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SPIRITUALISM IN BIOGRAPHY:—GIROLAMO SAVONAROLA.

It is only within the last quarter of a century that the name of Girolamo Savonarola has become to any considerable extent familiar to readers of English literature. The little that was previously known of him was mainly derived from very imperfect and untrustworthy sources; chiefly, indeed, from the garbled account of his proceedings given by Roscoe, in his *Life of Lorenzo de Medici*. One reason for this absence of interest in and intelligent appreciation of the character and influence of Savonarola may be found in the circumstance that the cause for which he laboured was not, like Luther's, crowned with great and immediate success, and the world, which looks only at outward and obvious results, cares little for defeated men, be they cast in ever so divine a mould. Nor is the name of Savonarola that of the head of a sect, or of a separatist movement. He lived and died in the church endeared to him by sacred associations, though none laboured more fearlessly and earnestly than he for its reformation; and in the political, social, moral and religious regeneration of the age in which he lived.

In Italy and Germany many distinguished writers, and especially Pasquale Villari, Professor of History in the University of Pisa, have drawn attention to the illustrious Florentine, and the influence of their works has begun to percolate the strata of English literature. The political and religious awakening of Italy and the resuscitation of its national life has done still more to direct the thoughts and pens of English writers to that country and its distinguished men. The authoress of *Agnes of Sorrento*, and the authoress of *Romola*, and the recent translation of Villari's *History of Savonarola and his Times*, by Mr. Horner, have called out in particular a deeper interest in the life and character of that great and gifted man. Would that in this brief sketch of him I could present a more full and worthy image of that

noble soul, so tender, so true, so full of courage and inspiration; and with such marvellous faculty of insight and vision, and intimate *rapport* with that diviner world of invisible intelligence, and purity of which he felt himself to be an instrument and medium!

Savonarola was born at Ferrara, in 1452. From childhood he was noted as thoughtful and devout; he was conspicuously diligent and successful in his studies, and was a liberal independent thinker for his time, with strong sympathies for the poor and suffering, and with equally strong indignation against corruption, injustice, and every form of meanness and vice. Not a sickly student, but every way a strong man: he had a robust physical constitution that enabled him to bear labour and fatigue beyond the capacity of most men. His sensitive and pious nature, shocked with the licentiousness and wickedness of that corrupt age:—sensual, ferocious, and degraded, beyond, perhaps, any since the Christian era, predisposed him to a religious life; continually did he pray that God would shew him the path in which He would have him to walk. His purpose of retiring from worldly society was confirmed by some expressions in a sermon by an Augustine monk whom he heard preach on a visit to Siena in 1474, and by what he believed to be a divine intimation, conveyed to him in a dream. Accordingly, in his twenty-third year, he entered the Dominican Order, and applied himself to the works of the fathers and the study of the Scriptures. He remained seven years at the Convent in Bologna, which he spent in fasting and privation, in study, and in prayer. The superiors were not long in discovering his learning and the rare qualities with which he was gifted; and instead of allowing him to be employed in the menial offices, to which, with singular humility, it was his wish to be devoted, they appointed him to instruct the novices. Soon after, he was appointed to preach, but as he had neither the graceful delivery nor the scholastic style of preaching then in vogue, he had but few hearers. But even at this time, his affectionate earnestness sometimes gave to his speech a more impressive effect than any studied rhetoric could have produced, of which the following, related by his contemporary, Burlamacchi, is one instance out of many recorded by his biographers. Going one day from Ferrara to Mantua in a small vessel, in which were thirteen soldiers, who, regardless of his presence, were gaming and indulging in ribaldry and profanity, he solicited and obtained their permission to say a few words to them, and addressed them with such effect that eleven of them fell on their knees, and with tears confessed their sins and begged forgiveness.

In 1482, war threatening Ferrara, where Savonarola had been sent to preach, many of the monks were sent away, and

Savonarola being directed to Florence, went straight to the convent of St. Mark, in which he was destined to pass the most brilliant and the most unhappy days of his life. Lorenzo the Magnificent was then in the zenith of his fame and power; and such was at that time the fanaticism in favour of the great authors of antiquity, that even in the pulpit Aristotle and Plato were quoted far more frequently than either the Old or the New Testament. Cardinal Bembo warns a friend not to study the Epistles of St. Paul lest their barbarous Latin should corrupt his taste; and choice language and harmonious cadences were the chief recommendation of a preacher to popular favour. Savonarola in his preaching launched forth vehemently against the vices and irreligion of both the clergy and laity, condemned as absurd this mania for the heathen poets and philosophers, and never quoted any other book than the Bible; hence it happened that while when a certain Gennezano preached, the church of Santo Spirito was not large enough to hold the crowd that flocked to it, there were never more than five-and-twenty persons to listen to Savonarola.

About this time (1483) many and various visions began to appear before him, and he heard voices encouraging him to continue in the path upon which he had entered. One day, as he was conversing with a brother monk, the heavens seemed to open all at once, and place before his eyes the future calamities of the church, and a voice commanded him to declare them in the face of the people. He was sent to preach during Lent, 1484-5, at San Geminiano, near Siena, among a small thriving community, neither so refined nor so sophisticated and corrupt as that of Florence. Here he preached with unwonted power and effect; and pronounced those words which were to become his war-cry in his life-battle with the evils of his time:—"The church will be scourged, then regenerated, and this quickly." In 1486, he was sent to preach in different cities of Lombardy, and chiefly in Brescia. He there gave an exposition of the Book of Revelations. Professor Villari, says:—"His language was very earnest, his manner commanding, and he spoke with a voice of thunder. He charged the people with their sins, arraigned the whole of Italy, and threatened all with the wrath of God. He figured to them the twenty-four elders, and imagined one of them rising to declare the future calamities of the Brescian people—that the city would become the prey of furious enemies, and would see rivers of blood flowing through her streets; that wives would be torn from their husbands, and virgins violated; that children would be murdered before the faces of their mothers; that the whole surrounding country would be in a state of terror at the sight of blood and conflagration."

This sermon "made a deep impression on the people: the voice of the preacher seemed to them to resound as from another world, and his threatenings struck them with terror. When, in the year 1512, the city was unable to resist the ferocious soldiers of Gaston de Foix, when nearly six thousand persons were slaughtered in the streets; the Brescians called to mind the Elders of the Apocalypse, and the preacher of Ferrara." His companion, Father Sebastian, of Brescia, affirmed to all, that Savonarola, while praying, was frequently in a trance, and that sometimes his head appeared surrounded with light. Fra Angelo, of Brescia, relates of him, that on Christmas night, he remained in an ecstasy for the space of five hours, his head surrounded by a bright light, as was seen also by other friars; and he adds, that while Savonarola was celebrating mass, he had several times seen his face beaming with light, and his senses apparently entranced in a wonderful manner in a rapture, on which account it was his custom to celebrate the mass in a place in the church not exposed to observation, solely in the presence of the person who served.

In 1490, on the urgent request of Lorenzo, Savonarola was recalled to Florence. He wished to devote himself here to the instruction of the novices in the convent of St. Mark, but by the time he had begun to be famous, and at the urgent entreaties of his friends, he reluctantly allowed a few others to attend his lectures. The number daily increased as he began to expound the Apocalypse, and at length, in the month of August, he addressed them from the pulpit. His words had such an effect that they seemed to the multitude something more than human; and even the learned for the moment laid Plato aside to discuss the merits of the Christian preacher. In this sermon, he told the people, "I will preach in this church to-morrow, and I will continue thus to do for the space of eight years." A prediction that was only too exactly verified. Soon the church of St. Mark became too small for the crowds that flocked thither, and Savonarola preached in the cathedral, the number and enthusiasm of his hearers continually increasing. This, and the boldness of his preaching, began to excite the displeasure of Lorenzo. One day, five of the principal citizens of Florence were sent to him to represent the dangers he was incurring to himself and to his convent, and to advise him to be more moderate. Savonarola soon interrupted their address, saying to them, "I am quite aware that you have not come here of your own accord, but have been sent by Lorenzo. Tell him to prepare to repent of his sins, for the Lord spares no one, and has no fear of the princes of the earth." When warned that he ran the risk of being exiled, he replied, "Although I am but a stranger, and

Lorenzo is not only a citizen, but the first among them, it is I who will remain, and he who shall leave the city." About the same time he, in the presence of many persons, affirmed that a change in the affairs of Italy would speedily take place, and that Lorenzo, the Pope, and the King of Naples, were near their last days.

Finding that there was an increasing ill-will to him on the part of the Medici and other persons of influence, he began to think it would be better to keep back, at least for a time, his prophetic denunciations, warnings, and visions; but he struggled in vain. In his *Compendio di Revelazioni*, he tells us:—"Everything that kept me back from my first design soon became irksome to me. . . . I remember well that upon one occasion, in the year 1491, when I was preaching in the Duomo, and having composed my sermon entirely upon those visions, I determined to abstain from all allusion to them, and in future to adhere to this resolution. God is my witness that the whole of Saturday, and the whole of the succeeding night I lay awake, and could see no other course, no other doctrine. At daybreak, worn out and depressed, by the many hours I had lain awake, while I was praying, I heard a voice that said to me: 'Fool that thou art, dost thou not see that it is God's will that thou shouldst keep to the same path.'"

In July, 1491, he was chosen prior of the convent of St. Mark, a position which increased his responsibility and his feeling of independence. His first step was a refusal to comply with a custom that had been introduced for a prior on his election to pay homage to the Magnificent. "I regard my election as coming from God alone, and to Him I shall pay obeisance," said Savonarola. In vain Lorenzo after hearing mass at St. Mark's walked in the garden of the convent, Savonarola would not leave off his studies to bear him company; and when soon afterwards he found in the poor's box a large amount of gold coin, that could have come from no one else than Lorenzo, he sent it to a charitable institution to be distributed among the poor, saying that copper and silver were quite enough for all the wants of the convent. The attempt of Lorenzo to check his influence by a rival preacher, Gennezano, whose choice rhetoric had formerly tickled the ears of the Florentines, equally failed. The fact is, Savonarola regarded Lorenzo as a tyrant, the destroyer of the people's liberties, and the great enemy of public morals and Christian character. Between the polished but corrupt prince and the austere monk, there was a great gulf, which neither intimidation, flattery, nor bribes could bridge over. When Lorenzo, in 1492, was on his death-bed, his sins rose black and threatening before him, and the last offices of religion

afforded no alleviation of his terror; he could not persuade himself that any one would dare to refuse him absolution:—"No one ever ventured to utter a resolute NO to me," he said to himself. All at once, however, the stern aspect of Savonarola recurred to his mind—he remembered that that man had never yielded either to his threats or his flatteries: "I know no honest friar but him," he said; and desired him to be sent for to receive his confession. When Savonarola came, and Lorenzo expressed his desire to make confession and receive absolution; Savonarola said:—"Three things are required of you." And what are they, father?" replied Lorenzo. Savonarola's countenance became grave: "First, it is necessary that you should have a full and lively faith in the mercy of God." "That I have most fully."—"Secondly, it is necessary to restore that which you have unjustly taken, or enjoin your sons to restore it for you." This requirement appeared to cause him surprise and grief; however, with an effort he gave his consent, by a nod of his head. Savonarola then rose up, and while the dying prince shrank with terror in his bed, the confessor seemed to rise above himself when saying,—“Lastly, you must restore liberty to the people of Florence.” His countenance was solemn, his voice almost terrible, his eyes, as if to read the answer, remained fixed intently on those of Lorenzo, who, collecting all the strength that nature had left him, turned his back on him scornfully, without uttering a word. And thus Savonarola left him without giving him absolution; and the Magnificent, lacerated by remorse, soon after breathed his last, on the 8th of April, 1492. On the 25th of the same month died Pope Innocent VIII., who was at once succeeded by the still more infamous Roderigo Borgia, known as Alexander VI.

In the night of the last Advent Sunday of this year, Savonarola had a vision, in which, as he relates, he saw in the heavens a hand with a drawn sword, on which was written, "*Gladius Domini super terram cito et velociter*" ("The sword of the Lord upon the earth, soon and sudden.") He heard clearly and distinctly voices, promising mercy to the good, and threatening punishment to the wicked, and proclaiming that the anger of God was at hand. All of a sudden, the sword turned towards the earth, the air became dark, showers of swords, and arrows, and fire descended, and fearful thunders were heard; whilst the whole earth became a prey to wars, famines, and pestilences. The vision disappeared with a command to Savonarola to threaten men with these punishments to inspire them with fear of God, and to induce them to pray to the Lord that he would send to the Church just pastors who would take care of the souls that had wandered from the right path. This vision was afterwards

represented in engravings and medals, which were widely circulated.

