seemed to wipe away all grief. I dropped asleep, and these words sounded in my ears all night:—

' They drink the deifying stream,  
And pluck the ambrosial fruit.' "

Under date June 5, 1801, in relation to the same friend there is this entry:—"One night I dreamed I saw her standing before me. I cried out, 'O, my dear love, are you come? I have waited for this.' She expressed the tenderest regard, but without words, and it left a sweet sensation on my mind. Another time I dreamed I was involved in great trials, and thought, 'O! if my Sally had been now with me, all would have been nothing.' Immediately I saw her just by me, and she gave me to know she was nearer than I thought. *I know our friends are not*

*really divided from us ; they are only become invisible.* Perhaps if we saw the spirits of our dear companions at such seasons, we might be tempted to put our trust in them. A veil is, therefore, drawn between ; and all for our eternal good. But the Scripture declares, ' We are come to the spirits of just men made perfect : ' but this is far more plain to their eyes than to ours, which are as yet under the veil."

A dream, which occurred to her some years before her marriage, together with its fulfilment, is thus narrated :—

I dreamed a man came to me to offer me some tithes,—I replied, " Friend, I have nothing to do with tithes,—I have no concern in any living." But soon after, I said to one of my family, " Hannah, I am going away ; I have a call from the Lord, I must go." But again, I thought, " I know not where, not even into what country. However, the way of duty is the way of safety. I will set out, and God will lead me." Immediately, I left Cross-Hall, and after walking a few paces, I thought I was carried in a moment, I knew not how, and set down in a church-yard ; and some one said to me, " You are to enter into this church." I went in, and, walking up the aisle, heard a kind of groan, and said, " That is the sound of death." When I came out of the church, I entered into a house which was just by it. As I was on the steps, it was said inwardly to me, " This is the habitation which God has chosen for you." I answered, " O, no ; I cannot live here. It is the order of God for me to live in Yorkshire." I went into some of the rooms, and found, in one I passed through, a man and woman. In the next was a young woman with a child on her lap. She appeared dying of a consumption, and in great conflicts. We soon entered into conversation, and she seemed very spiritual. After a time she told me I must come and live here, and here abide. I replied, " O, no, I live at Cross-Hall, in Yorkshire ; and have a great family, and many calls there." " But," said she, " it is the will of God to bring you here. There is work for you to do." She added, " Do not be frightened ; God will make you a comfortable habitation." I said, " Have you the Gospel here ?" She replied, " Yes." " And who," said I, " is the minister that brought it among you ?" She replied, " He is not here now." " Then, who," said I, " is your present minister ?" She showed me a name of three syllables ; but though I read it over and over, I could only remember the two last,—"*nerston*." I felt myself in great anguish and sorrow of mind, (though I could not assign any cause,) and said, " I must go away ; I cannot stay here. I do not know that man and woman ; I cannot live with them." She replied, " That man and woman will go away when you come. But here is a work for you to do, and you must abide here. Do not be frightened ; God will make you a comfortable habitation." Being determined, however, to return home, I went down stairs, and, seeing a coach ready to be hired, I beckoned to it—the man opened the door, and, as I was stepping in, he said, " Where will you be carried to ?" I strove to say, " Cross-hall, in Yorkshire," but could not. Then I strove to name various habitations I had formerly lived in, but could remember the name of none. As he still persevered in his questions, I at last stepped back, and pointing to the house I came out of, I said, " That is my home, and God hath taken the remembrance of every other out of my heart." I knew nothing of the situation of anything in Madeley when I had this dream ; but when, some years afterwards, I told it to my dear Mr. Fletcher, he said, " There was a man and woman who lived with me at that time, and a young woman, A. C., who was very useful in the work, to which she proved a nursing mother. She died of a consumption, in which she had many conflicts." I said, " Was there a minister here whose name ended with *nerston* ?" He replied, " No." But now I understand it all. Had I before remembered the whole name, I should at once have known this dream would be fulfilled at my dear husband's death, as Mr. *Kenerson* was the patron, and his son now became our vicar.

1773. Nov. 8, Monday.—My mind is this morning affected in a solemn manner. . . . Last night I went to bed recollected, and in the spirit of prayer:



but I had a dream which I cannot understand, though I believe it from God. . .  
*In all I said and did I seemed acted upon by another spirit rather than my own.*

Spirit appearances and communications were specially frequent after the death of her husband. I continue to quote from her *Diary* :—

December 9, 1785.—I dreamed I was in a room with Sally, and saw a picture, or rather the ground-work for a picture, on which was only painted one small sheep lying down; the rest was all plain. I said to her, "Sally, look on that picture, and what the Lord says, your dear master will draw it out for me to read!" I then saw letter by letter come out as if written, (though without any hand or pen,) as follows :—"She that dwelleth in the secret places of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." I felt it a confirmation of my faith; and said, "There is no better path than to repose the soul in God, and to go on in quiet resignation, whatever we may feel." As I was making that reflection, I heard, though yet asleep, my dear husband's voice, as if close to my face, speaking these words :—

"Shout, all the people of the sky,  
 And all the saints of the Most High :  
 Our Lord, who now his right obtains,  
 For ever and for ever reigns."

The beginning I heard in my sleep, but as it waked me, *the rest was heard afterwards, and I could have known his voice among a thousand.*

August 5 (1787).—Last night I had a powerful sense, in my sleep, of the presence of my dear husband. I felt such sweet communion with his spirit as gave me much peaceful feeling. I had for some days thought that I was called to rest more than I did, that strong and lively remembrance of various scenes, and of his last sickness and many other circumstances which frequently occurred with much pain. This thought being present to my mind, I looked on him. He said with a most sweet smile, "It is better to forget." "What," said I, "my dear love, to forget one another?" He replied with an inexpressible sweetness, "It is better to forget—it will not be long; we shall not be parted long—we shall soon meet again." He then signified, though not in words, that all weights should be laid aside. His presence continued till I awoke.

August 24 (1790).—Last night I prayed that I might not have so disturbed a night as I have found of late, but that the Lord would keep away those hurrying dreams which often disturb the quiet repose of my spirit. And it was so; I found a difference. About the middle of the night I saw my dear husband before me. We ran into each other's arms. I wished to ask him several questions concerning holiness, and the degree to be expected here, &c.; but I found something like a dark cloud on my memory, so that I said in myself, "I cannot frame the question I would ask; I am not permitted." At length I asked, "My dear, do you not visit me, sometimes?" He answered, "Many times a day." "But," said I, "do not principalities and powers strive to hinder you from communing with me?" He said, "There is something in that." And does their opposition cause you to suffer in coming to me?" He answered, "There is not much in that." "But do you know every material thing that occurs to me?" "Yes." "And may I always know that thou art near me when I am in trouble, or pain, or danger?" He paused and said, faintly, "Why, yes;" then added, "But it is as well for thee not to know it, for thy reliance must not be upon me." He mentioned also some in glory who remembered me, and said, "Mr. Hey is with us, also; he bid me tell thee so, and by that thou mayest know that it is I who speak to thee." Mr. Hey died a short time before, very happy in the Lord.

August 14, (1793).—This has been a solemn day. And is it indeed eight years since my dearest husband went to glory? What a night that was to me! I was at this hour waiting at his bed-side, with my eyes immovably fixed upon his dear, calm, peaceful, dying countenance. I have this day gone through the scene; but, glory be to God, in a different manner than when we seemed on the point of separation,—yea, already parted; for he could not show any sensibility towards me. But this day it has been constantly on my mind as if we thought

and did all together. Yes, thou dear spirit, well didst thou say to me in that dream, "I am not dead, I live!" Yes, thou dost live; and, I have no doubt, hast helped me this day to feel an uncommon peace, such as I sometimes have felt when dreaming, and having, in a peculiar manner, a sense of the presence of heavenly spirits. There are seasons when the mind, joining itself to the Lord, and abiding in that posture, feels a kind of anticipation of the blissful union enjoyed in the realms of light, and has communion, more or less sensible, with the spirits before the throne. Some faint touches of this I have felt this day.

March 30, Sunday, 1801.—On Tuesday night I dreamed I was sitting by the table, on which lay the large volume of my dear Mr. Fletcher's *Life*. I was at that time very thoughtful about the printing of his works, fearing anything should be done that he would not approve. He came into the room, but I did not look up, and, being desirous to be alone, I went into the next room and sat down. He called me with his own well-known voice, saying, "What, art thou so afraid of me as to go out of the room as I come in?" I started up and cried, "No, my dear, I am not afraid of thee." I then returned and sat down in a chair by the table; he sat on the other side. Then, taking up the book, he said, "There is no need for anxiety. I would have thee read this book: it will give thee pleasure. Take it up now—thou wilt find something that will encourage thee." Two days after I received a letter from Mr. Benson, informing me that a person in London had translated Mr. Fletcher's French Poem into English, and they had some thoughts of printing it with his other works, if found to be done in a respectable manner. Then I understood that my dear love told me of this in order to prevent the uneasiness I should have felt had he not shewn a degree of approval. I had no recollection of the poem; and that he should know I had not read the *Life*, and thus comfort me under the anxiety which I felt, was most pleasing to me. O, how indulgent is my heavenly Father!

Sometimes she was instructed in dream by symbols and spiritual correspondences, as in the following instance. It should be mentioned that she was at this time in great concern about the spiritual state of her nephew to whom she was much attached, but whom she found "quite carnal, and very averse to the things of God." She was afterwards made happy in being made the instrument of his conversion. She says:—

One night, about the beginning of November, 1784, I dreamed I was in a church standing by a communion-table, on which lay a large common prayer-book open in the service of matrimony. I observed it was all marked, as my dear husband used to mark those books he much approved. I beheld it with pleasure, for, being near the 12th of November, I took it as a token that he remembered with approbation the transaction of that day,—our marriage. I was conscious of the presence of his dear spirit, as sent to communicate something to me. As I looked on the book, he signified to me that the whole was emblematic, though a few entered into the spirituality of it; adding, "This is a great mystery, I speak concerning Christ and the church." As I cast my eyes on that word, "Who giveth this woman to this man?" he pointed me to that text, "None cometh to the Son but whom the Father draweth." As nothing was spoken in words, it is difficult to describe the ideas which were conveyed to my mind. A gleam of light seemed to break forth in my soul, by which I discovered in how full a sense the souls of the redeemed are given by the Father to the Son, as his bride! I then thought on those words, "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." In this acceptable moment my nephew came to my mind. I said, with a groan, "O, for our nephew!" Immediately I saw a little bird fly round and round. I said, "That is the emblem of my nephew's spirit. If it come to me and I take it up, his soul will be given unto me." I had not sooner spoken the word, but it came and lighted on the table before me. I took it up and stroked it, and let it fly again. A thought then struck my mind, "O, but he does not believe the Scriptures!" The bird came, and I took it up the second time. As it flew again, I thought, "O, but he does not believe in the

Divinity of our Lord!" Immediately it returned, and I took it up the third time. I no sooner saw it flying, but a beautiful large bird stood with great solemnity before me, and I awoke.

With this nephew she had many serious conversations. Referring to one of these, he told her:—

After we parted last night, I thought I would pray; but that it was right to consider what I wanted most. Then I thought, "Why, I most want light on this point, about Jesus Christ. But will God so condescend as to answer me?" Then, aunt, I heard a voice (*not with my ear, but I did hear it*) say, "Yes, he will." Then I began and made prayer; and an hour went away like a minute,—and I could say, "Through the Lord Jesus Christ!" O dear aunt, I thought I must have come up and told you, but you were gone to bed. And again I thought, "May be, to-morrow God will confirm this." And so he has, for when I was at Waters-Upton, Mr. G. H. began to make pleasantry of the miracles of Jesus Christ. I said in myself, "Yesterday, I could have smiled at this, and heard it with pleasure;" but now it was a horrible sensation; I could not bear it. I was forced to go out of the house.