In 1493, he was sent to preach at Bologna, where, having by the freedom and boldness of his reproof in preaching greatly offended the haughty Princess of Bologna, he narrowly escaped being assassinated. Two soldiers were sent by her to assassinate him in the very pulpit, but courage to perpetrate such an enormity failed them. Two others of her satellites were then sent to him in his cell, but he received them with such undaunted courage and spoke to them with such composure and resolution that they went away confounded. Lent being over, he took leave of the people, but before doing so, to shew that he was not to be intimidated from performing his duty, he said publicly, from the pulpit:—"This evening, I shall set out for Florence, with my walking-stick and wooden flask, and shall sleep at Pianoro. If any one has anything to say to me, let him come before the hour of my departure. Know that my death is not to be celebrated at Bologna." On his way to Florence, meditating on the growing difficulties and discouragements he would have to meet, "he was so overcome by fatigue, that he had not strength to continue his journey, nor could he take any food. When lo! there came to his help the vision of an unknown man, who restored his strength and courage, and who, after accompanying him to the St. Gallo Gate, said to him, 'Remember that thou dost that for which thou hast been sent by God,' and having said this, disappeared." Signor Villari, in giving this relation, reminds his readers that such narratives are a part of the history of the times, that men of the strongest minds believed in them; and he quotes from Libri's *Histoire des Sciences Mathematiques*, a letter of Christopher Columbus, in which he describes a similar vision which he saw in America; where being abandoned by all his companions, there came a voice from heaven encouraging him to continue his undertaking. Libri considers that letter one of the most eloquent in literature.

On returning to Florence, Savonarola with great difficulty obtained for his convent a restoration of that independence it had formerly enjoyed, a measure highly important, as it made him free from subjection to orders from his superiors in Lombardy or Rome, by which he had hitherto been liable to removal from the scene of his labours. He soon began to reform the discipline of the convent. He enforced the practice of poverty, he set his monks to labour for their living, he established schools for the study of the Scriptures, and of Greek, Hebrew, and other oriental languages, as well as painting, sculpture, architecture, and the art of copying and illuminating manuscripts. These

reforms were the more readily effected, as it was seen that the prior was a living model of the principles he inculcated. To correct evil habits, to rekindle faith, to reform the church, were the objects of his life; and he carried these principles into practice, in the first instance, in the sphere of his own more immediate influence.

The invasion of Italy by Charles VIII., of France, which Savonarola had predicted in 1484, in a sermon, in which he said the French King would cross the mountains, and without bloodshed, take possession of all Italy in a few days, took place as foretold, in 1494. The princes of Italy were wholly unprepared to meet it. Men's minds were filled with terror. "The multitude ran to Savonarola, as if to implore his help. All his words had come true; the princes whose deaths he had foretold were in their graves; the sword of the Lord had descended upon the earth; the scourge had begun. He alone had predicted these evils, and had seen them approaching; he alone knew the remedy for such a misfortune. His name, therefore, spread all over Italy; all eyes were turned towards him, who thus, by force of circumstances, found himself in the position of a statesman. And Savonarola proved himself fully equal to the crisis. In the stormy days that followed in the city of Florence, no excess of any kind was committed:—a new miracle in the history of Florence, and one, says his biographer, "which all the writers of the time ascribe to the beneficial ascendancy that Savonarola had been able to acquire over the minds of the people."

Savonarola, with two of its most distinguished citizens were appointed ambassadors from Florence to King Charles. His colleagues set out immediately for Lucca, where they hoped to meet the king, while Savonarola, as was his wont, travelled on foot. The two ambassadors did not succeed in their mission, they could obtain no terms from the king. "But," says Villari, "when the ambassadors failed, the friar of St. Mark went alone to the French camp, and, passing through a multitude of armed men, he found himself in the presence of the King, sitting among his generals. Meeting with a courteous reception, he without much preamble commenced a short sermon, which he delivered with a loud voice, and in an almost commanding tone:—'Most Christian king, thou art an instrument in the hands of the Lord, who sends thee to deliver Italy from her afflictions, as for many years before now, I have predicted, and sends thee to reform the church, which lies prostrate in the dust. But if thou be not just and merciful, if thou pay not respect to the city of Florence, to its women, its citizens, its liberty, if thou dost forget the work for which the Lord sends thee, He will then select another to fulfil it, and will let the hand of His wrath fall upon thee, and will punish thee with

awful scourges. These things I say to thee in the name of the Lord.'"^{*}

A noble sermon, worthy of a prophet! And it had its effect; the king had conceived an almost religious veneration for the prophet-friar; he and his generals listened with attention and awe to his menacing words, and the king received them with most earnest faith. He resolved to behave honourably to the Florentines, and entered into a treaty by which Florence remained a free and independent Republic.

From this time till his death, the history of Savonarola is identified with that of the Republic. He was the living and speaking impersonation of its liberties: the head and soul of the popular party. He had no wish to enter into the strife of politics; gladly would he have kept aloof from it, but he was impelled onward, outwardly, by the inevitable course of events, and inwardly, by a secret power which he could neither explain nor control; and which was indeed the secret of the wonderful effect of all his preaching. In the last sermon that he preached, March 18th, 1448, he observes:—"Sometimes, on coming down from the pulpit, I have on reflection said to myself, I will no longer speak of nor preach on those things, but will abstain from them, and leave the rest to God. But when I again stood up in the pulpit, I could not contain myself, nor do otherwise than I have done. To speak of the Lord has become to me like a consuming fire shut up in my bones and in my heart; and I found it impossible to restrain myself nor cease from speaking out, for I felt my whole being, as it were, on fire, and that I was inflamed by the spirit of the Lord. But when I come down, I say to myself, I will no more speak of those things; and yet, when I have again stood up in this place, I can no longer curb my tongue, nor refrain from uttering these sentiments."

Savonarola knew that the government of the Medici was not only itself corrupt, but that it had greatly corrupted the morals of the community, and in reconstructing the government, his chief aim was moral reformation, having its root in religious principle. He used politics only as instrumental to this end. "He wished for liberty in order to secure the triumph of religion. . . . He viewed the new government in no other light than as the first step in the regeneration of morals and the Church."

"Your reform," he said to the Florentines, "must begin with things spiritual, which are superior to all that are material, which

* "Charles VIII. had died at Amboise (April, 1498). His end had been a miserable one, as Savonarola had often predicted it would be, because of his having abandoned the work of the Lord. Having had a stroke of apoplexy he was carried into a place full of all kinds of filthy rubbish, and there, upon a bed of straw, the king of France drew his last breath."—*Villari*.

constitute the rule of life, and are life itself; and all that is temporal ought to be subservient to morals and to religion, on which it depends." As the ground-work of a new government he laid down this principle:—"That no individual shall have any benefit but what is general, and the people alone must have the power of choosing the magistrates, and of approving the laws." Into the laws and government framed and organized by him cannot here enter, Villari pronounces the whole plan of the government "admirable in all its parts;" and he adds, "all the greatest historians and political writers of Italy have declared it to be the best, or rather, the only good form of government that Florence had enjoyed through its long and much disturbed history." In a single year the freedom of a whole people was established, taxation was reformed, usury was abolished, the administration of justice was amended, disorderly assemblies were no longer held, and an amnesty was passed:—all this without bloodshed and without riot, and that too in Florence, the city of riots.

Savonarola's labours were incessant, he preached daily, and his influence over the people was like a miracle. "The appearance of the city was totally changed, the women gave up their rich ornaments, dressed with simplicity, and walked demurely; licentious young men became, as if by enchantment, modest and religious; instead of carnival songs, religious hymns were chanted. During the hours of mid-day rest, tradesmen were seen seated in their shop reading the Bible, or some work of a friar; habits of prayer were resumed, the churches were well attended, and alms were freely given. But the most wonderful thing of all was to find bankers and merchants refunding, from scruples of conscience, sums of money amounting sometimes to thousands of florins, which they had unrighteously acquired."

In 1496, and again in 1497, there was a "bonfire of vanities." This was accomplished by means of the children, who went from house to house asking for "vanities;" these consisted of indecent books, songs, and pictures; cards, dice, masques, &c. These were collected in an immense pile and burned as an *auto-da-fé* of the vanities of Florence on the last day of the carnival, with processions and sacred lauds, some composed by Savonarola himself. The money collected by the children during carnival, instead of being spent in feasting and extravagance was given to the poor.

But to so sudden and entire a revolution as had been wrought in the lives and habits of the people, there was sure to be a reaction. And it came but too soon. The partisans of the Medici and of the princes of Italy, the abandoned women, the violent and dissolute youth of Florence, all the elements of a rotten and corrupt society, though subdued and awed for the

time, soon rallied and combined against the new order of things. The influences of wealth and position, and all the artillery of profane wit were levelled against the friar, his visions, and his revelations. Several times was his life attempted by poison and assassination. His friends found it necessary for his protection to surround him on his passing from his convent to the cathedral, and on his return. But of all his enemies, the Pope became the most bitter, and his hate and rage the most implacable. Borgia had obtained the Papal chair by open simony. He was not only the worst of the bad Popes, but perhaps the worst man of that bad time. By dissimulation and smooth words, and by various artifices, Alexander sought to inveigle Savonarola into his power at Rome, where he would have had no difficulty in disposing of him. This not succeeding, he tried to win him over by flatteries and the offer of a cardinal's hat, but this only increased the indignation of the honest friar, who thundered more vehemently than ever against the abominations of Rome. The Pope then forbade him to preach, and laboured to raise the Signory of Florence against him. For a time the Signory stoutly defended Savonarola, and even procured a revocation of the brief which prohibited his preaching. But when the Pope found that Savonarola was conspiring, and in actual correspondence with the French king to convocate a General Council for the reformation of the church, which probably would have proclaimed his own election null and void by reason of simony, as it was afterwards proclaimed to be by Pope Julius the Second, his fury against the friar became inflamed and knew no bounds. He launched against Savonarola the excommunication, and threatened Florence with an interdict. A new Signory had just been elected, in which the party opposed to Savonarola had obtained the majority. Further, the new Signory was unwilling to come to extremities with the Pope, as it hoped to obtain his assent to a tax on ecclesiastical property, and to gain his assistance to subjugate Pisa, then in rebellion, all which the Pope readily promised if they would only be obedient in the matter of Savonarola. And so, his death was resolved on, and a plot, favoured by the Signory, was soon contrived for the purpose. A riot was got up, the Convent of St. Mark was attacked, and Savonarola and two companions surrendered themselves on a written order from the Signory, who assured them of their personal safety.

Savonarola was now in the hands of his enemies, who at once proceeded against him, appointing those who were notoriously hostile to him as his examiners, among them, one Doffo Spini, the chief author of all the plots against him, and who it was well known had not only hired men to assassinate him, but had attempted the murder with his own hands. This man was

now one of his judges. From the very outset, the violation of all law and justice was so apparent, that even one of the examiners indignantly refused to continue to act, saying, that he would not be present at such homicide. Under authority of this commission, Savonarola was subjected to repeated, continued, and most cruel torture, but even though they falsified the minutes of the examinations, they could establish nothing against him. The torture continued eleven days, at the end of which, the Signory in writing to the Pope were constrained to say:—"Notwithstanding a long and most careful interrogatory, and with all the help of torture, we could scarcely extract anything out of him which he wished to conceal from us, although we had open almost the inmost recesses of his mind." This, however, made no difference to the Pope, who sent two commissioners who were "charged to get him put to death were he even a St. John the Baptist." Nor did they make any secret of it, one of them, Romolino, on his arrival boasted to the magistrates—"We shall make a famous blaze; I have the sentence already prepared." Again was Savonarola put to the most severe torture, but "Romolino now saw that nothing could be got out of him, that neither tortures nor the cleverness of the notaries had been able to elicit answers that could justify him in condemning the friar, and that it was useless to lose more time." And so the matter was soon settled, one of his judges indeed advised that he should not be put to death, but kept in prison, and supplied with writing materials, that the world might not lose the fruits of his genius; but he was angrily reminded that perhaps the next Signory might set Savonarola at liberty, who would soon regain his ascendancy over the minds of the people, and it was added significantly—"A dead enemy makes no more wars." The tragedy was soon completed. On the 23rd of May, 1498, in the forty-fifth year of his age, the body of Savonarola and those of his two companions were hanged in chains and burnt in the great square of Florence, in presence of a multitude, many of whom had hung delighted on his lips; and in a few days after his ashes were thrown into the Arno.

Such, in brief, is the history of one whom God evidently raised up to do a great work in the century which closed the middle ages and heralded the new civilization. Never, surely, in all the Christian ages was there a man more full of the divine spirit. No prophet of ancient Israel was better attested than he, or more worthily fulfilled his mission. He lived the life, and he died the death of a prophet—even that of a martyr. His martyrdom came not to him as a surprise, he clearly foresaw and foretold it when he was yet the idol of the people; he saw the end, and he saw beyond it.

Burlamacchi, who was an eye-witness of the last days of Savonarola, relates of him, that he was distinctly seen suspended in the air, several feet above the floor of his dungeon, apparently absorbed in prayer—a phenomenon recorded of many pious persons of both the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches, and one which, with certain persons in our own day, especially at Home, is known to be of frequent occurrence, and to have been seen by many witnesses.

Some writers have represented Savonarola as holding religious views similar to those of the leaders of the Protestant Reformation. But in this they are in error. He wished for no alteration of dogmas. His own declarations on this point are explicit and decisive. He sought reform within the church not separation from it: he condemned all departure from its doctrines, but he at the same time maintained the rights of reason and the liberty of conscience, and condemned the temporal power of the church as the cause of its corruption, and as lowering its spiritual authority. To him, charity was a universal law, and conscience a supreme rule. He yielded a ready obedience to his ecclesiastical superiors in all things else; but, "This I maintain," he says:—"When it clearly appears that the commands of our superiors are contrary to those of God, and especially to what charity demands, no one, in such a case, ought to obey him, for it is written:—'We ought rather to obey God than man.' If, however, the case be not self-evident, if there be the slightest doubt, then we ought always to obey." To correct the universal corruption of Christendom, something more than ecclesiastical reformation was needed, even to re-awaken faith in the minds of men, and restore youth to their hearts, and re-kindle their spiritual powers and perceptions that they might in very truth know and feel heaven to be around them and within them, even as it had been to apostles and holy men of old.

Like many other eminent Christian seers, Savonarola believed the Bible to contain other and deeper meanings than that of the merely literal and verbal sense. It was to him "A living and speaking world, a world without limits, in which he found the revelations of the past and of the future, . . . the microcosm of the whole universe, the allegory of the history of the human race." In his exegesis of Scripture, besides the literal sense, there was also the *spiritual*, the *moral*, the *allegorical*, and the *anagogical*. Thus, in the first verse of Genesis in the *spiritual* sense, Heaven and Earth signifies soul and body; in the *moral* sense, reason and instinct; in the *allegorical* sense there was a double meaning, in the first it signified Adam and Eve, and these "corresponded," as Swedenborg would say, to the Hebrew church and the Christian church; the *anagogical* sense refers to the church triumphant, and

hence Heaven and Earth signify Angels and Men. Professor Villari presents in a tabular form Savonarola's interpretation of the seven days of the creation. I give that of the first day:—

LITERAL INTERPRETATION. <i>First Day:—</i> Heaven, Earth, Light.	SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION. Soul, Body, Action, Intellect.
ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION. <i>With reference to the Old Testament.</i> Adam, Eve, The Light of Grace.	ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION. <i>With reference to the New Testament.</i> Hebrew People, Gentiles, Jesus Christ.
MORAL INTERPRETATION. Soul, Body (in the sense of reason and instinct), Light of Grace.	ANAGOGICAL INTERPRETATION. Angels, Men, Visions of God.

Professor Villari, whose *History* I have mainly followed, devotes an entire chapter to "The Prophecies and Prophetic Writings of Savonarola." The prophecies and visions of Savonarola are a sad trouble to his learned biographer. He can't deny them, and he knows not what to make of them. On the whole, besides the natural tendency of a nervous temperament, religious fervour, and excited feelings, he is inclined to attribute them to excessive study, especially of the Old Testament and the Apocalypse. He tells us the dreams and visions to which Savonarola had been subject from his childhood, multiplied upon him in his public career. "They crowded round his mind, and in the night he may be said to have been haunted by them. When he afterwards found that, by reading the Bible and the fathers, by his prayers and night watches, they increased upon him, he began to believe them to be inspirations from God, which came to him through the intervention of angels, in the manner that St. Thomas Aquinas says the prophets were inspired. And truly nature, chance, study, prayer, and everything else, seem to have contributed to goad him on, as if against his will to these dangerous propensities." He continues to twaddle about its being a "subject of profound and philosophical meditation. It is a truly solemn sight to contemplate how signally Providence humbles the greatest of men by uniting faculties almost divine with such weaknesses as to remind us that they are still simple mortals." Not surely such "simple mortals," as their learned critics, who regard the exercise of man's spiritual senses and gifts as a "dangerous propensity," and a fit subject for their enlightened commiseration.

We may be sure then the Professor of History in the University of Pisa does not at all exaggerate this "weakness" in the man whose faculties he regards as "almost divine;" and he tells us: "It is not possible to describe the blind faith Savonarola lent at this time (1498) to those visions, nor the extent to which he had become their slave. . . . They were the object of his constant study, and of his serious meditations: he spent many long hours in showing in what manner the angels produce visions in the mind of man; how supernatural voices may be heard and so forth." Again, he tells us that in those moments of which Savonarola used to say, "An inward fire consumes my bones and forces me to speak out." He "was carried away by a kind of ecstasy in which the future seemed to open up before him. When this followed him into the solitude of his cell, he remained a long time the victim of visions, and was kept awake whole nights, until sleep, getting the better of him, brought refreshment to his wearied body. But on the other hand, when this state of ecstasy took possession of him in the pulpit, in the presence of the whole people, there were no bounds to his exultation; it exceeded all that words can describe; he became as it were the master over all his hearers, and carried them along with him in the same degree of excitement. Men and women of all ages and conditions, artizans, poets, philosophers, sobbed aloud, so that the walls of the church echoed the wailings. The individual who was taking down the words of the preacher, having had to stop, wrote: 'At this place I was so overcome by weeping that I could not go on.'" Professor Villari naively admits "that marvellous instinct, or, as we might call it, divination of the future, which no one can deny that Savonarola possessed." He says, "Setting aside all the specialties and accessories that attached to his many predictions, we cannot fail to be surprised, that almost all the prophecies should have come to pass. . . . That ever-present presentiment of his own violent death he announced with a firmness of conviction altogether inexplicable and truly miraculous. . . . And when at a later period, we find him describing, even to minuteness, the future calamities of Italy, and with such remarkable accuracy; when we see him worked up into a state of exaltation, throwing himself into such an agitation, and delirium of grief, in describing them, it is impossible for us to give any explanation of the facts; but still they are facts, and they are of a kind the most extraordinary. The man sees the sad and mournful future of his country, and its sorrows present themselves to him with such a semblance of truth, that he himself already endures the affliction."

Philip de Comines, the shrewd ambassador of the French king, in passing through Florence on his way to Naples, called

at the convent of St. Mark to become personally acquainted with Savonarola, and to gain a clear conception of the man who had filled Europe with his fame. He was astonished at his thorough and intimate knowledge of events. Comines says:—"He spoke to me of the *Grande Assemblée* which the Venetians had brought together much better than I could have done, who had just come from it. . . . I do not pretend to judge of his revelations; but it is most certain that he predicted things, both to myself and to the king, which no one believed at the time, but which all came to pass. . . . I believe him to be a good man, and that he has revealed things that no one in Florence could have told him."

Among the many works written by Savonarola are two on the subject of prophecy, *Dialogo della Verità Profetica*, and *Compendium Revelationum*. I present the following extract:—

"He who now is called a prophet, formerly was called a seer. He is properly named a prophet who sees things afar off, and not within the scope of the natural knowledge of any human creature. It comes to pass that the prophet also learns, by the medium of the light of prophecy, many things which are not far removed from the scope of human knowledge, because that light can be extended to all things, human as well as divine. Far removed from the scope of human knowledge of every creature are future contingent events—chiefly those which are dependent on free will, which in themselves cannot be known by men, nor by any other created beings, because they are only present to the Eternal, whose knowledge embraces all times. Their future contingency cannot be known by any natural light, but solely by God, who knows them in the eternity of His light, and by Him only are the things communicated to those to whom He deigns to reveal them. In such revelations there are two things done:—one is, that God infuses a supernatural light into the mind of the prophet, which light is a certain degree of participation of His eternity. By such participation, the prophet judges of that which is revealed to him—that the revelation is true and that it comes from God. And of such efficacy is this light, that the prophet is made as certain of those two things above mentioned, as the natural light makes philosophers certain of the first principles of science, and as people are made certain that two and two make four. The other thing that God does in these revelations is, that He propounds distinctly to the prophet that which He wishes him to know and to declare, and that he does in various ways, as it is written, 'I have spoken by the prophets and multiplied vision, and I have used similitudes by the ministry of the prophets.' Sometimes that which the prophet has to declare is infused into his mind without any vision of the imagination, but in the way in which wisdom was infused into the mind of Solomon; and in this way it was the prophet Daniel gave utterance to prophecy. Sometimes there arises in the imagination various figures and visions of phantasy, which signify that which the prophet has to understand and to declare; and he by the light is infused, understands the signification of such visions, otherwise he could not be called a prophet. Hence it is written in Daniel, chap. x., 'There is need of understanding in a vision.' And many times in those visions different words spoken by various persons are inwardly thought to be heard, or are so represented to the mind. And those words are understood by means of the light that proceeds from God, by the ministry of the angels. Sometimes God offers to the exterior senses, chiefly to the sight, types of things which are to be manifested, as we read in Daniel, in the fifth chapter, of the hand that wrote on the wall before the eyes of Belshazzar—'*Mene, Tekel, Phares.*' Which words Daniel the prophet saw with the external organs of vision, and interpreted by the internal light. It is to be observed that those external apparitions, and even those of the phantasy, are from God, and manifested by the ministry of angels, as St. Dionysius says in the first book of the Celestial Hierarchy, because every work

apostolic agency, that is of God, is ordered wisely. And in the order of his wisdom, infinite things are accomplished by mediate agents, and mediate things by the ministry of Christ. *The angels being mediate agents between God and us, the prophetic illumination comes from God by means of angelic spirits, who not only illuminate the interior mind, but cause divers apparitions to appear to the phantasy. But they also speak inwardly to the prophets; and to them they likewise appear many times in human form, and announce future things to them and admonish them of many things they have to do. And by the divine light, the prophets clearly know these apparitions to be angelic, and that which is spoken to them to be true. In these three ways I have attained and known future things:—some in one way some in another. Moreover in each of these ways I have attained to the knowledge of them, and always have been certified of the truth by the aforesaid light."*

Soon and bitterly did the people of Florence repent of the madness which had deprived them of their best friend, the most wise and courageous champion of their liberties. When they saw the country laid waste by sackings, by the sword, and by conflagrations; when Clement VII. ascended the pontifical throne, "when the armies of Charles V. besieged and sacked the Eternal City, when churches were converted into stables for horses, and into suttling houses for soldiers, then it seemed, indeed, even to the most incredulous, that the predictions of the friar had been verified to the letter. His last prophecy—that which he had made to Nicolini ("Bear in mind that a time will come when you will have a pope called Clement") was brought to reward; it was published and read with the utmost wonder, and it fell into the hands of all. His sermons were again read, and numerous passages in them were pointed out, in which events that had occurred had been again and again foretold. The victory of the Piagnoni, as if by a miracle, again found themselves masters; the Medici, getting no aid from without, and surrounded by internal enemies, took to flight. The Republic was again proclaimed. Christ was again chosen King of Florence; a civic militia was enrolled; and all were, this time, prepared to defend their re-acquired liberty, or die in a manner worthy of it. The new Republic sustained numerous assaults; and every one knows how it was fated soon to fall; but defended by the genius of Michael Angelo, by the right hand of Feruccio, and by the heart of a whole people, it had a glorious end, equal to its best days, when in its most flourishing condition. And in this marvellous effort, St. Mark's became the centre of the most faithful friends of their native land and of liberty. The disciples of the friar, his prophecies, his sermons, his very pictures, inspired those valiant and unanimous citizens to defend their Republic to the last hour. Thus, the history of the true followers of Savonarola terminated happily with the liberty of Florence."

But more than this, the labours of Savonarola had prepared the minds of men for the great Reformation, which before that

generation passed away began to spread over Christendom; and soon the incubus that had weighed upon the nations was thrown off, and the re-awakened intellect of Europe put forth powers that have made a new era in Christian civilization. Sacrifice—the sacrifice of the best and noblest, has hitherto been the condition of all progress—the means by which alone any great good for humanity has been achieved. And where, since Christ was crucified, shall we find a nobler sacrifice than that of the reformer, prophet, saint, and martyr, Girolamo Savonarola?

T. S.

INTRODUCTION BY JUDGE EDMONDS TO THE AMERICAN EDITION OF MR. HOME'S BOOK.

It is now about 15 years since there occurred at Rochester, in the State of New York, some incidents of so unusual a character as to excite a very lively attention. They happened in a family consisting of a mother and three daughters, of limited means and education, and in a humble condition of life:—simple, innocent, and well-intentioned, and enjoying a good reputation. Those incidents were the locomotion of ponderable objects without any perceivable mortal agency, and the creation of sounds without any discoverable human origin, and through their instrumentality an intelligence was displayed as enabled conversation to be carried on with the unseen power that was acting thus strangely in their midst. Through the conversation thus opened, it was professed that these things were done by the spirits of those who had once lived on the earth, and that the object was to open a communion between the living and the dead. Such a claim was received by an almost universal disbelief, by vehement condemnation of the impiety or unsparing ridicule of the credulity which could receive or avow it. Still the story went on, and, impelled by curiosity or the love of the marvellous, people began to investigate, and as investigation progressed, the belief in the spiritual origin of the phenomena spread, until in a short time, people of all classes and positions in society and of all conditions of intelligence and education inquired, and most of those who inquired believed. Confined originally to one locality, it soon spread to other parts of that state and to adjoining states. Limited at first to three young girls, as the “mediums” through whom these things were done, the power was soon manifested through others, of different sexes and ages.

The ordinary newspaper press of the day was alive with the details and discussion of the incidents and their origin. Periodical papers were established, devoted to the topic, and numerous

volumes were published with the same purpose. The whole matter was subjected, both as to the facts and their sources, to the severest scrutiny which ingenuity and acuteness could devise; solutions of the mystery, professing to be satisfactory, put forth even under the auspices of such men as Sir David Brewster and Professors Faraday and Agassiz, were of frequent occurrence, and the press and the pulpit seemed to unite in one voice of denunciation of the monstrous fraud and delusion. Still the thing moved steadily on, until before the expiration of the first decade after its advent, the instruments through whom the things were done were counted by thousands in this country, and the believers by millions, and kindred manifestations were breaking out throughout the world, and appearing on different continents, among people of diverse nations and language simultaneously, without any missionary effort on our part, and apparently without preconcert with us or between themselves.