Scattered throughout her pages are many experiences of her personal friends which they communicated to her. The following was related to her by "that dear old saint, Mary Matthews:"—

She told me (says Mrs. Fletcher), that on the day after the preaching the last week, having undertaken to open the door in time for the morning service, she took the key of the room for that purpose, and believed the Lord would awake her in time. About two in the morning (instead of five) she was awaked with an extraordinary power of God. She thought, "I must rise and pray." She came down and broke up the fire, and, being in a small house all alone, she sat down to meditate and give full scope to the spirit. She took up her hymn-book, but could not read. "For," said she, "all around me seemed to be light! It appeared to me as if the room was full of heavenly spirits. I laid the book down, and, falling back in my chair, I remembered no more of anything outward, but thought I was at the threshold of a most beautiful place. I could not look in. The first thing I saw was the Lord Jesus sitting on a throne! There was a beautiful crown over his head! It did not seem to bear with a weight, but as if it was suspended there; and as he turned his head, it turned with him. A glorious light appeared on one side, and all around him was glory! I thought on that word of St. Paul, 'Who dwelleth in light unapproachable!' Turning my eye a little, I saw close to my Saviour my dear minister, Mr. Fletcher. He looked continually on the Lord Jesus with a sweet smile. But he had a very different appearance from what he had when in the body: and yet there was such an exact resemblance, that I could have known him among a thousand; features and limbs just the same, but not of flesh. It was what I cannot describe—all light. I know not what to call it. I never saw anything like it. It was, I thought, such a body as could go thousands of miles in a moment! There were several passed who had the same appearance: and I seemed to have lost my old, weak, shaking body! I seemed to myself as if I could have gone to the world's end as light as air! I looked on him a long time, and observed every feature with its old likeness. He then turned his eyes on me, and held out his hand to me, just as he used to do. After this the whole disappeared, and I came to myself, and found it was just the time when I should open the preaching-house door."

I cite the following "dream of a good woman" for its beauty, and the important moral truth it conveys:—

She thought she was dying, and felt her soul leave the body. Immediately she found herself standing in the presence of God. Jesus appeared to her as seated on a white throne! He beckoned to her with his hand, and said, "Come up hither." When she was by his side, she saw many of the saints with the angels. Among them was William Brammah; he shone very bright. Some

others she knew also. Our Lord then pointed to the crowns of some saints still on earth; and she understood by the appearance of some of these crowns, that the persons were in great temptation. Our Lord and the glorious company seemed to sympathize greatly with them; and when by faith they conquered, a jewel was added to the crown, and the whole shone brighter. But every time they gave way to any corruption, a gem dropped out, and the whole crown turned dark! Sometimes there seemed joy in heaven over them; sometimes a kind of mourning. She sat some time in sweet delight, and then awaking, found with amazement she was still in the body.

Here is an account of the apparition of a living person, at a time when he was actually in great peril:—

*October (1784).*—As I was retired this morning at my ten o'clock hour, I was called down to Mary G——. She gave me a strange account which I shall insert as she related it:—A short time ago, she said, she was one day going out to work in the fields, but thought she would first go up stairs to prayer. While on her knees praising God for the care he had taken of her children, she was amazed to see her eldest son, about twenty-one years old, standing before her! She started up—but thought, “May be it is the enemy to affright me from prayer.” Casting her eyes again to the same spot, she still saw him there; on which she ran down into the kitchen, calling on the name of the Lord. Still wherever she looked she saw him standing before her pale, and as if covered with dirt. Concluding from this that he was killed, she ran to her mother, who, on hearing the account, went directly to the pit, determined to have him home, if alive. On her drawing near the pit, she heard a great tumult; for the earth had fallen in on him and two other men, and the people were striving to dig them out. At length he was got up alive and well, and came home to his mother, pale and dirty, just as she had seen him! She then fell on her knees, and began praising that God who hears and answers prayer. Many of the ungodly neighbours, having been witnesses of the whole transaction, are much affected; and I trust this very strange occurrence will work for good.\*

The greater part of one chapter is devoted by Mrs. Fletcher to “Thoughts on communion with happy spirits;” and the whole question is there argued out by her on rational and scriptural grounds. As many who would be indisposed to listen to such an exposition from a writer in the *Spiritual Magazine*, may be inclined to lend a willing ear to one so eminent for piety and evangelical sentiments as Mrs. Fletcher, I shall present her reasoning on this subject *in extenso* in a future number.

Her husband, the Rev. John Fletcher, was also a decided spiritual medium, and the subject of many remarkable experiences. He tells us that once, when quite awake, he had a clear and distinct vision of Christ upon the cross. At another time he heard a Divine voice speaking to him “in an inexpressibly awful sound.” He was consciously open to spiritual impressions, and had a clear presentiment of his own death. He relates many incidents of special providence in his behalf, by spiritual interposition, of which this is one, as related by his biographer, the Rev. J. Benson. As he was bathing in the Rhine, he was carried away by the

\* Was not this extraordinary dispensation permitted for the good of these ignorant ungodly persons, who were not likely to be moved by more rational means?—Rev. Henry Moore.

current, and drawn under a mill; striking against one of the piles on which it stood, he lost all consciousness. "When I came to myself," said Mr. Fletcher, "I was in a calm, safe place, perfectly well, without any soreness or weariness at all. Nothing was amiss but the distance of my clothes, the stream having driven me five miles from the place where I left them. Many persons gladly welcomed me on shore, one gentleman in particular, who said, "I looked when you went under the mill, and again when you rose on the other side; and the time of your being emerged among the piles was exactly twenty minutes. But some will say, 'Why this is a miracle!' 'Undoubtedly,' observes Mr. Wesley, 'it was; it was not a natural event; but a work wrought above the power of nature, probably by the ministry of angels.'"

The following singular narrative, which I give *verbatim*, in the language of Mr. Fletcher, as quoted by Mr. Benson, is all for which I can now find space. He says:—

One Sunday when I had done reading prayers at Madeley, I went up into the pulpit, intending to preach a sermon which I had prepared for that purpose. But my mind was so confused that I could not recollect either my text or any part of my sermon. I was afraid I should be obliged to come down without saying anything. But having collected myself a little, I thought I would say something on the first lesson, which was the third chapter of Daniel, containing the account of the three worthies cast into the fiery furnace: I found, in doing it, such an extraordinary assistance from God, and such a singular enlargement of heart, that I supposed there must be some peculiar cause for it. I therefore desired, if any of the congregation had met with anything particular, they would acquaint me with it in the ensuing week. In consequence of this, the Wednesday after a person came and gave me the following account:—"Mrs. K. had been for some time much concerned about her soul. She attended the church at all opportunities, and spent much time in private prayer. At this, her husband (who is a butcher) was exceedingly enraged, and threatened severely what he would do if she did not leave off going to John Fletcher's church: yea, if she had to go any more to any religious meetings whatever. When she told him he could not in conscience refrain from going, at least to the parish church, he grew quite outrageous, and swore dreadfully if she went any more he would cut her throat as soon as she came home. This made her cry mightily to God that he would support her in the trying hour. And though she did not feel any degree of comfort, yet having a sure confidence in God, she determined to go on in her duty and leave the event to Him. Last Sunday, after many struggles with the devil and her own heart, she came down stairs ready for church. Her husband asked her whether she was resolved to go thither? She told him she was. "Well, then," said he, "I shall not, as I intended, cut your throat, but I will heat the oven, and throw you into it the moment you come home." Notwithstanding this threatening which he enforced with many bitter oaths, she went to church, praying all the way that God would strengthen her to suffer whatever might befall her. While you were speaking of the three Hebrews whom Nebuchadnezzar cast into the burning fiery furnace, she found it all belonged to her, and God applied every word to her heart. And when the sermon was ended, she thought, if she had a thousand lives she could lay them all down for God. She felt her whole soul so filled with His love, that she fastened home, fully determined to give herself to whatsoever God pleased; nothing doubting, but that either He would take her to heaven if He suffered her to be burnt to death, or that he would some way deliver her, even as he did his three servants that trusted in him. But when she opened the door, to her astonishment and comfort, she found her husband's wrath abated, and soon had reason to believe that he was under a concern for the salvation of his soul."

The next Lord's Day, contrary to his former ungodly custom, he attended Divine service at the church, and even received the Lord's Supper. These good impressions, however, it is feared, have not produced any lasting change on his heart and life. But I now know why my sermon was taken from me—namely, that God might thus magnify his mercy.

T. S.

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### THE LATE DR. T. SIMPSON, OF YORK.

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ALTHOUGH the name of Dr. Simpson was not prominently known as a believer in spiritual phenomena, yet there was perhaps no one more zealous or learned in the subject, and in seeing and humbly following out the philosophy and the religious views which flow from the facts, when seen in their true light and significance. That his was just the sort of mind adapted to the inquiry, will be seen from the short memoir of him which we extract from a local paper, and it is a pity that the editor should have been either ignorant of Dr. Simpson's deep and earnest inquiry into this subject, or that he should have thought it inopportune to mention it, now that he has been so suddenly but not sadly removed from amongst his admiring fellow citizens. The *Yorkshire Gazette* in paying the last tribute to his memory says well of him:—

“We cannot allow the record in our obituary of the death of one of our most distinguished fellow-citizens to pass unnoticed. For nearly forty years Dr. Simpson has occupied a leading position among the members of the medical profession in this city, and has given an unobtrusive but cordial support to every effort made during that period to elevate the character and forward the interests of his adopted city.

“Dr. Simpson was a native of *Knarebro'*, where his father, a man of great shrewdness and sagacity, for many years practised the healing art with energy and success. One son was Dr. Simpson, of Malton, the other was the subject of our notice, who, after studying in London, where he obtained by his zeal, industry and intelligence, the approval and personal friendship of Sir A. Cooper, Cline, and other distinguished teachers of the day, commenced practice at an early age in his native town, and soon acquired very extensive practice, not only in *Knarebro'*, but also among the many distinguished families who reside in the neighbourhood of that romantic spot. Amidst the arduous and almost incessant toils of a large country practice, his active mind found time for extensive medical reading, and enlarged philosophical inquiries. Gifted by nature with a mind of no ordinary calibre, and with a memory of a very high order, Mr. Simpson was also an industrious and persevering student, and thus by reading and experience acquired an amount of professional

and general knowledge, which laid the foundation of his future success in a more important sphere.

"About the year 1823, having by his professional exertions relieved himself from the necessity of any longer toiling as a country practitioner, Mr. Simpson determined to relinquish the labours of general practice and to fit himself for the responsible duties of a physician. With this design he proceeded to Edinbro', where he pursued an academic career of successful application, which not only procured for him the diploma of Doctor of Medicine from that distinguished university, but also the lasting friendship of many of the professors and most distinguished graduates of his day.

"Dr. Simpson soon after this, commenced practice as a physician in this city, and for the remainder of his life enjoyed a very large amount of professional confidence, not only in the city and county, but throughout the north of England. He was successively elected Physician to the Dispensary, the York County Hospital, the County Asylum, &c., where he laboured to promote the science of his profession, and to administer relief to the afflicted inmates. He also took a leading part in establishing and supporting the Medical School, and was a regular attendant at the meetings of the Medical Society, where his profound and accurate knowledge, long experience, and power of communicating information made him a most valuable and useful member. He also presided over the meeting of the British Medical Association when it visited York. Dr. Simpson possessed no ordinary musical talent and skill, and was no mean judge of the fine arts. He devoted much of his spare time to microscopic and other scientific pursuits, and kept himself thoroughly acquainted with the literature of the day. His naturally unobtrusive and retiring character prevented him from recording his opinions and experience, and hence his only work was printed a few years ago, to prove the contagious nature of Asiatic cholera.

"But as a sound practical physician Dr. Simpson was best known and appreciated. At the bedside of the patient, his philosophical acumen, sound judgment, and long experience, gained for him the confidence of his medical brethren and the gratitude of his patients. A shrewd observer, a patient inquirer, deeply learned in the principles of his art, and especially in the appliances which can be brought to bear in arresting the progress of disease, Dr. Simpson combined the medical philosopher with the sound practitioner, and enjoyed no ordinary success in the practice of his profession. His medical honour was untainted, for he never for a moment attempted to lower a brother practitioner by any unworthy display of superiority, or by any seeming imputation of neglect or mistreatment to raise himself by another's humiliation. Hence Dr. Simpson possessed the most entire

confidence of his professional brethren, who could rely implicitly, not only his skill, but also on his honour and integrity.

“ Dr. Simpson took a warm interest in the religious and political topics of the day. From conviction Conservative and Protestant, yet tolerant of the opinions of those who differed from him, he was always ready to unite with them in promoting any common object for the good of others. Deeply read in theological literature and controversies, his sound and well-balanced mind was never shaken by subtle objections and vague conjectures, but ever stood firm in believing the great truths of Christianity; and during his last illness he evidenced his belief by the firmness of his faith.

“ Dr. Simpson enjoyed almost uninterrupted good health until the autumn of last year, when symptoms of internal disease began to develop themselves, and feeling that his power for active usefulness had passed away, he resigned his public appointments and submitted cheerfully to the quieter life he was compelled to lead. He rallied somewhat, until a month ago, when symptoms of apoplexy manifested themselves, which on the 28th of February ended in a fatal apoplectic seizure, and terminated in a few hours the life of this distinguished physician.

“ Dr. Simpson was never married, and he had nearly completed his seventy-fifth year. His remains were interred yesterday in the Cemetery, and were followed to the grave by many of his medical and other attached friends.”

Here seem to have been united in this learned and accomplished man, all the elements which the world deems necessary for pursuing with discrimination and judgment such a subject as that of Spiritualism, and it would indeed be hard if further qualities were needed, for we should look in vain for any whose absence we can specify. Extensive reading, zeal, industry, and intelligence, an active mind of no ordinary calibre, a memory of a high order, professional and general knowledge, crowning a distinguished academic career, and justly procuring successive appointments to the highest posts in his profession. Accomplished and learned in the arts and sciences, a shrewd observer, a patient inquirer, his honor untainted, possessing the entire confidence of his professional brethren, deeply read in theological literature, with a sound and well-balanced mind, never shaken by subtle objections or vague conjectures, but ever firm in believing the great truths of christianity, and during his last illness evidencing his belief by the firmness of his faith, what more could be required of a man to fit him to form a correct judgment, and to give confidence in his judgment when once formed. Yet such his great qualities are not stated in our words, but in those of his fellow-citizens amongst whom he lived and labored for the last forty years of his honored life. From long



personal friendship, and earnest conversations with him, the present writer fully approves those words of high commendation, and regrets that he may not look again for the renewal of those pleasant hours in which this great and good man avowed not only his full conviction of the truth of spiritual phenomena, but also their important bearing on both philosophy and religion. He was an earnest and intelligent reader of all the works past and present on the subject, and enriched his conversation by repeated instances which had occurred to himself, and to other members of his family and friends. He was far too honest and high minded to conceal his opinions where he thought their promulgation would further the cause of truth, and he often smiled, but without acrimony, at the credulity of the incredulous, and at the petty martyrdom which he had had to undergo at their hands. At one time his practice suffered in consequence of his known adherence to this and its kindred subject, mesmerism, but his persevering good sense, and his ability in his profession, soon enabled his patients to make the notable discovery, that a consistent belief in facts unrecognized by them, did not necessarily derogate from his professional character. The poor patients did not know, what Dr. Simpson did, that it was only they, and not he, who were making a display of ignorance and credulity.

Amongst many of the anecdotes with which he illustrated his conversations on this subject, was one of a remarkable kind which happened to his respected father at Knaresbro', shortly before his death. His father was for many years of a sceptical mind on religious subjects, but even in his own family he kept his opinions to himself. Whilst he was in perfect health, he had a vision of a departed relative, of such a nature as entirely to change his views on this all-important subject, and he had a few days after a very solemn conversation with his son in which he gave him the whole narration, and the remarkable predictions which were made to him, not only of his approaching departure, but of many minute circumstances which would precede and be connected with it, such as that it would happen in a particular room in the house long disused, and under circumstances in which it was apparently impossible that it should happen. He urged the strictest secrecy on Dr. Simpson, even from his brother and his mother, and he himself mentioned it to no one. Nevertheless, by a curious chain of events, each of these preliminary circumstances occurred precisely as he had been told in the vision, and as each happened contrary to the united endeavours of both, he from time to time called to him his son, and in solemn words bade him see the finger of God, in what was coming to pass. There was then at Knaresbro' a leading draper, who was usually employed to manage the funerals of the principal residents, and with him

the father had not been on friendly terms for some years. In the vision which he had seen of his approaching end and funeral, he told his son that he saw his coffin in the hall, just before being put in the hearse, that he had seen this person arranging the funeral, and that just as the coffin was being lifted, he saw a corner of the pall suddenly blown up, and this person step forward to pull it down. He desired his son to place the funeral in other hands, and not to allow the draper to manage it, giving as a reason that though he bore him no ill will, he would prefer its being in other hands. Just previously to his death, which happened more suddenly than was expected, Dr. Simpson happened to be called away, and on his return he found that this person had been employed to conduct the funeral. Dr. Simpson was amazed, and determined that he could not further interfere than to prevent his being in the hall before the coffin was brought out, so that the predicted incident should not occur. He took his measures accordingly, and was satisfied that he had succeeded. The coffin was raised by the bearers, and was being taken through the door, when a sudden gust of wind blew up one corner of the pall, and Dr. Simpson hastened forward to draw it down, found that it was being done by the same person, and just in the place foretold him by his father.

With many such instances happening or becoming known to such a man through a long life, and with his father's thoughts and experience, changing as they did in a moment the current of his lifetime, it was no wonder that Dr. Simpson should be a believer in spirits and in spiritual forces and spiritual powers, and his belief did not make him the less but only the more a Christian man. He was so earnest and desirous that others who were willing should know more of what had given him comfort and peace, that he has asked the writer to allow his domestics to be present at portions of their conversations, and he even tried at a time when Sir David Brewster had been prostrated by illness during a visit to York, and was becoming convalescent, to impress him with the truth of what he had before derided and denied. We could repeat here much of their conversations on the subject, and which were much at variance with the position subsequently taken up by Sir David, and no one was more surprised at what Sir David has since said, than was the good and honest Dr. Simpson. But let that rest. It is no place here to perpetuate an angry word, and we would fain hope that even yet Sir David may try to emulate the virtues and the integrity of his friend. Let it also be known and recorded amongst those who mourn the loss of Dr. Simpson in the departments of life which he so worthily filled, that he was a Spiritualist from personal experience, and from deep conviction that to be other is to deny the full import of Christianity.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPERIENCE.

## II.

(A WORD TO CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS.)

It is a fact as well known as it is unaccountable, that the phenomena which are included under the vague term Spiritualism have been ignored and denied, proved false by scientific men, regarded as fictions, or at best, mere figments of the imagination, by those who deemed them of too little importance for investigation, and included under the generic term diabolical by those who have at times seen mischievous results spring from their examination, or from the phenomena themselves. It is not for philosophy to deny, ignore, or evade, but to impartially examine, and accept, or reject, what claims to be fact and evidence. Faith in immortality has greatly diminished in the last few centuries. Protestantism, in revolting against the Catholic Church, in condemning the veneration paid to the saints, and holy persons who had passed into the spiritual world, has come into much practical unbelief in immortality. Many in the present day seem to have little faith in a sensible communion with the saints or any other individuals who are in the world that is invisible to us. This want of faith in what we cannot see, hear, or handle, seems to be the cause of the interposition of Providence, or in other words, the interference of immortal beings in favour of mortal ones. Immortality must be proved to materialists in material ways. Many a man can feel the force of an argument which appeals to his sense of sight or hearing, when the interior workings of his own soul, or of those who are in communion with him are unobserved. An apparently causeless series of movements or sounds responding to his questions is a curiosity, because he cannot believe that anything comes without a cause, and so he wonders and enquires, and at last comes to believe in the invisible and palpable, because of the visible palpable.

There is doubt in this age, where there is thought. People are asking a reason for their faith, or their want of it. The Protestant world is picking everything to pieces, as children do their toys to see what is in them. Many worldly persons in the Catholic Church trust their faith to the keeping of others, and are content to follow their own sordid ways, willing to be considered Catholic and Christian, so long as no reproach comes to them on this account. But let the guardians of their faith declare that a miracle has been wrought, and they are very likely to be ashamed and hide themselves among Protestants. Another class of so-called Catholics narrow their faith till no one is so uncatholic

as they. Bounding the true Church by the limits apparent to them, they say all is of the devil beyond that. It is vain for these that our Lord has said, "He that is not against us is for us." It is vain for them that He is *Emanuel God with us*, and that no good, natural or spiritual, exists but in Him and through Him; and that whoso casts out devils in His name, or puts down evil passions, or lives a true and holy life, is not to be forbidden, but accepted and encouraged, because it is by the Spirit of Truth that all good is done.

When any subject arrests the thought, and claims the attention of master minds and of large masses of men for a long time continuously, it recommends itself, from its relation to man's well or ill-being, to the notice of the wise and good. In all human movements, we expect to find imperfection. The history of our race is a record of power and weakness, of philosophy and folly, of mistakes, failures, and successes. The heart of humanity beats sometimes through an aneurism, and the physicians of the hospital see no escape from fatal lesion; but the tough old patient of five thousand years lives on, and disappoints his doctors. To Protestants, it may pertinently be said, that it is unmanly and irrational to refuse to hear the testimony of honest, sensible, and trustworthy persons respecting the facts of the supernatural world; and to Catholics, that it is uncatholic to deny the possibility of these facts and phenomena—and foolish, without investigation, to decide that they are diabolic.

It has been asked, "have Spiritualists a distinctive creed?" In nine cases out of ten, believers in the verity of the phenomena would answer "no." But I apprehend that they agree in a common creed, though they differ in many opinions. Spiritualism comprehends the belief in immortality, and the existence of a spiritual world, or worlds, and in the communion of persons in this material world, with those in a spiritual world. Spiritualism asserts the fact of *miracles*, the existence and possibility of which are generally denied out of the Catholic Church. I use the word miracle, in the popular, and *not* in the theological sense. I mean by miracle, in the words of Webster, "a wonder, a wonderful thing, a deviation from the known laws of nature." We see then that Spiritualism has several distinct articles of belief in which all its followers are agreed:—1st, The belief in immortality, or the continued existence of the human soul; 2nd, (and of course) In a world where such existence is perpetuated and provided with varied conditions; 3rd, That there is communication between our material world and the spiritual world; and, 4th, That this connection involves certain phenomena termed miracles.

There are two classes of spiritual manifestations; the diabolic, or evil manifestations, and beneficent manifestations.

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There are those who acknowledge no evil, and no Devil; who say of all false teaching, misleading, vice, crime, and misery, that it is all right—that it leads men upward, by a sort of spiral movement, by which everybody infallibly gets to Heaven at last. I do not write for this class of persons. There is a chaos in their understanding, which hinders all honest reason from having its legitimate effect with them; and I record as first of diabolical manifestations, those spiritual communications which deny the existence of evil, and of evil spirits. I am aware of the importance of clear definitions at the start, in all discussions, and I give therefore, Webster's definition of Devil and evil.

"Devil, an evil spirit, a fallen angel, the chief of the apostate angels, a very wicked person; any great evil."

"Evil, any deviation of a moral agent from the rules of conduct prescribed to him by God, or by legitimate human authority; any violation of the plain principles of justice and equity."

The popular idea of the meaning of the word Devil, has in it something vague, perhaps undefinable, but always frightful. Many Protestants who pride themselves on being rational, and philosophical, and intellectually respectable, reject the Devil as a script and fabulous being; they consider it an evidence of bad taste, and intellectual imbecility, to believe in him at all, except as the rhetorical personification of a principle. One sect of Protestants, who believe in the existence of Devils, assert that they are the souls of bad men—that all Devils are from the human race. Spiritualists who admit that there are evil spirits, many of them take this view of their origin.