Thus at length, through this instrumentality, and by the testimony of these hosts of witnesses, was established in this country the marvellous fact of *inanimate matter moving without mortal contact, and displaying intelligence, and that intelligence so great as to "speak in many tongues," and to read the inmost unuttered thoughts of man.*

Among the early instruments used to bring about such a result in this country, was Mr. D. D. Home, whose experience is given in the ensuing pages. He was of a mild and gentle disposition, sincere and simple-minded, yet of a passive rather than an affirmative character, with a strong devotional tendency. He was not known much in this country as a medium. His powers were not more remarkable than those of many others, who were in daily use at that time, and during a good part of the time that elapsed between the development of his powers and his departure for Europe, his mediumship was confined to a very small circle, consisting of gentlemen of education, and of means, who were through him thoroughly investigating the subject.

Such an investigation by men of science, of learning, of intelligence, and of standing, was earnestly sought and repeatedly urged by the educated among those who on witnessing the phenomena found in it a profound mystery. It was often said to that class of men whom we were wont to regard as our teachers and leaders in knowledge, "Here is something that we cannot fathom, come ye to our aid! Here are incidents for which we can find no origin in the laws of nature known to us, which we are told are not supernatural, but in conformity with nature; come ye, and discover this unknown and extraordinary power which thus tends to lead us into the domain of the magical and the miraculous! Here is an intelligence displayed by inanimate matter,

which professes to be that of the dead; come ye to our rescue and unfold to us, if it be possible, some other theory than the spiritual, as explanatory of these uncommon events; for if that cannot be done, and this thing is what it professes to be—a communion with the spirits of the departed—the importance of this new phase of human life cannot be exaggerated." To such appeals the response was often favourable, and such investigations were held in different parts of this country, which resulted not so much in the discovery of the nature of this new power, as in establishing to all who would expend a thought on the subject, the reality of its existence, and in some degree what it was capable of achieving.

As soon as this end was attained in this country, demonstrations of that character almost wholly ceased among us, and spiritual communion assumed a new and most interesting phase. Meanwhile, Europe lagged behind the celerity of our movement, and as we were beginning to read in this New Testament from God to man, we could occasionally hear that other people were just entering on their A B C. So that when Mr. Home arrived in England in possession of a power then quite common in this country, but almost unknown there, he at once attracted great attention, and it will be seen in the following pages how widespread and earnest was that attention among the higher classes as well on the Continent as in England. The same lively interest in these the primary steps of this communion, was displayed there that had been seen here some ten years before. The interest still continues there. I will mention as an instance of this, that some time ago I received a letter from Mr. Home requesting leave to send me the advanced sheets of his forthcoming work, in order to their publication here, and when I received those sheets, they came to me not from him, but from a friend, because he had been sent for by the Emperor of the French, and had departed for Paris.

The office which his book will perform in Europe will be somewhat different from that which it will perform with us. There it will be mainly to establish the fact of spiritual intercourse; with us we have an abundance of testimony on that point, not only in the oft-recorded experience of the past, but in the great number of private circles now scattered all over our land, where every one may see and judge for himself. To many in this country, too, that will be the object of this book; but to very many it will be different, and the book will find its chief interest in the plain, simple, and direct detail of the fact, and the great accumulation of testimony in support of that detail, and in the fact, that it is a clear delineation of the first step of many which have been taken within the last fifteen years. That first step

has been pretty thoroughly investigated in Europe and America, until a great revolution has been wrought in the public mind as to its actuality. The next thing, and we are prepared for that now in this country, is to obtain for the subsequent steps the same thorough and searching scrutiny.

And it is the object of this Introduction to bespeak for those subsequent steps the closest investigation that science, education, and acuteness can give. It is impossible for any one mind or any small number of minds to do that wisely and well. It requires very many minds, and numerous observations, and a gathering together of the results of very many enquiries, before a satisfactory conclusion can be arrived at, and every possible objection be foreclosed. Just as in astronomy, the discoveries of the last hundred years have exceeded those of any prior equal period, because of the largely increased number of observers and improved means of observation. It may be the same in spiritual intercourse. Many things now obscure may be rendered clear; many things now in conflict may be reconciled; many things deemed impossible may be shown to be possible; and many things which to the uninstructed mind may be terrifying may be rendered at once attractive and salutary. All that is wanted is patient, persistent investigation. This appeal of mine would, however, be incomplete if I should omit to define more particularly what are the topics for which I supplicate a scrutiny, and so I proceed to mention them.

First:—If it be true that the spirits of the dead can commune with us, then it must be that they can reveal to us what is the state of existence into which they were ushered on dying, and what is the mode of life they are leading there. This they profess to do, and this seems to me to be the primary and main object of this whole movement. I have myself received a great deal of information on this subject, some of which I have already given to the world, but there is a great deal more that I have not. I am ready to give it as soon as I find the world ready to receive it; not amid the fervour of superabundant wealth, with all the selfishness, luxury, and extravagance which follow in its train, nor amid the evil passions which civil war engenders, but bye-and-bye, when the afflictions which God is bringing upon us shall have performed their destined office of softening our hearts, and opening them to the entrance of the gentle voices which are now coming to us, in ever-increasing tones from beyond the grave.

As the life on earth is never exactly alike in any two persons, so life in the spirit-world is never alike to any two immortals. Behold then! how many spirits must commune with us, and how many mortals must engage in that communion, before enough can be obtained for us to be able to say and to feel that we know what is the life beyond the grave.

As in astronomy, it took the observations of very many persons for several thousand years to enable us to arrive at the truth in regard to our planetary system, so this far more momentous truth must come to us in the same way, as the result of many observations by many persons. What can one man or even a score do in this respect? The question is easily answered. How few have ever read or believed what I have published in regard to the spirit world! Yet let the inquirer be convinced of what this book of Mr. Home's teaches, viz., that there is such a thing as direct communion with departed spirits, and he can himself make his own inquiries, and receive direct answers to himself, and, thus, from personal observation, he may come to believe that which he finds it so hard to receive through me. Others and others again doing the same thing, the result would be such an accumulation of testimony, that there would be as little doubt upon this subject, as there is now of the actual existence of spiritual intercourse. And when that time shall come, when a rational knowledge of what the great change—the mortal putting on immortality—actually is, shall be substituted for the dreadful fear of death, which now so often frightens man from his propriety, and enslaves his mind with a worse than Egyptian bondage, what imagination can picture the vast increase that will flow to the happiness, the wisdom, and the purity of man!

Second:—Another topic, on which much evidence has already been received, but much more is necessary to a full understanding, is involved in the question:—In what manner and to what extent are we, in the mortal life, surrounded and affected by the spirits of the departed?

There is abundant evidence to show that we are ever surrounded by them, and much to induce us to believe that every mood of mind has its kindred spirit: whence it would seem to follow, that we are ever liable to be influenced for good or evil by our unseen companions. But many important questions arising out of these facts are yet unsolved. For instance: To what extent and under what circumstances can the attendant spirits influence us? And what is our protection against the evil of this influence? Can we ourselves control it by controlling our mood of mind? And, if we need help, can we obtain it, and how? Here perhaps will be found the solution to the oft-disputed proposition of the efficacy of prayer. Here perchance we may learn, that as God always works through his instruments, so the mood of mind, which prompts us to pray, may drive evil far from us, and draw closely around us the ministering spirits who may be charged with the function of answering our petitions, and who might not otherwise be able to approach and do for us that, which they see as well as we do, is needful for us. And here too, perchance, may

be found the solution of many mental conditions, which ignorant doctors are apt to treat as incurable insanity. I have seen a good many such cases myself, and several where the physicians had been appealed to in vain. The ability to cure consisted in the ability to learn the cause of the disease.

It is not long since that I was invited by one of our medical societies to attend the reading of a paper on insanity by a German Doctor. In some remarks I made on that paper, I took occasion to call the attention of the faculty to this subject, and detailed to them several of the cases which I had cured; and I did so in the hope that they would investigate for themselves, and see whether there was not something in it. Unhappily, in their publication of the report of my remarks, they omitted this part, and with it an enquiry, which I cannot but think highly pertinent:—"Whether the medical profession might not find in these and cognate cases, something worthy of their most careful investigation?"

And now, in this connection I may repeat the question already asked. If the enquirer believe in the communion announced in these pages of Mr. Home, and he can, by availing himself of that communion, learn the cause and the cure of any number of cases of insanity, be they many or few, why not investigate? Does mere investigation hurt? It never hurts anything but error, and sometimes perchance, the first propounder of the truth, but the truth itself it never hurts.

Third:—Another deeply interesting topic, on which some revelation has been had, and more may be, is, "What is the soul? and how is it connected with the body? What form or covering does it assume, when corruption puts on incorruption? And what are its relative powers before and after death?"

In this topic are embraced the phenonema of sleep and dreams—of clairvoyance (long a subject of dispute, but now received as a fact, though involved in profound mystery)—of the spirit photographs—of a spiritual telegraph, and the philosophy and explanation of spirit communion. On all these subjects many facts and principles have already been learned, and many more may be. Enough, however, has been learned to show us that we need not remain in ignorance any longer. For instance: One winter, four or five years ago, I tried some very interesting experiments. Two *séances* were held at the same time (allowing ten minutes for the difference of longitude), in New York and Boston, careful records of what occurred at each place were preserved; and, upon comparing them, it was found that the two parties, although 250 miles asunder, conversed with each other as if present, face to face. The *modus operandi* was shown to me and many explanations given. The experiments were continued

for several weeks, but it was found that they were attended with danger, and they were abandoned. The cause of that danger was discovered, and it was found that in due time it could be obviated. Since those experiments, I have made no continued efforts in that direction; but I have experienced many incidents calculated to show the practicability of such a communion among us, even in this earth-life.

Another instance will be found to be in the spirit photographs, which profess to be likenesses of the departed as they now live in the spirit life. Several years ago I received from the far west—Illinois, I think—some crude specimens of this feat, and was informed what was intended and what it was hoped would be attained. Now a more matured form of it has appeared in Boston, and many pictures have been taken, which there is every reason to believe are likenesses of the departed as they exist now. Time and repeated observation will shew how this is, and if it should become a well-established fact, surely every one will see at a glance how powerful is the evidence thus given of an existence beyond the grave. Connected with this subject, is the power of seeing and delineating scenes and objects in the spirit life. I have received much evidence in this regard, and have in my collection some interesting specimens, all of which tend to show the feasibility and the need of further investigation to develop the power.

Fourth:—I will refer to one other topic and close, and that is the power of foretelling future events. I have in my library a book published in London in 1707, in which is detailed a prophecy, given through just such a spiritual intercourse as we are now experiencing, that the Bourbon family would be expelled from the throne of France, and the reason was given, to wit, its general profligacy, and its persecution of the freedom of religious opinion. The last time I lectured to the Spiritualists in New York, which was in May, 1861, I read two papers, one given eleven years and the other about five years ago, in which our present civil war was foretold—in one of the papers somewhat blindly, until the events made it clear, but in the other most explicit and distinct. These all related to public events, where the prophecies were published to the world before the events happened; but I have had a great many instances within my own observation, where private events were truly foretold.

Five years ago I published a tract on this subject, with a view of calling attention to it. I have seen nothing since to change my views, but much, very much to confirm them and to show me that there is a power capable of being understood and improved by us and of being made available to us. These four topics are all that I deem it advisable to refer to now. But they are by no means all that is connected with spiritual intercourse that is of

deep and abiding interest, in which some knowledge has already been obtained, and more may be by proper inquiries. It is, as I understand it, only through the instrumentality of spiritual intercourse that that knowledge can be obtained. No man certainly will use that instrumentality who does not believe in its reality or regards it as a fraud or a delusion. And in this, it seems to me lies the chief value of Mr. Home's book and the lesson which it teaches. If the book does no more than merely work conviction in some minds of the reality of communion with the departed, it will be of some value, for it will carry consolation to many a heart now suffering under a load of doubt, or affliction. But if it goes further and leads intelligent and instructed minds into an investigation of the higher truths connected with the subject, it will be a great good indeed.

For my part, I do not believe that we have yet "attained the end of our knowledge of either the works or the word of God."

J. W. EDMONDS.

New York, March 29th, 1863.

TWO HONEST LETTERS.

THE writer of the following earnest exposition of his ideas deserves to have a larger audience than the individual, Mr. Home, to whom the letter is addressed. Mr. Barge is evidently zealous in putting forward his views. His letter is written in a good bold hand, and leads to the conclusion that he must have received some education in his youth, which has sufficed for him up to the present time. We do not know of what age he may now be:—

"Beech Mount, Higher Broughton,

"Manchester, 9th April, 1863.

"SIR,—May I ask you in all kindness, if you consider the world as 'daft,' as the Scotch say? What can you imagine to be the real condition of our minds and understanding, when you audaciously thrust a book before the public, called *Incidents of my Life*? I cast it from me with the utmost contempt; and if it finds one reader who believes it, I would point thus ~~to~~ to the asylum, and select his keepers. It is of no use mincing the matter; the book is saturated with humbug!—double-distilled humbug! And for 'Mrs. Hall receiving a lock of hair from a spirit's hand,' it is rather '*de trop*,' and makes one's honest indignation rise to boiling point! For grandmamas, imbeciles, nurses, and children, such balderdash might tell; but to thrust it under one's nose as an incontestible fact, as you have done, makes the exclamation of Hamlet still more forcible, of 'To what base uses may we not return, Horatio.' I have the pleasure of knowing the talented Mr. Hall,—I respect him; but his *swallow* must be indeed large, if he can take in such a piece of double-distilled humbug as this! I hate anonymous letters, and hence affix my name.

"I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

"THOS. BARGE.

"D. D. Home, Esq., &c., &c."

The Manchester Barges, judging from this specimen, are evidently similar to those with which we are so well acquainted in London—strong, broad-bottomed, adapted for carrying heavy goods and rubbish of all kinds, and exceedingly useful in their way, but not at all fit for a yacht race, or for any purposes in which swift sailing or beauty of outline are required.

The same post which brought the above letter to Mr. Home also conveyed to him the following from the Honorable Colonel Wilbraham, well known in the neighbourhood from which the Barge letter comes, as well as in the wider world of London, not only by his own high character, but as the brother of the Countess of Derby. The contrast between his ideas founded on repeated observation, and those of Mr. Barge founded on his ignorance, is striking and complete, and as we have an opinion that Mr. Barge is as honest as he is ignorant, which is saying a great deal for him, we commend this second letter to his special attention:—

“46, Brook-street, April 14, 1863.

“DEAR MR. HOME,—I have much pleasure in stating that I have attended several *séances*, in your presence, at the houses of two of my intimate friends and at my own, where I have witnessed phenomena similar to some of those described in your book, which, I feel certain, could not have been produced by any trick or collusion whatever. The rooms in which they occurred were always perfectly lighted; and it was impossible for me to disbelieve the evidence of my own senses.

“Believe me, yours very truly,

“D. D. Home, Esq.”

“E. B. WILBRAHAM

We should be glad if others who have witnessed the phenomena of Spiritualism, either in the presence of Mr. Home, or of other mediums, would, like Colonel Wilbraham, come forward in the same bold and frank manner to assist in removing the ignorance and incredulity which are still so prevalent.

SPIRITUALISM AT MALVERN.

A CONTROVERSY on Spiritualism has been carried on recently in the *Malvern Advertiser*, which has had at least the good effect of bringing to the surface the opinions of the Rev. John Lumb, one of the Church of England ministers there. He has written a long letter to the editor, and has since published it (price 2*d.* each, or 1*s.* 6*d.* per dozen). He brings out the usual texts from Deuteronomy, and Leviticus, and urges the duty of following them out as part of the Mosaic law, without being at all aware of there having since appeared the spiritual revelation of the New Testament, which being suited to a new condition of men, abrogated much of the old Jewish law. If the Mosaic law were to hold in its integrity, we should be obliged, as being still under it, to do and to

refrain from doing many things, that would be entirely incongruous in this age of the human mind. We eat the unclean animals, and whilst we contend through our bishops for the essential and abiding truth of the revelation of every word in the Old Testament, even down to the hare of Bishop Colenso, we, in our professed belief of its being necessary to salvation to accept, as infallible, what is said, about its chewing the cud, shew our entire disregard of its value as a law, by eating the very hare about which we are quarrelling. If the verse be eternally infallible that the hare chews the cud, that is simply a collateral reason given for not eating it. The eating it is the thing forbidden, and that is precisely what we are daily doing, though violently contending, at the very moment, for the infallible physiological reason given in the verse, for why it should not be eaten. The Mosaic law is thus dealt with in nearly all its essential particulars, and it is reduced merely to a clerical repository for fulminating texts, which are misapplied for the purpose of the hour.

We should be very glad if it were possible to make such as the Rev. Mr. Lumb see the inconsistency of which they are guilty in this time of the eclipse of faith, by denouncing all inquiry into spiritual laws, and their relation with material things and with the souls of men. We do not suppose that his violence proceeds from want of charity so much as from ignorance of the nature of the inquiry in which we are engaged. It is one which if he were to help us to investigate, would in turn greatly help him in his earnest endeavours after spiritual life, for the inquiry is calculated to throw light upon the hitherto hidden operations of spiritual laws. If, as in other branches of knowledge, we are obliged to begin at the bottom of the ladder, and to observe and record the lowest physical effects produced by these laws, it is scarcely right for him to select these for vituperation and abuse, as being the whole of the inquiry. Under any circumstances, whether they be good or bad, they are eminently worthy of investigation, from their manifest connection with the higher branches of spiritual knowledge, and he should have enough perception to see that he much stands in need of the power to commend the wider investigation to his flock.

He sees in the spiritual world nothing but the communion of devils, whereas the creed which he repeats every Sunday as that of the apostles contains the words "I believe in the communion of saints." We are endeavouring to prove to an unwilling and an unbelieving world, how and under what laws the Spiritualism of the Bible is possible and may be believed, instead of being with so many the stumbling block and rock of offence. Shall we not have at some day all wise and good shepherds of their flocks to help us? Paul was not convinced

by Moses and the prophets till a spiritual manifestation came to him, which he took pleasure and manly pride in declaring on all occasions afterwards in his large-hearted noble words. The same objections were of course raised against the truth of the manifestation he received, as are raised at the present day against the possibility of all such. In the 12th chapter of his Epistle to the Corinthians he speaks in the fulness of his ~~and~~ his experience, and gives us the philosophy of true Spiritualism, from which the churches have grievously fallen away. He knew the Mosaic law, and he knew that Christ had abrogated it by the higher spiritual law which he introduced when at the transfiguration he spoke with Moses himself and with Elias that other great prophet of the old dispensation. The new age was told to "try the spirits whether they be of God," and that is just what we are doing by endeavouring to discover the laws under which they manifest themselves to us; and Paul in his earnestness and zeal for the truth, thus pours out his heart to help us.

"Now about spiritual things, brethren, *I would not have you ignorant.* There are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit. *But the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal.* For to one is given by the spirit, the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same spirit, to another faith by the same spirit, to another the gifts of healing by the same spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another divers kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. Follow after charity and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied. Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, (or, as translated in the margin, *of spirits*) seek, that ye may excel to the edifying of the church."

How do such words as these comport with the denunciations of Mr. Lumb? We would much rather ask him why he exhibits none of these spiritual gifts. Where is his wisdom, his knowledge, his faith? Where are his gifts of healing, his working of miracles, his prophesy, his discerning of spirits, his divers kinds of tongues, his interpretation of tongues? We fail to recognize any of these in him. But can we say the same if we ask as to his ignorance of Scripture, his want of charity, and his fair dealing? These are manifest enough, and we are sorry to find him saying that many of his congregation approve of his tract, because it makes it the less likely that he will make an effort to put himself right in regard to this matter.

A SPECIMEN OF RELIGIOUS REVIEWING:— THE "PATRIOT" NEWSPAPER.

To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."

SIR,—The publication of my *History of the Supernatural*, and of Mr. Home's *Incidents of My Life*, has proved the *Experimentum Crucis* of the Press. There has been an outcry and an agony destitute of everything like reason or sanity, which gave you no idea but that the whole critical corps was seized with a sudden fit of the colic. In my work I boldly exposed the rank infidelity and materialism of the Church and the Press, most of whose writers were educated in its schools: and the Press has completely justified me by its almost universal trampling on the principle of revelation whether in the Bible or out of it. The book is a collection of examples of divine revelation from the Bible and Gospels, as well as testimonials to it from the greatest minds which this or any other country has produced:—amongst the Gentiles, Socrates, Plato, Confucius, Zoroaster, Cicero, Seneca, &c.; amongst Christians, the early disciples, the best men of all succeeding ages, Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Fenelon, Bacon, Cudworth, Milton, Newton, George Fox, the Wesleys, &c. On all these evidences, without discrimination, the critics have spit and trampled, and it is clear that every one of them would have spit on Christ, had they lived in his time, with the same unenquiring, unreasoning fury. This would have been inevitable, because they act exactly as the Scribes and Pharisees did then—condemn without any investigation.

There certainly has never been a more lamentable exhibition of empty rage, abandonment of examination and logic, and frantic possession by a spirit of mere noise and falsehood, since criticism assumed its public vocation. All this we may pass by as utterly worthless, from this simple fact, that all these critics are alike ignorant of the subject. Not one of them has dared to come forward and say, "I have examined this subject carefully, thoroughly, and experimentally, and therefore I am entitled to speak upon it." The Spiritualists are the only ones who have made a rational examination, and to bring against their collective statements, where their numbers amount to millions, and their familiar knowledge of the subject in all its phases extends over at least fifteen years, mere ignorance, is, to say the least of it, nothing short of an act of idiocy. As these critics know nothing, their opinions would be utterly valueless, even were they honest.

But this is far from being the worst feature of the recent melancholy display. In almost every instance the so-called criticisms have been a series of deliberate falsehoods. I can except

only those of the *Star*, the *British Quarterly*, the *Eclectic Review*, *Weldon's Register*, the *Critic*, the *New Review* and the *Standard*, and *Morning Herald*, the rest have been pretty much of the same raving and mendacious stamp. Now the utter want of truth amongst these men who have set themselves up as public teachers is one of the most serious matters of reflection possible. What is to be its effect on the moral principle of the nation? I have always been accustomed to congratulate myself on belonging to a country which had a higher regard for truth than any in which I have sojourned: but the display of reckless falsehood in the critical press is a rotten spot in the English nation which threatens the most lamentable results. For examples of this spirit of untruth, the reader may turn to any of the reviews in question—the *Athenæum*, the *Reader*, the *Spectator*, *All the Year Round*, the *Sun*, the *Globe*, the *Parthenon*, the *Saturday Review*, &c., &c. He will find them, like a parcel of suborned witnesses in a court of justice, not only falsifying both my work and Mr. Home's, but exposing unconsciously each other's perjuries. The *John Bull* says I have given no details of my own experience; the *Athenæum* not only says I have, but quotes them at large. The *Reader* says the whole book is a chaos without any arrangement whatever; the *Critic* says the arrangement is most clear and admirable, and so we might run through the whole catalogue of them. But perhaps the religious journals set the truth at defiance more unblushingly than the worldly ones. Let us take one of these as a sample, for to go through the whole were a waste of paper. The *Patriot*, one of the organs of that highly respectable body, the Independents, is especially flagrant in this respect, in fact, I do not recollect to have met, during forty years of authorship with so unlimited a capacity for falsehood in any journal, religious or profane. The whole of the article is a foaming, ranting composition, so excessively exaggerated as to lose all likeness to sober truth. The editor is, I am informed, a Mr. Turbeville, and it is always desirable to deal with responsible persons in a review, and therefore I name him thus expressly. He sets off by assuring us that "It is not truth, it is not moral goodness, it is not Christ, it is not holiness for which he" (that is, myself) "cries aloud, it is for the Supernatural that he calls." Now the whole aim, drift and evidence of these volumes, is to establish truth, holiness, moral goodness, and the faith in Christ as proved by the Supernatural. The thousands of readers in whose hands these volumes are now, if they ever saw the *Patriot* must be much surprised at such a statement. He then expresses his wonder at "Mr. Howitt, whilom alderman of Nottingham, and wielding the fierce democracy of that town in the days of the Reform Bill, and of anti-priestianity, the man of hard head and hand, the

very *beau-ideal* of an unbelieving positivist, coming in 1863 "to assert these preternatural things.

Now where does this man of brass, this Mr. Patriot Turbeville, find any evidence of my being at that time or at any time "an unbelieving positivist?" My writings through a course of forty years are before the public, and from the various editions of them, must have passed through some hundreds of thousands of hands, and I challenge any single one of all these readers to produce a single proof from any of them of my being at any period of my life "an unbelieving positivist." On the contrary, my faith has always been honest and firm in the truth of the Gospels, in the whole divine dispensation of Christianity. The *History of Priestcraft*, and *The Rural Life of England*, are the books written at the period referred to by the Patriot, and he must be a clever fellow indeed who can find any unbelief in the Christian religion in either of them. The object of the *History of Priestcraft*, was precisely the same object as that of the *History of the Supernatural*—to vindicate the Scriptures from the corruptions of Priestcraft, and to free them from the disguises of merely secular Churchism. The book contains the warmest praises of the Bible, the highest homage to the character and divine mission of Christ. The *Rural Life of England* may be turned to anywhere for the same spirit and advocacy, but especially to the chapter called *Sunday in the Country*, and the introductory chapter to the second volume, in the more recent editions, the second part. The audacity of these falsehoods is unparalleled in literature; but Mr. Turbeville reiterates them against the present work. "In two thick volumes on the Supernatural, there is scarcely a word respecting the Most High or the Lord Jesus Christ in his character as the Saviour of sinners, in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead." Now, is it necessary to say to any one who has read the book how atrociously mendacious is this statement? These volumes contain four elaborate chapters on the Scriptures and their proofs of divine revelation, and of the great work of Christ, as the Saviour of the world. These chapters are on the Supernatural in the Old Testament, in the New Testament, in the Apocrypha, and in the Early Church. Everywhere the name of the Most High, and of Christ as the Saviour of sinners abounds, and in one particular place, Vol. I., p. 112, it is said, "I want a Saviour, and when one has come and produced his credentials in accompanying miracles and preceding prophecies, and then come a set of people and discredit his credentials, and endeavour to persuade me that his genealogy has been all dressed up and falsified, they reduce him from a Saviour to a mere impostor; and it is then in vain to endeavour to recommend him as a philosopher. His ethics may be very fine, but they are

not what I want; I want salvation, and that is not to be obtained from either impostor or philosopher. We must take Christ, altogether as he stands in the Scriptures, or leave him altogether."