Catholics (as well as perhaps the majority of Protestants), believe in the angels who kept not their first estate, and they believe in these bad spirits as having a leader. They have little idea of any state so bad, as to be absolute chaos, without semblance of hierarchy, or order. But though they agree in their belief in the devil, and in evil spirits, who are not of the human race, they probably differ a good deal in their ideas of the qualities, and capabilities of these beings. Some Catholics think the devil a great fool, and feel sure of thwarting him with the simple weapon of humble trust in the sovereign good. While others are almost fearful enough to be unbelieving; and the filial reverence of the lovers of the mother of our Lord, and the absorbing fear of those who have as much terror of the devil as of sin, deceive the Protestant world into the notion that worship of the Blessed Mother, and fear of the devil, are articles of faith in the Catholic Church; and I presume that I shall surprise most Protestants by the assertion that this is not the fact. I quote a popular opinion on this subject from Black-

wood, "If they are to be Papists they *must* be worshippers of the Virgin Mary—they must be worshippers of stocks and stones," &c.

Persons seeing the disorders of Spiritualism, and observing only those manifestations that are diabolic, readily conclude there are no beneficent manifestations. It is not wonderful they should so conclude, or that those who reject the idea of devil, or of evil spirits, should denounce the whole as imposture, hallucination, hysteria, &c.

As society has its leaders in Church and State, even when the Papacy and a hierarchy are most earnestly denounced, as an acknowledged leader in either is followed and obeyed by a sort of unwritten compact, in which the principal elements of power on the one side, and pusillanimity on the other; and leaders are often blind, and bound, at least, for a season, it is strange that there has been a mingled cry of impossibility, denunciation, imposture, and worse than all, disreputable vulgarity, against belief in the supernatural phenomena termed Spiritualism. As fashions are worn amongst us some time after they are discarded where they had their birth, so a leader of public opinion may feel his cheek tingle with shame to hear his cast-off opinion avowed and defended by honest or dishonest followers long after he has found his way to a higher stand-point, and a broader, clearer vision.

The world moves all the time, and truth justifies itself, and men who have seen but one side of any movement, and formed their opinions accordingly, have only to be thankful when they discover good where evil was at first only apparent to them. As there are winnings at the gaming table that are only discovered so there are apparently beneficent spiritual manifestations which lead the victim on to the loss of all self-control till he gives himself up to be governed and guided by what he considers his guardian angel. Again, what seem trifling, or mischievous manifestations may lead to most beneficent results. We cannot decide as to the quality of a grain or fruit till its maturity is reached. Hence the maturity of evil is much more rapidly attained, than that of good, hence evil must soon demonstrate itself. It is claimed by Roman Catholics that the garnered experience of the church gives to its members, in the learning and care of pastors, a security against evil that the Protestant world has not, and we know that many Protestants have become victims in a greater or less degree, in being pioneers in a reconnoissance whereby valuable facts have been obtained for others.

In examining the subject of spiritual manifestations, one must be prepared to encounter a very great amount of extraneous and really irrelevant matter. There are impositions, self-deception

tion, nervous imaginations, hysteria, hallucinations, and positive insanity. Under each of these heads might be grouped a large number of facts, which have a seeming, but no real relation to our present subject. There is a melancholy satisfaction in the conviction to which I have come, after some years of careful observation, that the amount of self-deception, and insanity, are far greater than the wilful deception by sane individuals. Yet the credulous are constantly deceived by facts, that are simply pathological, and the incredulous declare that all unaccountable facts are fit subjects for the police, and an additional detective force would in their estimation be quite sufficient to explode the humbug of pretended communication between the spiritual and material worlds.

For years my opinion was, that all so-called spiritual manifestations belonged to the classes hysteria and imposition. This foregone conclusion hindered me from fair examination, and my expressed opinions in those days, though just to the classes of facts I examined, are not applicable to phenomena that have since come under my observation.

I propose in these articles to bring together facts and phenomena from my own experience and from the lives of several mediums which have come under my observation, or which have been communicated to me by calm and judicious observers. I shall group these facts together, according to their specific character.

I will now consider what is called impressibility, or the influence that persons and things have over us, by presence, or contact. There is an epidemic character in emotions, as in diseases; a stampede among horses, a panic in an army, the epidemic character of revivals, the influence of public sentiment in creating mobs, and revolutions, where rational conviction has much less effect than blind feeling, are general evidences of impressibility. There is also the legitimate and orderly action of the same faculty, which is seen in a healthy public sentiment, reverence for heroes, and great and good men, the corporate enthusiasm of fire companies, armies, &c., for their object and their leaders. Most persons have some degree of what is termed impressibility; we feel an antipathy for one stranger, and an attraction for another, without any apparent reason. Many persons suppose that the instinctive faculties by which animals secure their safety and their comfort, are not needed by human beings, and that therefore they were left out in the creation of man, and reason given him in exchange. This may be in part true; but is it not also true, that we blunt all our senses by habits which take away a certain amount of the use of each, and consequently, a large amount of that instinct, or intuition, which may be the sum total of the conservative action of all the faculties?

A person of experience, and an undepraved sense of smell, detects the odour of diseases, and hurtful scents, where the ordinary observer perceives nothing, because he has deprived himself of the use of the organs of perception. The human sense of smell may be as acute as the canine. It may be questioned whether this would be comfortable or endurable, in the present state of the civilized world; but in escaping disadvantages, by organic lesion, we must also forego advantages. I do not assert that impressibility is the action of any or all the faculties, but I instance the depravation of the ordinary senses as, perhaps, a parallel to a palsy of singular sensibility or impressibility. Many persons, and especially is this true of infants and children, have an instinctive antipathy to certain other persons. I have never hunted home an antipathy of this kind, without finding that it was justified by some evil in the object. I have seen such antipathy manifest itself in a babe three months old, and I have seen it continued till the little one was old enough to listen to a story, and then the object of the aversion swindled the child out of a most legitimate antipathy, by relating a pathetic tale, in which he represented himself as the sufferer.

I have observed different degrees of impressibility, from that which says, "I don't like to touch what that person has touched, or I would like to have the least thing that such an one had," up to that degree of impressibility that will tell you, by touching the hand-writing, or some article used or worn by a person, the disposition, dominant passion, occupation of the person, and numberless facts respecting him. I have frequently seen an impressibility, that would tell the contents of a sealed letter, by laying the hand upon it, or pressing it against the forehead, or the contents might be indicated in the words of the reader, or merely the subject of the letter, and the disposition of the writer, and his name given. And this, when all was sealed in several envelopes, and only the hand, or forehead brought in contact with the outer envelope. The person telling all this, was a simple country girl, innocent and ignorant, with very little power of apprehending what she was reading with her finger ends. I trace the rudiments of impressibility in a desire for keepsakes, prevalent in the Protestant world, and I recognize a higher form or degree of the same faculty, as one cause (though it may be unknown to themselves) of the wearing of relics by Catholics, and of their usefulness to those who wear them. It is true that the teaching of their church causes relics to be worn and venerated. But whence that teaching? The Catholic claims that the instruction of his church has for its end, the well-being of man: that it is all reasonable, though its reason may far transcend ours. If there is no realized benefit, no conscious effect from the wear-



ing of relics, and blessed objects, would the practice be continued, whoever might advise it? There seems to be a lingering of virtue from separated or departed friends around articles that they have once used and that have been interpenetrated by the sphere of their spiritual character. All the world cannot rob us of this consciousness, and yet we may not at all be able to explain how it is. But because the mother cannot explain why she feels comfort in touching and wearing a lock of her deceased babe's hair, should she, therefore, resign it? Should the lover resign the flower, or the glove worn by his beloved, and that he has treasured long after she is dust, because he cannot tell *how*, or *why* her presence seems blended with these keepsakes?

In my next I purpose to resume my narrative of facts.

M. N.

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#### THE CRITICS.—The "*Athenæum*" and "*Spectator*."

THERE is every reason to fear that the breed has greatly degenerated from the parent stock, though comparatively so short a time has elapsed since literary criticism was invented. Now, every one thinks himself competent to be a critic, and the result is that the art has fallen to zero. It has become little better than jobbery and penny-a-lining. We propose to give illustrations of this in a future number by gathering together the lacerations of the leading literary journals on the recently published works of Mr. Howitt and Mr. Home. Most of these notices are simply fatuous, and do not deserve the name of criticism. They are, even when honest, only on a par with that of the theatrical critic who in Sterne's days measured the pauses between Garrick's soul-throes by a stop-watch. But there are others of these worthies like Mr. Hepworth Dixon, the editor of the *Athenæum*, who write from a different cause. This gentleman complains that Mr. Home passes too lightly over his life at Florence, and thinks it a good insinuation. On making inquiry as to this, we find there is some truth in what Mr. Hepworth Dixon says, and that Mr. Home should have added that Mr. Dixon happened to be there at the time, and that from what he saw and heard of him Mr. Home declined the honour of his proposed acquaintance. This may have shewn bad taste on Mr. Home's part, but Mr. Hepworth Dixon has certainly since shewn great soreness whenever the subject of Spiritualism has been mentioned, and now when the opportunity comes, by his enemy writing a book, he has nothing but a greenish-yellow article which indicates considerable disease of the liver and of the biliary ducts. Perhaps the most amusing notice, from its *naïveté*, is that of the *Spectator*, which makes a small show of fairness, and yet, not-

withstanding the numerous and conclusive testimonies to the facts which appear in Mr. Home's narrative, this writer offers once again to settle the question for ever, if Mr. Home will honour the office of the *Spectator* with his presence, and permit him to witness the phenomena. There is a small preliminary which this gentleman himself ought to go through before he is the accepted arbiter of the question, namely that he should produce the credentials in solemn form under which he claims to act as plenipotentiary. Has he been appointed by the world at large to negotiate this treaty of peace and amity, or is he simply another of that numerous class who has so high an opinion of himself, and so low an opinion of every one else, that he has come to put himself forward without any credentials at all? We have had already a large experience of these persons, and we have not found that when they have been convinced, the world acknowledges that it ever appointed them as its ambassadors. They are then found to be, what indeed they were all along, merely dull units with no importance excepting that which they blindly attribute to themselves, and after them comes up another, and another, and another, each with the same hollow pretensions, who asks that he too shall be convinced. These persons do not see that man himself and all his social relations are but a matter of testimony, and as they began by rejecting testimony, so the world will reject theirs. Let them fully recognize this position, and draw ingenuous comparisons between themselves, and the numerous persons who have given their names as vouching for the facts they have witnessed. Are they themselves much higher in the social scale, or in intelligence, or in honesty than these published witnesses? Have they better eyes for seeing, or ears for hearing? Are they less likely to be biologized or deceived or deluded? If they be, we should be glad to know who they are, but judging from all we do know of them, namely, their positive writing on a subject on which they are admittedly ignorant, and only ask for the means of knowledge, after they have written, instead of before, we have not formed a high opinion of them. Perhaps we are wrong in this, but let them give us the privilege of knowing who they are, who put forward the pretension of being so much trusted by the world. We have a rather extensive acquaintance with the writers of the press, and have not found them by any means supremely wise, but just average persons, striving to earn a somewhat precarious livelihood by not running counter to the prejudices of the day. Is not the writer in the *Spectator* one of these, and is not that paper already so depressed in circulation, that it could not afford to be the organ of an honest "spirit-rapping" editor? Is not the Maurice-Ludlow-Hughes element already sufficiently prominent and dangerous in its pages?