But to quote proofs of the utter falsity of this Mr. Turbeville, I must quote the whole of my book. In fact, my ideas of the glorious breadth of salvation through Christ is far more ample than this Calvinistic writer would approve of. If he be true to his own creed, he believes in the perdition of millions on millions of human beings, making as it was admirably remarked in the *Spiritual Magazine* of last month, the Gospel not a Gospel of salvation, but a Gospel of damnation. I, on the contrary, believe in Christ's own words, that he came to restore all things, and that he will eventually restore all things. In fact, the very concluding words of my work are those of Cowper, asserting this great truth.

But this truth-trampling religious critic goes on to say, that "there is very little about the devil and his angels in these volumes." And yet he adds but a little further on, that "the pages are chiefly filled with stories of phantoms, ghosts and lime-flinging demons." What are demons but the devil and his angels? Now, however, look again at the man's shocking disregard of truth. The chapters in the two volumes amount to forty-three. Three-fourths of these are concerned with the evidences of the Supernatural in the Bible, in the New Testament, in the greatest writers, philosophers, and historians of Greece, Rome, China, India, of ancient and modern Europe, of the Roman, Waldensian, and Reformed Churches; on the testimonies of such men as Plato, Socrates, Cicero, Seneca, of old; on that of Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Knox, Cudworth, Baxter, Bacon, Milton, George Fox, this Calvinist's own magnates, Drs. Doddridge and Watts, Isaac Taylor, and many others of a like creed; Bunyan, the Wesleys, the Fletchers of Madeley; the persecuted Cevennois; the opinions and narratives of Dante, Tasso, Petrarch, our own Sir Thomas Browne, Bishops Cranmer, Latimer, Ken, Hall of Norwich, Heber, and many others. The statements of a thousand other such august lights of truth and religion make up, and must of necessity make up the bulk of my volumes. But this veracious Mr. Turbeville dips into a single chapter on German facts—which facts he says he does not dispute—and there finding a relation of a strange scene at the Castle of Slawansk, on the authority of Dr. Kerner, where lime is flung about, he coolly asserts that my pages are chiefly filled with such stories, whilst the *Sun*, on the contrary, says there are too few of such stories. Let the readers of these volumes, who are now very numerous, pronounce judgment on such a man.

But he does not stop here. He asserts that I "set aside Scripture completely, or audaciously pervert its meaning," to

cover my own purposes. I say let the reader also judge of the truth of this assertion. Everywhere I have carefully noted the work, the volume, the chapter and page from which I quote. My references to all quotations from Scripture are minute, and were carefully verified as the volumes went through the press. If I had *anywhere* falsified, distorted, or misrepresented the text, or the meaning of the text, it would have been an act of consummate folly on my part to make my own refutation so immediate and unavoidable.

The only instance in which the *Patriot* has attempted to show a different meaning to mine, is where I assert that Our Saviour broke purposely the law of Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration by "seeking to the dead." And in this it has completely failed! That Christ did seek to the dead on the Mount, to Moses and Elijah, remains a fact. That He took three of His disciples up to witness that abrogation of this law, remains a fact. And indeed, without that destruction of this law, Christianity could not have been established, for Christ was about to become the Prince and first-fruits of the dead as well as of the living. As He was the fountain of all life, so He was about to become the prince of the dead. The very first act of His after He passed the gates of death, we are told, was to seek to the dead—to go and preach to the spirits in prison. All souls hereafter were to seek to Him—the dead, and yet the living; through Him—one of the dead—though the Lord of Life, every human soul was henceforth only to approach the throne of the Most High. The law of Moses, therefore, which forbade all seeking to the dead, whether for good or evil, must of necessity be broken, and a new law of liberty, but equally of responsibility was ordained. If any one sought to evil spirits, the evil must lie on his own soul. Mr. Turbeville says I do not warn my readers against sorcery and necromancy, against communication with evil spirits. I can only say that this is just as true as the rest of his article and no truer. There are ample and express warnings in the volumes against all sorcery and necromancy. I state that the only rule is Christ's own rule of judging of the tree by its fruits. I state with St. John, though Mr. Turbeville says I do not, that you must "try the spirits."

Another of the *Patriot's* flagrant untruths, is that of all the marvellous stories in my volumes, "*not one of them is coolly and carefully sifted to the bottom.*" The italics are his own. Now, what must the many readers of my book think of such an assertion, when the greatest care is used everywhere to give all the evidence that exists on the different subjects. To take one case, which is enough to shew his falsity, for he says, there is not *one*—let it be that of the miracles at the tomb of the Abbè Paris. I have there most elaborately gone into the evidence, and shewn that it consists of the public depositions, before the notaries and

magistrates, of the most eminent surgeons, physicians, and other distinguished persons of France at that time, and that the *Eclectic Review* admits. Still, however, I have given but little idea of the rampant falsehood and dishonesty of this *Patriot* editor. He states, that I affirm that 25,000 persons in the United States have been converted by Spiritualism to a belief in *the immortality of the soul*; and he then proceeds to argue, what a difference there is betwixt being convinced of the immortality of the soul, and of Christianity. Surely, if Spiritualism had converted 25,000 people in a few years to this belief in immortality, it would have been a noble triumph; but could the reader believe that at p. 183, of Vol. II., the statement on this subject is as follows:—"Professor Hare himself, in his work says, that 25,000 persons had been converted from *Atheism and Deism to Christianity* in the United States alone." Such is the veracity of a religious critic. But Mr. Turbeville does not even remember his own statements from the beginning to the end of his article. He says, "It would be some encouragement if Mr. Howitt indicated anywhere the retention of the power of doubting, or any remainders of a *judicious scepticism*." And then he winds up by admitting that the work affords "an admirable lesson on the cultivation of a *judicious scepticism*."

This may suffice as an example of one critic, and that an organ of a very intelligent and worthy dissenting body. Well may Dr. Vaughan, in the *British Quarterly*, another organ of the same body, say, "This is not the manner in which these opinions will ever be refuted." It is creditable to this body also, that its old organ, the *Eclectic Review*, takes a very different tone; asserts that my declaration that the supernatural is a *lex magna* of the universe is a great truth; and asks whether such testimonies as those of Luther, Calvin, Cudworth, Doddridge, Baxter, Bunyan, Bacon, &c., &c., are to be treated as illusions or of no value. Now where can such a man as this Mr. Turbeville have been educated? Can it possibly have been in any respectable dissenting academy? If it were, there must have been some radical impenetrability in his nature to the grand principle of truth. His training would seem rather to have been under the especial care of that very ancient and paternal professor, known as the Father of Lies. Can the Independents really intrust to such a man one of their sources of information on books and politics?

In conclusion, let me congratulate Spiritualism on the decided impulse which even the late senseless outcry has given to it. Those, who like Charles Dickens, Mr. Holt Hutton, and the Saturday Reviewers, are so anxious to add themselves to the list of the opponents of new ideas, of steam, vaccination, and winnowing machines, will find that they have amply succeeded in

adding themselves to that inglorious catalogue of would-be obstructives, but not in writing down Spiritualism. Every day Spiritualism adds to its numbers. Every day we hear of atheists convinced of spirit and of an eternal world, of men of art, literature, science, and theology, sitting down to examine and rising up firm believers. Already, the Press, in some of its members, shews that the thin edge of the wedge is inserted. The *Standard* and *Morning Herald* declare Spiritualism grown too large to be laughed at. The *British Quarterly* avows that scepticism has gone too far. The *Eclectic Review* asserts the supernatural to be true and necessary to revive the life of religion. Already the *Morning Star* declares the case of the supernatural completely made out. Already the *New Review* advances so far as to say that, "In prosecuting this inquiry the reader will have cause to bless the labours of Mr. Howitt." Already your clergyman in the April number of this magazine admits that a great power is in the midst of us, and that more clergymen have satisfied themselves of this fact than we are aware of. This power is moving silently, but at a rate that is astonishing even to the most sanguine of observers, and the day is not far distant when the large sect of Nicodemians who are yet too timid to approach the subject by daylight, will suddenly look in their neighbours' faces, and there will be a general exclamation—"What, you too! And you! And you!" The Nicodemians are becoming too numerous a body to remain much longer a great unknown. It will be a merry morning when they find out that they may lay by their hoods and cloaks, their lamps and candles, and come out to the sunshine without taking any harm. And I dare say they will find some modern Pauls walking with the disciples. The fierceness of the persecuting element in some of the present blind men, seems to augur that they are of the kind who are only temporarily struck blind in order that they may in awhile see all the better. The heat and thunder which are now in the sceptical atmosphere foretel refreshing showers, and fresh impulses of fertility. There is hope of all but the very stocks and stones of learned conceit; even the dullest clods "of the earth earthy," if they cannot burst to life themselves, must serve for more living things to strike their roots into. As the Greeks were fond of saying, "The earth is yet mingled with fire." Life is stirring under our very feet, and the bravest sceptics would stand appalled if they could see Spiritualism as it will be seen five years hence.

Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM HOWITT.

[We do not know if Mr. Turbeville be also the writer of the article in the *Patriot* reviewing Mr. Home's book, but whoever

be the author of it, he richly merits all that Mr. Howitt says of him, and a great deal more. The secular press displays ignorance and dishonesty enough in dealing with this subject, but for the most fraudulent notices, we must of course refer to the religious press, which alone rises to the required standard. For an instance of their alarming dishonesty, we present the following mutilated quotation in the *Putriot*, which is the organ of the Independent, and we shall be glad to know whether those who manage the newspaper take any steps to shew their reprehension of the writer.

The writer is professing to make a quotation from page 137 of Mr. Home's book, containing the account of his being raised in the air, as narrated by Mr. J. G. Crawford, who was, up to that period, a disbeliever in the phenomena of Spiritualism. and the writer quotes as follows:—"Thus Mr. Crawford says—'The room was so dark that we could not see each other.' 'Don't touch me,' said Mr. Home in one of his aerial ascents, 'or I shall come down.' 'I am again ascending, and from the sound of his voice we could not but infer that he was actually rising towards the ceiling of the ante-room. He then appeared to float under the archway, then to rise to the cornice of the room we were sitting in, and we heard him quite distinctly make three cross marks on the ceiling, besides doing some other writing. Then he came down, and lay stretched out with his back upon the table, in which position we found him when the gas was lighted, where we distinctly saw the marks on the ceiling which we had heard him make.' WHERE IS THE PROOF HERE?" The italics are those of the *Putriot* writer, and he triumphantly says, "Where is the proof *here*?" Who, reading such a quotation, could imagine that the writer had carefully left out the main proof, and that he would then ask for it in its forced and fraudulent absence? And yet so it is, and this religious paper is served by a man who omitted the following words, page 137:—"Mr. Home remarked, 'I feel as if I am going to rise.' The room was quite dark. He said, 'I am getting up,' and as I was only a few feet from him, I put out my hand to him; I indubitably felt the soles of both his boots some three feet above the level of the floor. On my doing so, he said, 'Don't touch me or I shall come down.' Of course I instantly desisted, but down he came. In less than five minutes after this he remarked, 'I am again ascending,' " &c.

We should say that, feeling the soles of Mr. Home's boots as he was rising, was tolerably good proof of the fact, and so the reviewer appears to have thought when he so dishonestly expunged the words, and then asked for the proof. Such a person should be shunned by all who are not "independent" of all truth and common honesty.—ED.]