## A "MASTER OF ARTS."

A GENTLEMAN—another of these critics who gives this description of himself, instead of signing his name—says that he has been reading, not the works themselves, but the notices in the press of Mr. Howitt's and Mr. Home's books, and he makes the following proposal:—"Let a photographer be stationed with his apparatus in the room, in which Mr. Home, the extraordinary familiar of the unseen world, shall next float in mid-air, as he records himself to have done. As the sun is a correct delineator, and would not fail to elucidate any contrivances of the conjuring art, a sight of the picture I propose would justify the answer being made to sceptical objectors, that 'seeing is believing,' not less than the perception of the floating performance itself." The letter bears the impress of that temple of orthodoxy, the "Oxford and Cambridge Club," and must therefore be treated with due seriousness and respect. It is from these feelings that it occurs to us to ask if he has always required similar evidence before believing in supernatural occurrences. We fancy that he has solemnly pledged his belief to many such without the testimony which he now seems so important and essential. In this day he can, by taking a cab, have personal interviews within two hours, with half a dozen men of his own university, who will give him full particulars of what they have seen, whilst for more astonishing spiritual facts than Mr. Home's, in which he thinks or says he believes, he can only read an ancient book which is just now being subjected to the special analysis of Bishop Colenso. The bishop's exegesis is not so exacting as to require photographs of the principal occurrences, but henceforth if the new rules of testimony required by this M.A. are to prevail, we shall all want a portable photographic apparatus, to be set up whenever anything remarkable is likely to occur, and we shall have to produce our negatives and positives, as the only mode of satisfying the learned.

It would certainly be very convenient if our family bibles could be illustrated with photographs of the most remarkable occurrences. The first would be one of the creation, after the sun was set in the firmament. Then we should have all the leading events of Paradise, and the Fall, the angels with the flaming swords. The flood and the ark would follow, and the patriarchs. The angels supping with Abraham at the door of his tent; the wrestling of Jacob with the angel; the ascent of Elijah would be subject to the same process. Another would be the wondrous scene which so "astonied" Nebuchadnezzar when he had thrown the three men bound into the burning fiery furnace, and said, "Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt." We have passed by Balaam's ass. There were,

no doubt, many asses in those days, as in these, but we only hear of this one who saw an angel. Why should not a photograph of it be required to prove so wonderful an event? Philip being carried in the air from Gaza to Azotus, would be the subject of another. The angel who appeared to the apostles in prison, and opened the prison doors, and brought them forth (Acts v. 19), and the angel who released Peter from his chains and prison, and afterwards walked with him "through one street," must be pictured in the same way. We forbear to do more than thus show this "Master of Arts," what a double-edged sword he is using by departing from the ordinary rules of human testimony, and setting up his foolish test, which would seem to imply, that nothing happens unless it be photographed.

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"BELL'S MESSENGER," AND MR. SQUIRE.

IN a recent review in *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, of Mr. Howitt's work on *The Supernatural in all Ages and Nations*, is the following passage:—"We recently heard of a surgeon of high standing, and considerable repute, being invited to a *séance*, at which a heavy table was made to lift itself up, and topple over the shoulder of the manipulator, at his pleasure, as if from spontaneous volition! The surgeon was persuaded that the whole process was a trick; and he not only tested it on the spot, but showed the manipulator how it was done, *and did it himself*, although he nearly broke the flexor muscle of his right arm in doing it. It is sufficient to say that there was no report of that evening's *séance* in the Spiritualist publications of the time. Yet to an infinitude of delusions such as these, one so simple-minded, and yet so gifted as William Howitt, has lent himself," &c.

The writer of the review has had an incorrect statement of what really occurred on the evening in question, and is himself open to the charge of credulity for believing in what certainly did not occur. This, however, is so ordinary with these writers, that it would not be necessary, only on that account, to set him right, if he had not suggested, that the alleged exposure by his friend, the eminent surgeon, was dishonestly concealed in the Spiritualist publications of the time. This is a charge of so heinous a kind that it is necessary to answer it. Those who are acquainted with this Magazine as "constant readers," will not need to be reminded, that we have on every occasion been the first to expose all instances of fraud which have come within our knowledge, and we have repeatedly disavowed the having in view any interests but those of truth in our investigations. Indeed, we cannot conceive any motive to the contrary, for certainly the

subject is not a popular one, and there is neither gain in a pecuniary sense, nor in reputation, to be got by running counter to the morbid scepticism of the age, with respect to such phenomena as we are in the habit of laying before our readers. We sincerely trust that if we should ever be detected in keeping back from our readers any important detection of fraud or imposture, they will thenceforth cease to have any confidence in our statements, and treat us as being as bad as the rogues whose dishonesty we conceal.

But let us give the reason why "there was no report of that evening's *séance* in the Spiritualist publications of the time." The writer was present on the occasion to which the reviewer refers, and "the eminent surgeon" is an old and valued friend of his. Unfortunately he is, like too many of his profession, a disbeliever in spiritual realities, and equally sceptical as to both old and new instances of such. He was by no means a hopeful pupil, for he was much pre-occupied by foregone conclusions. Mr. Squire, whose wonderful phenomena are well known to our readers, was the medium on the occasion, and the heavy table, on which he placed only one of his hands, the other being held by a gentleman present, was suddenly and in a moment thrown over his head, on to a bed behind him, his feet being fastened to the chair on which he sat, and no muscular action or movement being detected by the gentleman holding his other hand. The fact was demonstrated as perfectly as it has been before and since in many hundreds of instances.

Then came the turn of the eminent surgeon, who sat down in the chair with the table before him, and in the presence and sight of all present, endeavoured to perform the same feat. By moving his body in all directions, by stretching out his powerful arm to the opposite side of the table, and by the liberal use of his legs, continued for several minutes, by crushing the flesh of his hand by the earnestness of his grasp, *by nearly breaking the flexor muscle of his right arm*, as the reviewer truly states, and throwing himself into a profuse perspiration from which he took long to recover, and, as he was constantly reminded by the bystanders, by breaking every one of the conditions under which the same had been done through Mr. Squire, he finally got the table over his head upon the bed behind him. The whole was a ludicrous burlesque upon science and surgery, and was only an additional proof of the truth of the previous manifestation through Mr. Squire. During its progress it was far from satisfactory to the eminent surgeon himself, who could not fail to recognize the difficulties he was putting himself through to so little purpose.

During Mr. Squire's subsequent residence in Paris, where the same and other phenomena were repeated several times a week

for many months in the presence of hundreds of persons, there were also some eminent persons who thought they could accomplish what the eminent surgeon here so manifestly failed in doing, and a society of gentlemen publicly offered a reward of 1,000 francs to any one who would do the same thing by natural means. This offer stood open during several months, but no one came forward to compete for the reward. If the reviewer in *Bell's Messenger*, who thinks Mr. Howitt so simple-minded, and so easily deluded, would like to try the experiment, we can inform him that the same table is yet in being, and that if he will perform the feat under the same circumstances as it was done by Mr. Squire, we will make him a present in sterling English coin of a similar amount to that offered to his credulous French *confrères*. Meantime, we advise him that he will find "the flexor muscle of his right arm," much less exercised in writing shallow reviews, which if they have any meaning, deny all supernaturalism, and strike at the root of the spiritual foundations of all religions.

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#### MR. PUNCH AND MR. DICKENS.

THESE gentlemen come next in order. They have both been coming out in their respective journals during the past month on the subject of the manifestations. They tax rather heavily the loss of memory of their readers, by wishing them to ignore the phenomena which occurred in the presence of their sons, the Messrs. Evans and Dickens, junr., on the 11th of May, 1860, at the house of a friend in Russell Square. It was on that occasion that Mr. Squire's mediumship was investigated and satisfactorily tested by them, to their great amazement; and though it was only a few days after Mr. Leech's clever cartoon of the spirit-hand, put up to the nose of the Emperor of the French, they evinced their great dread of being grasped by one, by suddenly withdrawing their hands from its touch. Mr. Dickens, junr., took notes, and gave them to his father, and the Messrs. Evans also duly informed the paternal *Punch* of what they had seen, and how entirely satisfied they were with the tests which they had applied. Notwithstanding all this, their parents found it well to try to ignore the facts supplied to them by their own sons, and they hope that by not referring to them, and by taking a bold and independent tone as if they had never occurred, the public will forget them. The full account will be found at page 241 of our first volume, from which we make a short extract, to refresh their memory.

There were other manifestations in their presence, which did not at all make the matter better. An oval table, weighing seventy-five pounds, was several

times lifted a somersault in the air, and thrown on a bed, the left hand only of Mr. Squire being placed on it, and his other hand held by Mr. Dickens. At the request of Mr. Dickens, this was done on both sides of the bed, and afterwards from the foot, having to pass over a high foot-board in the way. One leg of the table was broken off, and the table was lifted successively on to the heads of Mr. Squire and Mr. Dickens, and Mr. Squire and Mr. Evans, whilst Mr. Squire's hands and feet were tied to prevent the possibility of his in any way assisting it. The two gentlemen hurt their hands in trying to prevent the table rising, and sent it out of its course by their efforts, but down upon their heads it came, nevertheless. Should *Punch* wish for a true picture instead of a false one, for one of his forthcoming numbers, we should suggest his making a cartoon of this little incident.

*Punch* has never given us the cartoon, but always avoids this subject, which is no doubt a very unpleasant one to him, as well as to Mr. Dickens, because it tends to impeach either their frankness or their sagacity. Certainly it is a painful thing for them to find their own sons vouching for the truth of facts, of which the parents deny the possibility, and we should be sorry for them, if they would only deal fairly with the case.

*Punch* and some others of the reviewers complain of the use of initials by many of the witnesses to the remarkable phenomena narrated by Mr. Home, and state that they put their testimony entirely out of the question in consequence. In reply to this we beg to say that Mr. Home has furnished us with the means of satisfying any *bonâ fide* inquirer with the full names and addresses of each and all of these persons, and which we are prepared to do in any case in which such information will serve the cause of truth. There are very few of the narrations which cannot be proved by the testimonies of from four to eight witnesses. How comes it that Mr. Dickens, who has himself seen nothing, disbelieves his own son, and all the testimony of those who have repeatedly seen what makes him so angry even to think of. It must surely strike him as very strange, that he can deny without seeing, what they affirm from ocular experience; but he is in the same unenviable position as to all the supernatural of the Bible, which he equally disbelieves, and it is well that his readers should know this state of his mind, as one not confining his disbelief to modern instances only.

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#### THE "SATURDAY REVIEW."

THIS paper, in a review of Mr. Home's book, is both weak and incorrect in its facts, and shews that though it cannot believe facts which have occurred, it can believe readily in those which have never happened. There are several gross mis-statements of matters of fact, such as that it discovered the cheating of Foster, and that we followed its lead, whereas the reverse is the fact, and it *has*, we believe, always been so, that nearly all the intelligent

discoveries of cheating have been made and published by the spiritual journals. The assertion of the reviewer is substantially that no spiritual fact has ever occurred in the history of man excepting those in the Bible, that such facts are impossible, and that they are contrary to his belief.

We have already been made by the assertions of reviewers to see that the impossibility of a thing is no bar to its happening, and we may be in the same way at last driven to find out that things may happen which are contrary to their beliefs, or in other words, that their disbelief has not sufficient dynamic force to prevent the occurrence of a physical fact in nature. Indeed we may say that we have already well nigh arrived at this conclusion, and we desire them to take notice of our opinion. The facts of Spiritualism derive a great part of their importance from the denials of these men of their possibility, and it is a work of great charity on our part to be continually pressing them under their notice, in order to correct their ignorance, and enlarge their ideas.

*The Saturday Review* also, like the "Master of Arts," introduces some new rules of evidence. He requires photography as the only test of truth, whilst the *Saturday* gentlemen require "eleven Judges, or eleven Q.C.'s, or eleven Fellows of the College of Physicians or even eleven bishops." We suppose that this is in addition to having the photographs, so that the demands increase according to the ignorance of each questioner. We certainly had not had the advantage of any eleven of the classes he names to the miracles of the Bible, which indeed would soon crumble in our hands under the application of such a test. For the most of them, there are not the written testimonies of so many as three witnesses, and these do not always agree as to all the circumstances stated, so that in this day we are certainly superior in point of testimony. Although we cannot number eleven Judges as witnesses, we can yet name five, and amongst them Lord Lyndhurst, as being satisfied of the occurrence of the facts, also one very eminent Q.C., and many of the bar, and of the College of Physicians, and two bishops. There is far less testimony to the old miracles, and we fail to recognize eleven Q.C.'s in the twelve fishermen and the Evangelists who in twos and threes either witnessed or performed what is described. The *Saturday Reviewers* of those days were called Sadducees. Our friends have made a discovery, too, that persons who are represented by initials are non-existent, and that facts do not happen unless the names of the witnesses are given, although he conceals even his initials; and he instances the narrative of what occurred at Sandgate in the presence of thirteen persons, and says that the whole is based on Mr. Home's personal assertion. We have at hand the names, and we know personally the whole of these thirteen persons, and to



proper enquirers we will give them, and so of the other cases in which initials are given, we personally vouch for the fact that they exist and are credible persons, and we will, if necessary, furnish their names and addresses. We were quite unaware of this new doctrine of testimony, or that any one at this day would accept the stupid axiom of Bishop Douglas in his *Criterion*.

The reviewer alleges that if he were to go to St. Paul's, and say he saw a large bird on the cross, in five minutes several would say they saw it too. Let him try the experiment, and we predict that instead of seeing it on the cross, they will recognize it on the ground occupied by the reviewer, and pronounce it to be of the goose genus. The whole article is really below par, and is a great disgrace to a paper which pretends to write essays for the upper ten thousand, of whom a large proportion have witnessed the facts which he denies. Perhaps, the silliest argument is, that those who have witnessed the most are the least competent witnesses. He who has seen nothing, considers himself, therefore, the most competent, and to be without the "invincible prejudice" of those who have frequently seen the facts with their own eyes. Galileo and all true observers are tainted with the same invincible prejudice. But really the difference between us is, that we have not settled so completely as he has what is possible and impossible, and this because actual observation has enlarged our knowledge. It is a great comfort that the denial of this shallow-pated writer, cannot limit the bounds of the possible, and that notwithstanding his gooseish cackle, the facts can and do occur precisely as they are described. He repudiates the evidence of believers *because* they believe on the evidence of their senses of sight, and touch, and hearing, and he "knows nothing" of Dr. Gully whose reputation has created Malvern. If the reviewer would give his name, the position might be more truly reversed, and we could say that we "know nothing" of the pert young critic, who would thus make an end of all testimony, opinion, and belief whatever, by his illogical, dishonest, and conceited essay. Finally, we are reduced to the conclusion that facts may and do occur notwithstanding their impossibility, and the disbelief of the *Saturday Review*.

"I never said it was possible; I only said it was true," is an old saying which we would commend to his notice.

## THE SPIRIT-WORLD.

How hard it is for mortal man  
 Beyond the bounds of earth to mount !  
 Too much engrossed by earthly things,  
 Of heaven we take no count.

Life's weight of meanness holds us down,  
 When high our spirits fain would rise :  
 When we would see celestial sights,  
 Earth's blindness shuts our eyes.

And thus we feel not what a world  
 Of spirits waits upon our life ;  
 That every foot of common air  
 With heavenly souls is rife.

Ah me ! the solemn thought, that man  
 Is compassed by such eyes as these !  
 That every action from his birth  
 A purer nature sees !

Perchance they mark not acts alone ;  
 It may be, thoughts lie open too :  
 Each sin, committed and conceived,  
 The sinless angels view.

Ah ! what a sight for holy eyes,  
 The open heart of sinful man !  
 What is their pity, what their grief,  
 When such a sight they scan !

They see the good, whose head is crowned  
 With praise from every human lip,  
 Full of all frailty, when disguise  
 From his weak heart they strip.

They mark how selfishness defiles  
 The love which men esteem most pure :  
 They mark how oft the virtue slips,  
 We blindly hold most sure.

Well might we shudder at the gaze,  
 That sees what lies most deep within,  
 If angels loved, like men, to mark  
 The weakness and the sin.

But they have pity for our state ;  
 They mourn, but they will not condemn ;  
 Our common Father is the Judge,  
 Who judgeth us and them.

They love to succour and to heal ;  
 In woe they soothe, in guilt reprove :  
 It is for kindly offices  
 They leave their home above.

Perchance the dead thus visit us,  
 In form of angels hovering near :  
 Alas, we soon forget ; yet we  
 To them may still be dear.

Ah ! think, when thou art urged to sin,  
 Think that, it may be, by thy side  
 Stands thy lost mother, or thy child,  
 Perchance thy youthful bride ;

Stands, and entreats for thee with prayer  
 That almost mars her sainted joy :  
 Nor deem it strange if earthly sin  
 Celestial bliss alloy.

Closelier connected than we think  
 Are heaven and earth : though high above  
 The earth be heaven, through height and depth  
 Stretches the chain of love.

WILLIAM FULFORD.

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### WHAT I MYSELF HAVE WITNESSED.

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I HAVE seen tables and lightstands of various size moved about in the most astonishing manner, by what purported to be an invisible agency, with only the gentle and passive resting of the hands and finger-ends of the medium on one of their edges. Also, many distinct movings of such objects, by request, *without* the touch of the medium at all. I have sat and conversed by the hour together with the authors of these sounds and motions, by means of signals first agreed on ; asking questions and obtaining answers—receiving communications spelled out by the alphabet—discussing propositions sometimes made by them to me, and *vice versa*—all by slow process, indeed, but with every possible demonstration of intelligence, though not without incidental misapprehensions and mistakes. I have witnessed the asking of mental questions by inquirers, who received as prompt and correct answers as when the questions were asked audibly to the cognition of the medium.

I have known these invisibles, by request, to write their names with a common plumbago pencil on a clean sheet of paper

—half a dozen of them, each in a different hand. To make sure of this, as an absolute fact, the medium was required to lay her left hand, back downwards, in the hollow of a veracious person's hand, both open; when a piece of pasteboard paper was laid on her hand, a well-examined blank sheet of writing-paper placed thereon, and a lead pencil on top of *that*; in which position (the medium's right hand being held up to view), both the hands, with these fixtures resting on them, were placed under the leaf of the table, as insisted on by the *writers*. After a minute or two, at a given signal by the spirits that they had done, the paper was exhibited with various names written thereon, as above affirmed. This was repeatedly tested with the same results, under circumstances putting all suspicion of fraud and jugglery entirely at rest.

I have requested what purported to be the spirit of a friend many years deceased, to go to a particular place, several miles distant from that of the *sitting*, and to bring me back intelligence respecting the then health and doings of a certain relative well-known to the parties. In three minutes of time the intelligence was obtained, numerous particulars given, some of them rather improbable, but every one exactly confirmed the next day, by personal inquiries made for that purpose.

I have been requested by the invisibles to speak on a particular subject, at a given time and place, with the assurance that responses should be made on the occasion, by knockings, approving the truths uttered; all which was strikingly verified. Once, at a most unexpected interview, when nothing of the kind had been previously thought of by any person present, a spirit, so purporting, who had several times evinced much interest in my public labours, spelled out:—"Have you selected your subjects of discourse for the next Sunday?" "Only one of them," I answered. "Would my spirit-friend like to suggest a text for the other part of the day?" "Yes." "What is it?" I enquired. He spelled out the word "The," and ceased. Wondering at his silence, the signal of another spirit was given. The new comer communicated by *movings* of the table, not by *raps*, like the other. He said that our friend the rapper, had been suddenly summoned away for a few moments, but would certainly return soon. He did return within fifteen minutes, resumed his communication just where he left it, and spelled out—"The second chapter of first Corinthians, the twelfth and thirteenth verses." No one in the room had the least recollection of the words referred to. So the Bible was called for, when the text proved to be the following:—"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things we

also speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth: comparing spiritual things with spiritual." Struck with the sublimity, purity, richness, and force of the passage, I answered that I accepted it thankfully, as a very appropriate text for the occasion referred to, and would endeavour to illustrate its great truths as well as I might be able.—*Rev. Adin Ballou.*

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## SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHS.

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AN important letter has been published by Dr. Gardner in the *Banner of Light*, Boston, which throws doubt upon the genuineness of two of these alleged spirit photographs, and until the circumstances be fully investigated and satisfactorily accounted for, no reliance can be placed upon the person who is implicated. We are glad that Dr. Gardner, who was one of the first to give publicity to this possible phenomenon, is also the first to caution the public of possible fraud in the matter. The editor of the *Banner* in introducing Dr. Gardner's letter says:—

"When the subject of spirit photography was first mooted in this city, we cautioned our friends and the public not to be too sanguine in regard to what purported to be a new phase of spirit-power—as we considered it a matter of great moment, if true, and an unpardonable deception, if untrue—and accordingly advised them to scrutinize carefully the *modus operandi* of taking these pictures. Subsequently we received what we considered reliable evidence of the genuineness of several of the *cartes de visite* produced by Mr. Mumler—which evidence is before the public. Since then Spiritualists and others have investigated the phenomenon, to the best of their ability without detecting the least fraud on the part of the artist. But recently the gentlemen whose names are appended to the subjoined articles, and other parties, have expressed themselves that several of these photographs are *not* genuine spirits portraits; and in justice to ourselves and the community at large, we are in duty bound to open our columns to their statements, hoping that the whole truth may be arrived at thereby. We fully endorse Dr. Gardner, wherein he expresses the opinion that Mr. Mumler has produced spirit pictures that are genuine, notwithstanding the evidence to the contrary which is given below:—

“ ‘ DR. H. F. GARDNER'S STATEMENT.

“ ‘ MR. EDITOR—Please allow me a small space in your columns to say to the many friends who have written me upon

the subject of spirit photographs, as produced by Mr. W. H. Mumler, that while I am fully of the belief that genuine spirit likenesses have been produced through his mediumship, evidence of deception in two cases, at least, has been furnished me, which is perfectly conclusive. I have, during all my investigations of the subject of spirit photography, been forced by the accumulating evidence into the belief that genuine spirit likenesses were produced, and have frankly and openly so stated at all times and under all circumstances, and I deeply regret the necessity that compels me, through irrefragable evidence, to state with equal frankness that I am satisfied, beyond a doubt, that in the instances above referred to, Mr. Mumler, or some person connected with Mrs. Stuart's rooms, has been guilty of deception in palming off, as genuine spirit likenesses, pictures of a person who is now living in this city.

Yours for the truth,

“ Boston, Feb. 20, 1863. H. F. GARDNER, M.D.’ ”

There is a further letter, giving particulars to the same effect, by Mr. Latham. Upon these letters the *Herald of Progress* makes the following comments:—

“ The letters of Dr. Gardner, and John Latham, published in the *Banner of Light*, and alluded to last week, express in distinct terms the conviction of these two gentlemen that at least two of the alleged spirit-pictures were produced by deceptive means. The proof is found in the exact resemblance of two alleged spirit-forms to the likeness of a living person whose photograph was taken at Mrs. Stuart's rooms some months since. We have seen the two ‘spirit’-pictures, but not the original. We would not hesitate to declare the two to be likenesses of one person. Our position in respect to these pictures is the same as it has been. We believe spirit-photographs to be possible. The claim of Mr. Mumler's pictures to be accepted as such rests on testimony in each and every case. We have only declared upon some of this testimony, which has been clear and indisputable. The fact that a ‘spirit’-form is the likeness of a living person, though affording strong presumptive proof of deception, is not absolutely conclusive, especially when the conditions essential to a fraud appear to be wanting, since, if it is possible to produce a spirit-image at all, it is equally possible for a spirit to reflect an image of a mortal, though extremely unlikely to be done. The repeated calls for decisive statements from us, as to these pictures, have not yet betrayed us, and will not betray us into any pre-judgment or hasty decision. We have not hesitated to declare upon the plain and reliable statements of trustworthy persons. Such testimony applies only to certain pictures. As to others—unattested—we have nothing to say; nor is there aught discouraging to us in

the fact that this, with other manifestations, has to be settled to each investigator by evidence conclusive to him, and often to him alone. Fortunately there is no court of inquiry whose report on these pictures is 'final.' Simple justice to Mr. Mumler, either as an honest medium or most expert trickster, requires us to admit that no single person has alleged the existence of even the slightest appearance of deception in his arrangements or operations. Those who have enjoyed the freedom of his rooms for days and weeks, fail to discover a single suspicious indication. So far as known, his methods do not differ from those of other photographers.