EXPERIENCES OF A PRESBYTERIAN.*

THERE is no teacher like experience, as we used to write in our school copy books, and as we may, perhaps, read in the pages of Tupper. There is no way of convincing a man like setting him down before the fact and asking him what he can make of it. He may hold cheap the observations of a thousand independent witnesses as capable as himself, or believe that they are in a conspiracy to deceive him, but he is generally a sufficient egotist to trust in the integrity of his own senses, and has so much confidence in his own honesty and judgment that he expects other people to believe *him*, and to think that now *he* is satisfied the world is on the way to being convinced; it *now* only wants a scientific commission to be appointed to investigate the evidence and the thing is done. Alas! the enthusiast of a new and unpopular truth soon finds out his mistake, the world wags on just as before, he is only one more added to the impostors or the deluded; men, for the most part, are so far "children of a larger growth" that each must put his own finger in the lighted candle to believe that it will burn, and then, how he sings out, and expects that all his brothers and sisters will take warning by his example; while little laxen-haired Johnny undeterred, and with curiosity rather piqued, takes the first opportunity when left alone with the candle, of repeating the experiment, and is somewhat grieved to find it has the same result. There are some stolid theorists whose case is so hopeless that even burnt fingers will not satisfy them. Perhaps the man who asserted "They can't put *me* in the stocks," was only confirmed in that opinion by finding himself on the village-green with his legs well taken care of under lock and key. This however is an extreme case. Usually, the man who when spirits are mentioned whistles most loudly the tune of some philosophical theory, is the most startled when anything of an unquestionably ghostly character really happens to him. When Messrs. Evans and Dickens Jun. witnessed the manifestations in the presence of Mr. Squire, all the "right merrie conceits," the jokes and gibes, the

"Quips and cranks and wanton wiles"

of Dickens and Punch were forgotten; a ghost at a distance might be laughed at, but one in the same room and ready to shake hands with them; no, they "couldn't stand that." "Facts," then, as Mr. Gradgrind says, "are what we want," or rather what is wanted by the sceptical spirit of our time, and these facts, as directly presented by honest, intelligent, and

* *My Experiences: or Footprints of a Presbyterian to Spiritualism*, By FRANCIS H. SMITH.. Baltimore, U.S.A.

independent witnesses, we shall continue to lay before our readers. As the experience of one person is added to that of another, a new phenomenon presents itself. A single testimony may be set aside, but when testimonies multiply upon us, when we have the recorded experience of many persons, writing independent of each other, at different times, at various places, each from his own centre, with his several characteristics; and all converge to the same point, and attest the same general facts, each then, beside its own independent value, adds weight and force to the rest, and we have to consider not only the separate but the *cumulative* testimony. This is why we have furnished so many ancient and modern testimonies to Spiritualism—why we have from time to time given examples of Spiritualism in Biography, and have cited such direct and recent experiences as those of Andrew Jackson Davis, Judge Edmonds, and the late Professor Hare. The experience of Mr. Francis H. Smith, as related by himself, is that of one who, if less widely known, is evidently an honest, able, and diligent investigator of the modern phenomena. We cite some of the more salient points of it the more freely, as the book containing it is little known, and is not likely to attain an extensive circulation in England.

Previous to any practical investigation of the manifestations, Mr. Smith tells us he had regarded them as “all imposture or delusion,” indeed, “downright blasphemy.” While, however, on a visit to a friend in Washington, in the summer of 1854, a neighbour invited their attendance at a circle. To gratify his friend, Mr. S. consented to accompany him, “confident that whether trick or delusion, it could be detected and exposed.” This is his account of what occurred:—

We were ushered into a genteel parlor, and found there only Major —, of the U.S.A., his wife and daughter, a girl of some fourteen summers. Having taken our seats at a small breakfast-table, with the hands resting gently thereon, it soon began to move; at first sideways, then tipping forward and backward; at times with some violence. The alphabet being called, sentences were spelled out, the proper letters being indicated by the tipping of the table. I was confounded—all idea of imposture vanished the moment I entered the room; everything around me forbade the thought: nor could I see any more ground for delusion—all was too plain and manifest. The major and his wife then withdrew, leaving only my friend, myself, and the little medium at the table. More spelling ensued, and presently the table went off rapidly across the room. I seized upon it with both hands, but could not arrest its motion! My friend, who measures full six feet in height, then applied his strength, but with no better success; it still moved, and all that we could see opposed to us was a laughing child, with the tips of her fingers upon the edge of the table.

Mr. S. left the room somewhat bewildered—the thought that it could be the work of spirits he tells us was as far from him as ever, yet he “felt assured that neither fraud nor delusion had any part in it.” Accident one day threw into his hands a

spiritual publication, the perusal of this led to further reading, and to his seeking and obtaining an invitation to a private circle of investigators, consisting of two gentlemen and three ladies, all strangers to him. At this *séance* several communications were given by the invisibles.

The first sentence was addressed to one of the gentlemen by the spirit of a lady who had died many years ago in England. "The grave is not so deep nor heaven so far off as to separate me from thee." Another heard from a son, who was killed in battle, in Mexico, giving the particulars of his death. One of the ladies received a message from a Sabbath-school child, who had recently passed away. She came to offer thanks for the kindness and attention that had been shewn her. Then it was asked if Mr. Smith had any spirit friend present? "Yes." The name? "FRANK." "If this be the one I am thinking of, at what age did you die?" "You know, dear Pa, five—I died not, but then began to live." It was my son, whose form had lain in the grave more than twenty years. More followed. I was deeply moved; until, at length, the pent-up feelings found vent in tears. I cannot say that even then, after the first emotions had subsided, that I was altogether convinced. I wanted more tests, and no opportunity was lost for further investigation. On all occasions, no matter where or with what medium, my son was with me, giving test after test; mental questions were answered until at length every particle of doubt was removed and my conviction was and has ever remained firm, without the least misgiving or shadow of turning, that the spirits of the loved, *not* lost, can and do return and commune with us.

Mr. S. continued his investigations, and received communications deeply interesting to him from relatives in the spirit-world, through mediums unknown to each other, and strangers to him and his family. He adopted the useful practice of keeping a Journal of the facts he witnessed and the communications he received. The following is an extract:—

May 1.—After a communication from my mother, the medium said that my brother was present and wished to communicate. I smiled at this, as my brothers are still living. However, wishing to test the matter, I told her to proceed. Immediately her hand dashed off a page, and just as her pencil made the last stroke, the table suddenly rose up, placed one leg on my knee, then continued rising until it rested on my head, and then as quietly returned to the floor. It occurred about noon, with no one but ourselves in the room, her hands all the time resting *upon* the table; the whole occupying less time than I have taken to write the last three lines. You may suppose this caused no little excitement, for the medium herself had seen nothing like it before; as soon, then, as composure was restored, we read what had been written. It began with: "Dear Brother," apologized for having interrupted my mother, and after some affectionate remarks, said: "You cannot doubt that this is the spirit of your brother. I put the table on your head to show what power I have.—THOROGOOD." "I leave you to judge my astonishment when I read the signature. It was my mother's first child, and I doubt whether the fact that such a child had been born before me, was known to any member of my family.

Among other phenomena mentioned by him, he says:—

With your hands merely touching the table, the spirits will fasten it to the floor so that it will require considerable force with both hands to raise one that you could lift with a finger! The medium having raised one end of it an inch or more, the invisibles will raise the other end! The table will be made to rise from the floor, place one leg on the knee, and then up, up, until it places itself on the head of every one in succession! I have witnessed these manifestations again and again. Only recently, while visiting a friend in Accomac County, Va.

a wish having been expressed to see something of these wonders, a rumour of which had only just reached them, a circle was formed consisting of three ladies, two gentlemen and myself. Not only what is above mentioned occurred, but a large old fashioned mahogany dining table with rounded end, and hanging ~~leg~~ was made to run rapidly around the room—was turned completely over, and ~~ran~~ up until the legs touched the ceiling, and then returned gently to the floor. Two of the ladies seated themselves upon it and were instantly thrown off. This was done several times. Afterwards, while in motion, their united efforts could not stop it. One of them seated in a chair with her feet resting on the ~~round~~ was thrown out by the chair being pitched violently forward. To all this there was no apparent agency but the fingers of one lady and two gentlemen resting lightly upon them!

Mr. S. gives a series of communications from a spirit, through five different mediums, unknown to each other; none of whom but the first even knew that such a person had ever lived. Among the spirits communicating was one purporting to be Sir Humphrey Davy, who delivered to the circle a series of lectures. Mr. S. says:—

Wishing to know more of one by whom we had been thus highly favoured, I procured his *Life*, the perusal of which suggested three questions by which to test whether it was indeed the spirit of Sir Humphrey Davy, and at the same time, satisfy my sceptical friend, who had been doubting—doubting whether it did not all emanate from her own mind. Accordingly, at our next sitting, I laid on the table a folded paper, within which was written: Who was Grace Millet? Who was Mr. Tonkin? What of Chloe? I intimated nothing of my purpose, but as soon as his name was announced, merley asked if he could answer it. "I can—the relation of the first to me was my mother?" It was her maiden name! The second was the friend of my childhood, of my youth, and when I became a man, my associate in study. The third was my pet dog. I saved her from being killed by a mad dog." Imagine the astonishment of my young friend! Let it be understood that no one present knew what I was about, as I had given no intimation of it, but simply laid the folded paper on the table. Now turn to his "*Life*," and see how appropriate were the replies.

As many of our readers may feel curious as to the spiritual teachings of the late President of the Royal Society, we present an extract from one of the aforesaid lectures, giving, we think, good reason why spirits do not more fully comply with the requirements of Sir Humphrey Davy's distinguished successor—Professor Faraday, to make to the world new revelations in physical science:—

"Dear friends, man has searched out the various principles of his own globe; but there is much yet which has not been revealed, much that is hidden which shall be brought to light. If spirits were permitted to tell of all God's mysteries, man would have nothing left to search for himself. There would then be no occasion for chemical analysis. The astronomer would no more construct telescopes to search the ethereal skies. No more need ships be sent to explore the vast expanse of the polar regions, of which so much has been written, so much speculation indulged, and wherein so many earth-lives have been lost. Can you not see that if all were revealed, man with his inert nature would not care to search for himself. If the discoveries yet to be made in chemistry were already laid down, what occasion would there be for constructing new and various vessels. Would the astronomer tax his brain to search the divine and yet undiscovered regions stretched above him? All would be plain. Search would be a superfluous word: what would there be to search for if all were known? Therefore, my friends, the All-puissant Father of light has decreed, that man

shall ever have something to learn:—Aye, even when he reaches the divine and glorious land wherein we dwell.

The following is a piece of what purports to be the spiritual biography of the eminent sceptic—David Hume:—

“When I left earth’s sphere, you all know what sentiments I avowed. I had never felt or understood the mercies of my loving Father. I knew not God. I entered the spirit-world bewildered. I knew not where I was. Can this, thought I, be death? Am I not still a man in form and feeling? Where lies the change? A change there must be, for I there behold my earthly image? It seemed incredible. I touched myself. I spoke aloud—I shrieked, and all to prove my identity. Darkness seemed around, and yet I saw, but could not discover the source of the light by which I saw. I breathed; I knew I lived. Where could I be? and wherefore all alone? but not long alone; for soon dark images appeared around me. Here was a man of gigantic shape and form. Surely, thought I, this be must the spirit of Goliath. I shrank in fear away from him, so huge he was. Others surrounded me; some dark and black, some tall, and others seemed mere dwarfs. They laughed, they hooted, they shouted, beckoning me to go with them, where I knew not. I feared myself. “Oh!” I involuntarily exclaimed, “there must be a God!” The words were scarcely uttered, ere I beheld a ray of light shining beside me. “Is there, oh, is there an Eternal Master,” I shrieked; and in my agony, threw myself upon the ground, and roared in my excess of misery. How long I laid there, I know not, but suddenly it seemed as if a bright light was all around. I raised my head, and beheld standing before me a being whose glorious perfection of beauty I shall never find words to describe. She seemed lovely as an angel’s dream of supernal bliss. Her skin of alabaster fairness—her hair, you have no words to apply to it reached to her feet and was intermingled with heaven’s loveliest flowers. Her dress was white and she wore a girdle of golden leaves that sparkled in that brilliant light, till it seemed to me each ray was composed of numberless diamonds. On her head was a wreath of the same, and yet its light seemed different. Its rays shot upward, and the thought came to me, If there be a God, surely this lovely being’s purity and love are carried upward to her Heavenly Father with those rays of light divine. She spoke to me in tones of matchless music. She told me of her life on earth—how she had been as I; aye worse; and how through the love of that God, whose existence I doubted, she had been saved and raised to the happiness she now experienced. She told me of her first heaven-garment; how it was black and spotted like mine; and now, I perceived for the first time, how dark was the dress I wore. She told me of the teachings of her angel-guides—how they had prayed and wept for her; and she said each tear that fell on her garment of sin, changed the spot to a lighter shade. “Shall we, my friend, she continued, cleanse *thy* robe by the tears of repentance? Shall we pray to our Heavenly Father to purify thee? His existence you no longer can doubt, therefore, will you not seek to do His will? Oh! become as one of our little lambs. Will you not seek to reach the abode of your equals in intellect? Yes, I feel that you will; and mine is the charge to guide your onward steps.” That lovely angel whom I learned to call my saviour-guide, never deserted me; she it was who, when temptations beset me, led me away and wept for my sin. She taught me the truths of our heaven-home. Her task was arduous, but she never seemed to feel it so; and I noticed that as I progressed, her garment became still whiter, and her face still more angelic; and I learned that each effort of hers to save me had purified her still more. Long I labored against my prejudices, but in time I progressed to a comparatively happy state, and am now fast advancing to the realms of endless light, wherein the spirit shall know no pain, the heart no thought of sin below.”

One George Dennis, who had been a slave, communicates as follows:—

“I was drowned. I was in the Patrick Henry, coming from the West Indies. All on board were lost. The ship was loaded with sugar and molasses. A

squall struck us off Cape Hatteras. I was knocked overboard by the main boom before any other person was drowned, and before the vessel was capsized by the squall. To whom did you belong, and when did this happen? "I belonged to Col. Edward Sneed. I don't know how long it was ago. My master's eldest son was then about twelve years old." Where did you sail from? "Onancock." A gentleman, Mr. Parker, had entered the room, just after this had begun. At first he could not understand what was going on, but it being explained, he listened with great attention and said that he knew George Dennis well—knew the vessel—she sailed from Onancock about twenty years ago and was never heard of. But he thought the spirit was mistaken in saying she was lost when coming from the West Indies—thinks that her last voyage was from Providence. To this the answer given was. "I did go to the West Indies the trip before I was lost, and was going back there after I came from Providence. We should have gone there then, but Captain John Colona was sick and could not go. Captain Marmouth was captain. I was thinking about another trip when Captain Billy Revel went captain—then we went to the West Indies. Mr. Nat. Topping was one of the owners. Captain Billy Revel went captain because he knew navigation better than the rest. I must leave." Mr. Parker said he knew all these persons, and the facts, as stated, were correct.