C.M.P.

"Since the above was written, we have received this week's *Banner of Light*, in which appears the following card, to which, we trust, Mr. Mumler will promptly respond, and afford every desired facility:—

"A CARD.

"I propose to go to Mr. Mumler's rooms with a committee of disinterested men and an honest reporter, and I will then and there, in presence of that committee and reporter, discover and exhibit the trick of spiritual photographing as done by said Mumler, if he, Mumler, will grant said committee, reporter, and myself, the same privileges that I have heard he has given to Mr. Guay, who has written favourably of his (Mumler's) operations in regard to spirit-photographing.

"CHARLES B. BOYLE."

We have also received from Dr. F. T. Child a letter and the additional photographs which are referred to in it. Dr. Child says:—

"I have had no further opportunity of investigating the spirit photographs personally since I wrote you. It is now over four months since the first of these were taken, and as yet, no one has detected any fraud or discovered any means by which pictures similar in all respects can be taken. Several hundred pictures have been taken by Mr. Mumler. I have seen over of one hundred and more than half of these have been recognized by respectable persons as pictures of deceased friends. I send herewith some duplicates.

"No. 1 is Mr. Taylor of Central Indiana; they had a child about seven months' old, which died, and having no picture of it, he concluded to go to Boston, nearly 800 miles from his home, and try to get a picture of their child; he held his arm in the peculiar position you see, and the form of the child was on the plate. He was an entire stranger in Boston, said nothing to any

one about his intention, and he declares, most emphatically, that it is a faithful likeness of their baby. He is said to be a man of strict integrity. Mr. Robert Dale Owen shewed me two pictures which are interesting. A gentleman residing near Boston went to Mr. Mumler and obtained his picture, and the form of his first wife with a peculiar head-dress; he took it home, and his present wife said, 'You know, my dear, I am desirous of maintaining the best feeling towards your former wife; we will say nothing about this, and I will go into Boston and see if I cannot get a similar picture;' 'Very well,' said her husband; she did so, and obtained a picture of the same spirit, with a different head-dress and in a different posture. The veracity of these parties is unquestionable.

"No. 2 is a singular picture. Mrs. Isaac Babbit, of Boston, a lady of the highest respectability, obtained a picture of her deceased husband, which had been recognized by hundreds of persons who knew him. At another sitting this child was recognized—it is a niece; you can see the aunt's face in the forehead of the child. Either the "model" must have been very large, or it was held nearer the camera than the lady sat. I have about fifty pictures, most of which have been recognized. Other artists are trying experiments. I saw a picture of a medium a few days since, and over the head were three stars. I have seen several in which there have been bundles of rays of light thrown on the head. There is an artist at Roxbury, near Boston, who has taken a number of pictures with very distinct forms on them, though I believe no one has been recognized. I send you—Mr. Robert Dale Owen, No. 3—it was taken at Roxbury, and he cannot tell whose the form is that stands beside him. No. 4 is one of my own taken by the same artist, the form not recognized. But I had no opportunity of seeing the entire process at Roxbury, as in Mumler's case, and from the character of the pictures I have considerable doubts of their spiritual origin. I am certain they might be produced by another negative, but I do not know that they were so produced. I think we shall have more light on this interesting subject before long.

" Yours truly,  
" HENRY T. CHILD, M.D.

" Philadelphia,  
" Feb. 17th, 1863."

As we have said, the question to be decided is not of possibility, as to which we can know nothing, but it is one of direct evidence in each case, and by that test it must stand or fall. We must still wait the result of this, bearing in mind that in the numerous cases in which spirits have made themselves visible there would be no physical reason against obtaining a photograph. For



instance in the case known as the "Lord Chancellor's Ghost" where a female figure was seen by several persons preceding Mr. Roche, the Registrar of the Bankruptcy Court, into his bed room mentioned at page 218 of our last volume. The only assumed impossibility therefore is in those cases in which the spirit is not visible to the naked eye, and as to this impossibility we cannot pronounce *à priori*. Certainly it is well established that the eye is not the measure for the photograph, and this is fully proved by the interesting experiments of Baron Reichenbach, who obtained the results on sensitive paper, from the odic light flowing from a magnet, which light could not be detected by the naked eye. In other words the paper was more sensitive to the rays of light than the human eye.

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## Notices of Books.

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### HOWITT'S HISTORY OF THE SUPERNATURAL.

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Is this welcome and much needed contribution to literature and philosophy, which we were able only to barely notice in our last number, Mr. Howitt defines Spiritualism as—"simply the revival of the universal faith of all past times and nations in the communion of God and his angels with the spirit of man." This definition, which fully accords with that we have adopted as the motto of this Magazine, is no less true, than it is broad; and the petty artifice which seeks to discredit Spiritualism by characterising it as "spirit-rapping" (as if that comprised both its complete statement and refutation), is a mere piece of vulgar claptrap, which we hope that henceforth no intelligent, ingenuous writer will again resort to. With rare learning and research, Mr. Howitt brings together evidence from far and near, from people of different times, races, languages and religions—from history, sacred and secular—from biography and poetry—from philosophy and Scripture—from the traditions and mythology of the far-off past—from prophets and apostles—from the Christian fathers, saints, confessors, martyrs, and reformers—from later and eminent theologians of various churches—from travellers in distant climes, and from the literature of divers periods, countries and forms, to demonstrate this common, we might, perhaps, say, instinctive belief of humanity, "as old as the hills, and as ubiquitous as the ocean." "In the heart and soul of mankind, the great truth is found to be rooted inextricably with

the roots of life and of all consciousness." From the wide survey he has taken in this work, Mr. Howitt makes the induction that the golden chain of the supernatural is a *Lex Magna* of the universe. And so far from holding that what are called miracles are interruptions or violations of the course of nature, he regards them only as the results of spiritual laws, which in their occasional action subdue, suspend, or neutralize the less powerful physical laws, just as a stronger chemical affinity subdues a weaker one, producing new combinations, but combinations strictly in accordance with the collective laws of the universe, whether understood or not yet understood by us.

The sceptics who are so fond of appealing to experience, have not only present experience, but the cumulative experience of all the ages against them. Let them fairly grapple with this aggregate of evidence; for no mere microscopical reasoning, picking out a hole here, and finding a flaw there, can materially affect the general value of this testimony, taken as a whole. Nor will it meet the case to say that this belief, admitting its universality, is no proof of its truth; that men have universally held opinions, which science has subsequently demonstrated to be erroneous; for this faith is not one of opinion, grounded in speculation on matter beyond the limits of human knowledge or opinion, or of limited and defective observation; but everywhere it claims to be based upon positive fact, upon direct observation and experience, which no discovery in science can impair, and the reality of which is attested by the number of independent sources from whence it is derived.

Earnest souls, everywhere, are alike weary of an unsatisfying scepticism, and of the ever-renewed because ever-unsatisfactory efforts to remove it by mere verbal argument. On a question of fact what is needed is, not words and opinions, but facts; facts which shall speak to us not only from the past, but from both the past and the present. This, and this alone, will offer a blunt impassable terminus to scepticism and neology, and give certain assurance to the yearnings and aspirations of the soul; and lay the foundations deep and wide of a true spiritual philosophy which shall harmonize the conflicting claims of Reason and of Faith. In establishing beyond a peradventure the realities of a spiritual world, it will also confirm those salutary feelings and convictions which tend to that renovation of character and life which it is the object of Christianity to enforce.

But for the strange blunder of some reviewers, we should hardly have deemed it necessary to apprise the reader that Mr. Howitt does not attach equal weight and importance to every narrative to which he has referred. The very title-page of his book should have sufficed to prevent such a misconception. His

*History* is written to demonstrate "a Universal Faith," not the absolute verity of every particular relation in connection with it. At the same time, to regard the great mass of evidence he has presented as fiction, would be wholly to discredit human testimony in all matters of which we had not personal experience; and the supposition that the universal faith he has demonstrated (and which his critics have not attempted to invalidate) has been through all ages based upon delusion and lies, implies a degree of credulity which we should think to a sane mind was hardly possible.

Mr. Howitt incidentally alludes to his own experiences of spirit-manifestations. We hope that he will take an early opportunity of detailing these more fully than he has done in these slight incidental references, as they go far to clinch his argument. There is a general tendency in human nature to attach special weight to what a man says of his own knowledge, especially when, as in the case of Mr. Howitt, he is one widely known and respected, and in whose integrity we feel we can place perfect confidence. All who are familiar with his writings, too, know him to be a man of keen, shrewd observation, who *sees* what he looks at, (which is not the case with all persons), and reports faithfully only what he sees. His *History of Priestcraft* is a sufficient proof that his bias is not towards superstition, and that he is not a man to tolerate imposture. Let us then, as Spiritualism is on trial at the bar of public opinion, put Mr. Howitt in the witness-box, and hear his evidence as to the facts: bearing in mind his declaration,—“The author adds his own conclusions from a *practical examination of these higher phenomena, through a course of more than seven years.*” When those who differ from Mr. Howitt can make a similar declaration, their conclusions will be entitled to greater respect than in general they have now any right to claim for them. But let us hear Mr. Howitt's deposition. He says:—

We have seen tables often enough lifted by invisible power from the floor; seen them give answers to questions by rising and sinking in the air; we have seen them in the air keep time by their movements to a tune playing on a piano; seen them slide about the floor of a room, laying themselves down when touched, and refusing to do anything for a fortnight together, but thus to creep about the floor whenever touched. We have heard bells ring in the air, and seen them thus ringing move about a room; seen flowers broken from plants, and carried to different persons, without any visible hand; seen musical instruments play correct airs apparently of themselves, and even rise up, place themselves on a person's head, and there, just over it, but not touching it, play out a well-known air in fine style. We have heard remarkable predictions given through mediums, and which have come literally to pass; heard wonderful descriptions of scenes in the visible world made by persons in clairvoyant trance, which would require the highest imaginative genius to invent or embody in words; have seen writing done by pencils laid on paper in the middle of the floor, not within reach of any person present, and innumerable such things.

And in speaking of the drawings made by Madam Hauffé

under spirit-influence, he takes occasion to make the following statement of his own experience as a spirit-medium :—

Having myself, who never had a single lesson in drawing, and never could draw in a normal condition, had a great number of circles struck through my hand under spirit influence, and these filled up by tracery of ever new invention, without a thought of my own, I, at once, recognise the truth of Kerner's statement. The drawings made by my hand have been seen by great numbers of persons, artists, as well as others, and remain to be seen, though the power is again gone from me. Giotto, or any pair of compasses, could not strike more perfect circles than I could under this influence, with nothing but a piece of paper and a pencil. No inventor of tracery or patterns could invent such original ones as were thrown out on the paper day after day, with almost lightning speed, except with long and studious labour, and by instrumental aid. At the same time the sketches given through me are not to be named with the drawings, both in pencil and colours, produced in this manner through others who are well known.

Mr. Howitt forcibly points out that those who have led the English onslaught on Spiritualism have either simply repeated the worn-out arguments urged by objectors in America after they had ceased doing duty there, or have pillaged—or if they prefer it, borrowed without acknowledgment, the weapons which the Pagan philosophers hurled against Christianity. And in doing this he also cuts at the root of a very popular fallacy. The press of this country, which for the most part cries out lustily against Spiritualism as an imposture, always assumes that its phenomena occur chiefly, or only, in the presence of professional mediums, against whom, as they are interested in producing them, there is always a *prima facie* case of suspicion, and on this pretence they strive to confound them with jugglers and conjurors' tricks. Let it then be understood that this assumption is wholly unwarranted and contrary to the facts; that though there are a few professional mediums, who being open to the public, are of course more widely known, yet that these are only a small fraction, probably much less than a hundredth-part of the number of persons who are consciously mediums, but whose mediumship is seen only at their own family and private circles, and among these, are some, like Mr. Howitt, of whom the public is not ignorant, and whom critics dare not treat otherwise than with respect. If then it comes to this—as it does on the showing of most adverse critics, that we are to believe that our friends, and the members of our own families; daughters, sisters, wives, mothers, brothers, and fathers, have suddenly, and from no motive, become cheats and liars; or else—that Spiritualism is true; we shall not be long making up our minds which horn of the dilemma to take. But to the quotation from Mr. Howitt, with which, and a hearty commendation of his book, this notice must conclude :—

How frequently have we had to listen to this class of borrowed arguments. Why, said the learned heathen, did not God come as God? Why, say the anti-Spiritualists now, do not His angels come openly as angels? Why do they

confine themselves to modes of communication as strange to the wise now, as Christ's mode of coming was to the wise then?

And all this time, in England, thousands and tens of thousands were daily sitting down in their families and circles of intimate friends, and were quietly, and as people of common sense, successfully testing those angels under their own mode of advent, and finding them real. And both in America and here, as well as in most of the continental nations, this private mode has been the great mode of enquiry and conviction. Not one man in a hundred has ever seen a public medium. Public mediums have, in reality, only inaugurated the movement: it has been, of necessity, carried on by private and family practice. In this domestic prosecution of Spiritualism, equally inaccessible to the vulgar necromancer and the interested impostor—where every person was desirous only of truth, and many of them of deep religious truth—the second stage of spiritual development, the more interior and intellectual, has been reached by a very large community. For there is, indeed, a very large section of society who are sick of mere empty profession, or still more disgusted with the dreary cheat of scepticism, and who have been long yearning for some revelation of the immortal hopes of earlier years, in some substantial and unmistakeable form. They have found this in the daily visits of their departed friends, coming to them with all their old identities of soul, of taste, or common memory of glad or trusting incidents, of announcements of Christian truth, and of God's promised felicity. They have listened again and again to the words of their beloved ones, bidding them take courage, for there was no death, no place for darkness or death; but that around them walked their so-called departed, ready to aid them and comfort them in their earth's pilgrimage, and to receive them to immediate and far more glorious existence.

That great cry which has, at one time or other, ascended from the universal human heart, for positive and personal assurance of the reality of the Christian promises, and the reunion of beloved friends, had been going up from theirs; and they had felt how comparatively small is the value of all the evidences given to others, and especially to the ancient world, weighed against one such evidence to themselves. All human souls have felt this; all have cried, 'How long, O Lord, wilt Thou continue to me a God who hidest Thyself?' Mrs. Crawford, in the *Metropolitan Magazine*, in 1836, tells us that the then Lord Chedworth was a man who suffered deeply from doubts of the existence of the soul in another world; and that he had a friend, very dear to him, as sceptical as himself. Whilst one morning relating to his niece, Miss Wright, at breakfast, that his friend appeared to him the night before, exactly as he appeared in life, and told him that he died that night at eight o'clock, and that there was another world, and a righteous God who judgeth all—and whilst Miss Wright was ridiculing the idea of the apparition—a groom rode up the avenue bringing a letter announcing the fact of his friend's sudden death at the time stated by the spirit. Mrs. Crawford adds, 'The effect it had upon the mind of Lord Chedworth was as happy as it was permanent; all his doubts were at once removed, and for ever.'

To such a certainty, and comfort to a single mind tortured with doubts, what is the value of the finest sceptical writing that ever was written?

We had intended to say a few words on the treatment Mr. Howitt's book has received and is receiving from the press—from writers, most of whom it is evident have not given as many hours to the practical investigation of the phenomena as Mr. Howitt has years; but it all may be summed up in Cowper's well-known couplet—

"The owls and bats in full assembly find  
On strictest search the keen-eyed eagle—blind."

We are not surprised at this result. No "respectable journal" dare accept the supernatural manifestations recorded in Mr Howitt's book as the present realities they claim to be. For

the press to receive any book making such affirmation with candid and intelligent appreciation, would be a greater miracle than any which Mr. Howitt has recorded. The reviewers generally approach every such work with a foregone conclusion against it, and seek only so to manipulate the case that it shall fit in with the verdict which in their own minds they have already pronounced. The scornful tone they assume is the natural expression of that state of mind which does not know and will not learn, and which breasts all facts novel to it, and which run counter to its prejudices, with a front of dogged stolid resistance. That despite of this Spiritualism holds its own, and makes headway, is due solely to its being based on facts, which "winna ding," let critics without knowledge, without investigation, and with no better guide than blind incredulity, wag their pens as they may. "Still it moves," and will move, and Mr. Howitt's book is one of many evidences that it does so. *Magna est veritas.*

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,"

And in this matter of Spiritualism it does err most egregiously.

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## Correspondence.

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### SOME CURIOUS INCIDENTS.

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*To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."*

SIR, my dear grandfather was an Independent minister. He was one of the few whose spirit kept pace with the times, singularly free from bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and to the last a most congenial friend and adviser of young men. I feel convinced, from many little incidents of his life, that he was a "medium," and had he been spared a few more years, when the subject of "Spiritualism" came more under public attention, that it would have found in him a deeply interested inquirer. Although my grandfather seldom introduced such subjects, I quite remember as a child feeling, from little remarks I had heard in conversation, that his belief in "spirits," or as we now call it "Spiritualism," was greater than that of most people in those days.

I was one day accompanying him in his round of pastoral visits, when my suspicions were confirmed to an unexpected degree, in the following conversation. "Do you believe in spirits, grandpapa?" I inquired. "Oh, yes!" he said, "indeed, I do!" and upon further questioning, he said, "I frequently see your uncle S——," referring to a son, who had also been an Independent minister, and had died from consumption, many years before the times I speak of. "He comes to me at night when I am alone, after the others are gone to bed, and stays with me, often an hour and more at a time, when we have long and most interesting conversations." "What about?" I inquired. "That," he replied, "I may not tell you, or any one, but, among other things, he frequently suggests subjects for my sermons." I asked if he had ever seen any of his other children, (of whom he had lost five in consumption, from the age of sixteen and upwards). He replied "Yes, I have seen and talked to M—— a few times, but not often."

J. R—, his eldest daughter, evidently inherited this mediumship, as several incidents of her life clearly revealed. I will relate two of the most remarkable, that now suggest themselves. In the year 1825, she was visiting some friends, at a distant city. One evening she retired to bed, when instead of rest, an indescribable, as it was unaccountable, feeling of dread came over her, and a conviction, improbable as it appeared, that R—, was endangering his life by fire. R—, it should be stated, was the gentleman to whom she was engaged to be married, and who had spent the previous evening with her. The feeling of the danger at length, became so vivid, that she aroused some one to whom she communicated her presentiments, as was to be expected however they were looked upon, as merely nervous agitation; it was nevertheless so great, she could not be left the remainder of the night. The morning came, and with it R— made his appearance; her first words were, "Where have you been? I'm sure you have been in danger from fire!" His surprise may be imagined, for he had come to relate that, on his way home, on the previous evening, he had discovered a fire breaking out in an upholsterer's warehouse—belonging to a relative—when, with the assistance of some soldiers he sent for, he was the means of saving nearly the whole stock, though not before he had run considerable risk, once indeed, he had scarcely left a room, before the ceiling and one of the walls fell in, with a force which would probably have been fatal to him had it happened a few minutes before.

Another incident happened a few months afterwards of an equally remarkable character. On this occasion she was at home. All had retired to rest for the night, when about three o'clock in the morning, she rose with an indescribable feeling of anxiety, went into her parents' room, and told them she was sure R— was coming, and that he was then in danger of being drowned. No reasoning could allay her feeling of restlessness, and at last she determined to get up and prepare breakfast for him. This she did. In less than an hour R— knocked at the door, when, instead of an astonished enquirer to know who was there that time of night, as he had reason to expect, a voice called out, "I knew you were coming; I'm ready—I have lighted a fire, and water is nearly boiling. I saw you coming up the road and pass along a gate under which the flood was rushing—your foot slipped, and it is a wonder you were not drowned!" When R— came in he found everything comfortable and cheerful, excepting only the faces; they were, however, soon made so by his safe arrival. It appeared that business had suddenly called him to London, when, as the coach passed within five miles of the house, he determined to spend a few hours there. As he was not expected, however, of course no conveyance was in waiting for him; he was, therefore, compelled to walk. When he had gone about three miles of the distance, he found the river swollen to such an extent as to make it almost impossible to trace the road, and at one part he was only able to do so by keeping close to and walking along some railings; while doing this his foot had slipped just in the manner and at the critical point, so minutely described by J. R—.

Yours truly,  
F. J. T.

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To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."

Wakefield, 4th February, 1863.

SIR,—I have just finished perusing the current number of your periodical, with regard to George Muller, of Bristol. Allow me to assure you that were I allowed to give you in detail *visible* instances of answer to prayer, I might mention many as having occurred to the religious community of Dominican nuns residing at Stone, Staffordshire, but a regard for the feeling of these ladies induces me to abstain from relating circumstances as extraordinary as those detailed by your correspondent, "T. S." However, I shall now give you two anecdotes connected with my own family, which you are at full liberty to publish. One of the earlier numbers of your magazine contained some instances of what is called *presentiment* of death. I was in hopes that these anecdotes would have been continued, and actuated by that desire, I give the following:—On the last Sunday in May, 1838, I was sitting with my eldest sister in the parlour; we had just read the evensong

of the Established Church, of which I was then a member; after remaining quiet for a few minutes, as if in deep thought, she exclaimed, "Oh, E——, I shall die this day week!" and left the room. As she was going upstairs she turned to me, and said, "When next I come down these stairs, it will be in my coffin." I enquired if she desired to see her usual medical attendant. "No," was her reply; "I am quite well, but I shall die at three o'clock next Sunday." The next morning her medical attendant was sent for, who laughed at her nervousness. However, as she had predicted, she died at three o'clock, p.m., on Sunday, 3rd June, 1838. The circumstances attending her death are narrated by one of her medical attendants.

The other incident occurred to myself:—Shortly after my reconciliation to the Church of Rome, I went on a visit to some of my relations at St. Servan. I was requested some time in the month of May, 1847, to lock the cellar door before coming upstairs to tea. On going to do so, I saw standing before me a figure of a woman dressed in black, in the cellar, with her hands stretched out. In my confusion I dropped the key, and while searching for it I still saw her standing in the same position. After locking the door I joined the family party at tea, and mentioned the matter casually, when some children exclaimed that "I had seen the ghost," and on requesting an explanation was informed that the house was said to be haunted. In the course of the evening I called on an Irish family, and while they were laughing at my narrative, I looked up and saw a lady, a perfect stranger to me—a friend of the family. I observed half jestingly, "Were I not sure of the contrary, I should be inclined to believe that you have been playing me a trick, as I never saw two persons more alike than you and my ghost." The effect of this innocent remark on my part acted as an electric shock on the lady in question, and she immediately fainted. As soon as she had been restored to consciousness, I learned that her sister had died suddenly in the house where I was staying, and that her *révenant* (ghost if you will) or spirit as I call it, was haunting the place. A few weeks after this, I accompanied a large party to the orphanage. On reaching the door I was informed by a clergyman, who was one of the party, and who is now, I believe, *vicaire* at St. Servan or its neighbourhood, that Madame D——'s child at the time of her death, an infant, was in the orphanage. On going into the *salle*, a room where there were about two hundred children, I pointed out little Marie D——, and enquired if she was not Madame ——'s niece. I was answered in the affirmative. My reply in answer to the question how I recognized the child was, that I never saw any one so like the *révenant* I had seen (excepting her aunt) as this little child. The same apparition has been seen by many others, and if you like I shall be most happy to give you the names of parties who have seen the ghost. Enclosing my card and address

Believe me to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,

AMICUS VERITATIS

#### EXTRACT FROM A LETTER,

*Dated September 14th, 1859.*

"Dear Robert, his last prayer was for peace and love. On Wednesday night, about one, he (my father) asked Victoria and me to sing to him; Victoria sang the 218th hymn. I could not help her—my tongue was palsied. Papa joined her, and sang the last line of each verse. Whilst they were singing, a bird came in at the window, and flew three times over their heads, and then went out.

"Papa said, he had found the true path, and told us to come where he was going. He died the same morning.

"R. H. C."