"Then a number of spirits gave their names: Parker Lee, Henry Copes, Revel West, Edwin West, Harry Walker, Elizabeth West, Jacob Carmine, James Poulson—all strangers to me, but each known to some one present."

Of the power of spirits to cure disease, Mr. S. professes himself a living instance. His eyes had been attacked with inflammation twelve years previous, and his sight had gradually become so impaired that he could only read large print; at chess he was obliged to tie bits of paper to the bishops to distinguish them from the knights, and he had to guide his course by the street lamps when walking out at night. He expected soon to be totally blind, and believed his case hopeless, being told by his physician that the disease was paralysis of the optic nerve. By spiritual magnetization and magnetic shocks, and by following a simple course of treatment which the spirits prescribed, he was quickly enabled to dispense with the opaque glasses he had found it necessary to use; he could write, and read the finest print without spectacles—which he had been using on all occasions for fifteen years previously.

Several instances are given of correct answers to mental questions, and replies to questions, written on paper closely folded and placed in carefully-sealed envelopes; but we must for the present content ourselves and readers with Mr. Smith's testimony:—"That the experience of the last three years has been varied and highly interesting. A tithe of it is sufficient to convince any rational mind—one who, with deep sense of the tremendous importance of the subject, a seeker after truth for truth's sake, would give it a fair investigation. No such mind could resist what it has been my happy lot to receive, and for which all this world's wealth and honour would be but a poor exchange."

T. S.

SPIRITUALISM IN AUSTRALIA.

II.

THE following letter we think will interest the reader as a record of phenomena similar to those so frequently witnessed in England, on the Continent, and in America. Like the former one published in our number for February last, it originally appeared in *The Empire* newspaper, from which, with a few unimportant omissions it is now reprinted :—

To the Editor of the "Empire."

Sir,—The following report of phenomena, which I have had an opportunity of observing, will add, more or less, to the evidence adducible in favour of the truth of Spiritualism :—

In the month of February, 1862, I was one of a circle of six persons who seated themselves round a common cedar table, and placed their hands on the surface of it. We had not thus sat many minutes before the table began to crack in a strange and curious manner, the sounds at first resembling a faint tick, and afterwards increasing in loudness, so as ultimately to become distinctly audible to all persons in the room. One of the ladies present asked if the person, or thing that was rapping, was a spirit, and the response consisted of a number of raps, which we interpreted to be an affirmative answer. The following dialogue then occurred between the rapping agent, and the members of the circle :—Mr. S. "Will you answer our questions by giving three raps for 'Yes,' and keeping silence for 'No?' Spirit. Three raps (meaning 'Yes.')" Five members of the circle then asked successively whether the spirit, while in the flesh, had been related to them, but the invisible dialogist maintained strict silence, which we understood to be an answer in the negative to each questioner.

Mr. S. "Are you a relation of mine?" Spirit. "Yes."

Mr. S. "I will name several degrees of relationship, and should I mention that which you sustained to me will you please to rap?" Spirit. "Yes."

Mr. S. "Were you my father, sister, brother, nephew, niece, aunt?" Spirit "No."

Mr. S. "Were you my uncle?" Spirit. "Yes."

Mr. S. "Were you, or are you, my uncle James, Alexander, William?" Spirit. "No."

Mr. S. "Are you my uncle John?" Spirit. "Yes."

Mr. S. "I will mention the names of different kingdoms and countries; and when I name the country in which you died, will you please to rap?" Spirit: "Yes!"

Mr. S. "Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, America?" Spirit. "No."

Mr. S. "Scotland?" Spirit. "Yes."

Mr. S. "Did you die a natural death?" Spirit. "No."

Mr. S. "Did you die by violence?" Spirit. "Yes."

Mr. S. "Were you killed with a bludgeon, shot, poisoned, or murdered in any other way?" Spirit. "No."

Mr. S. "Were you drowned?" Spirit. "Yes."

Mr. S. "What age were you when your body died? Give a rap for each year." A shower of raps came on the table so rapidly that we could not accurately count them.

Mr. S. "Were you forty?" Spirit. "Yes."

Mr. S. "Fifty, Sixty?" Spirit. "Yes."

Mr. S. "Were you seventy years of age?" Spirit. "No."

In answer to questions put in this way, we obtained the additional information that our invisible friend was between sixty-four and sixty-five years of age when he was drowned.

Towards the close of this *séance* the writer's son asked the spirit to give one distinct knock as a test of its existence, and as a proof of its ability to understand his question, and one distinct rap was heard on the table. "Louder,"

said the lad, and the rap was repeated in a louder tone. "Louder still," said the youth, and then there came a moderately heavy thud on the under side of the table. This closed the *séance*. I may here remark that I had an uncle of the name of John, from whom I have not heard for more than thirty years. When I last heard of him he was in America. If he is dead, I neither know the place where he died, nor the mode of his death. For aught, therefore, which I know to the contrary, the information which I received from the invisible presence respecting him may be true. I have, however, no means of ascertaining whether it is true or false. Although at the commencement of the *séance* we sat round the table, yet, when spirit-power began to be manifested, we all stood up, and it was whilst we were standing that the greater part of the raps were heard. None of us had any reason to suspect that any of the rest would be guilty of playing off a hoax, but, nevertheless, we watched each other as closely as possible, in order that we might detect a physical and ordinary cause for the sounds we heard. The culprit, however, remained invisible. During the time the rappings were being produced, the hands of all persons in the party were on the table, nor was there any appearance whatever of anything like a trick. The sounds obviously proceeded from some cause outside of ourselves, and over the operations of which we had no control. The phenomena we had witnessed were so strange and wonderful that they very naturally excited in us a desire to witness them again, and to know more about them. Accordingly, on a subsequent evening, we assembled, and after forming the circle, the rappings commenced, and were just as demonstrative as they had been at our first *séance*. We asked the rapping agent to give one rap at each of the letters of its name, whilst we repeated the letters of the alphabet, and in this way we got slowly spelled out the name "E-l-i-z-a K-i—," the name obviously being unfinished. Strangely enough, one of the ladies in the circle, and who we have ascertained to be the medium, had an aunt, recently deceased, named Eliza King. The following colloquy then occurred:—

Mr. S. "Does space affect you as it does us, that is are you related to it as we are?" Spirit. "No."

Mr. S. "Can you go to London in five minutes?" Spirit. "Yes."

Mr. S. "Will you please to go there to—street, No.—, and ascertain how Mrs. N—is?" Spirit. "Yes."

Mr. S. "Have you been to London?" Spirit. "Yes."

Mr. S. "How is Mrs. N——? Is she well?" Spirit. "No."

Mr. S. "Is she ill?" Spirit. "Yes."

Mr. S. "Is she very ill?" Spirit. "Yes."

Mr. S. "Will she die of her illness?" Spirit. "No."

Mr. S. "Will she recover?" Spirit. "Yes."

At this stage of the proceedings, two of the ladies became alarmed, and the *séance* terminated. This *séance* was held on the 16th of February, 1862.

The next circle meeting took place on the following Saturday. A gentleman connected with a banking establishment was present at it, and took part in the proceedings. The following dialogue took place:—

Mr. S. "Can you tell us anything about the missing mail steamer?" (The Bombay was then overdue about ten days.) Spirit. "Yes."

Mr. S. "I will mention various causes of detention, and should I mention the right one, will you please to rap?" Spirit. "Yes."

Mr. S. "Has she taken fire? Has she been wrecked? Has she sunk? Has she been detained by storms, heavy weather?" Spirit. "No."

Mr. S. "Has the delay been occasioned by imperfect machinery?" Spirit. "Yes."

Mr. S. "Are you sure that imperfect machinery has been the cause of the delay?" Spirit. "Yes."

Mr. S. "When shall we receive in Wollongong a telegram of English news? On the 22nd, 23rd, 24th?" Spirit. "No."

Mr. S. "Shall we receive it on the 25th?" Spirit. "Yes."

Mr. S. "Are you sure of that?" Spirit. "Yes."

On the 25th of February, we did receive a telegram of English news contained in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of that date, and which was received via Melbourne,

from the Mauritius. Strange to say also, the Bombay steamship, was detained through imperfect machinery, for she broke her screw on the voyage, and had to put into the Mauritius for repairs. Those who were present at the *séance* understood that the telegram which the spirit said would be received on the 25th, was to contain the news brought by the Bombay's mail. This, however, was purely an inference of our own, and was not stated by the invisible interlocutor.

At this *séance*, a very curious phenomenon occurred. The agent that was answering our questions sometimes seemed to lack power to make the table crack—or, at least, I supposed that it lacked that power, because of the length of time it took to answer the questions we put to it. At length, a question was put, and we were all anxiously waiting for a response, when some strange influence began to effect my hands and arms causing them to become stiff, rigid, and catalepted, and pressing them down with great force upon the table. Whether this rigidity or spasm of the muscles was occasioned by some obscure kind of automatic mental action, or by animal magnetism, or by electricity, or by Reichenbach's odic force, or by reflex nervous action, or by the agency of a spirit, I leave others to determine; but, *certainly*, whatever may have been the cause, the effect was to me extremely curious and interesting. It seemed to be produced by something outside of myself, operating in conjunction with abnormal volitional impulses, so obscure as to be almost imperceptible to consciousness. Although I knew and felt that I could stop this effect by a direct act of my will, I nevertheless allowed my hands to operate without check or hindrance, and watched the result with much interest. When the rigidity in my arms had reached what appeared to be a culminating point, and had begun to produce slight pain, my hands rose involuntarily from the table, made a few mesmeric passes over it, and then slowly rising about a foot, or a foot and a half above it, remained stationary. All this might have been automatic, that is to say, might have been produced by some obscure action of my own brain; but what followed, and which seemed intimately related to this supposed automatic action, must have been produced by something distinct from myself. Whilst my hands were held over the table, the latter began to crack, and then an affirmative answer to the question we had proposed was rapped out. This occurred repeatedly, and uniformly with the same effect, excepting in one instance, in which the rapping agent would not give a response, until my hands were brought within an inch or so of the table, when a distinct rap was produced immediately beneath them; again they rose and descended, and a second rap was heard; and a third time they rose and descended, and a third rap was heard; the three raps thus constituting an affirmative answer to our question. While these raps were being produced, no part of my person was in contact with the table, nor did my clothes touch the wood of it in any place. The raps seemed to be produced in the wood at the edge of the table, immediately beneath my hands, and were heard only when my hands were brought close to the table. During the time this pantomimic and apparently ridiculous performance was taking place, I remained as passive as possible, and allowed my faculties to be made use of by another; but I watched the changes that took place in myself very narrowly, and thought that I was able to discriminate that portion of the effect that was produced by my own agency, from that portion that was produced by the agency of another. If it be presumed that the spasm or rigidity of my muscles was produced by purely automatic action, how can the production of the raps be explained? and more especially, how can we account for the bewildering fact that purely automatic action caused an unintelligent substance to manifest intelligence?

At our next circle meeting we did not obtain any manifestation of spirit-presence; although the same persons that were present at the previous meetings, were present at this; and the circle was formed in the customary manner.

Early in March we again met to test the matter further. When I sat down to the table I had some doubts on my mind as to the mode in which the raps had been produced. I thought that perhaps after all they might not have been produced by spiritual agency, but rather by ourselves; that we might have unconsciously pushed the table, and so caused it to crack; that we knew, or fancied that we knew the answer to each question; and that the dominant thoughts of our minds imperceptibly influenced the pressure effected by our

hands, and so caused the table to crack at the proper time, so as that the raps should appear to form intelligible answers to our questions. This pretty theory was put to flight by the very first rap we heard. That rap seemed to levelled at my doubts. Instead of being made on the table it was made on a piano which stood in the room, and which was not in contact with any of the persons present at the *séance*. We were all so situated that none of us could touch the piano without all the rest perceiving that we did touch it. The medium was seated with her back towards it, while her hands were on the table, the hands of all the rest being on the table also, all persons present being more than a yard distant from any part of the instrument. While thus situated the raps came on the piano just as we wished, in twos or threes, or singly, or in any other mode we pointed out. We inquired the name of the spirit that was rapping, and the raps spelled out "Collins," and then, in answer to our question—What is your other name? "Col." was made out, which was all the information we could get. We asked then if the second name was finished, and was told that it was not. The spirit then promised to meet me on the following afternoon, at five o'clock, and to communicate with me; but, although I attended at the time and place appointed, I received no manifestation of any kind; so that, if the spirit was really there, it was rather unwilling, or perhaps unable to perform what it had promised. At this meeting the raps were heard on the piano at first, but towards the close of the *séance* they were requested to come upon the table and they did so.

On the 26th of March we formed a circle at the medium's house. We again heard the raps. They came upon the table, on the ceiling, on a chest of drawers on a second table that was in the apartment, and on the back of the chair on which the medium sat. The medium averred that she felt distinct knocks and touches on her back. My arms were strangely affected, being pressed down with great force upon the table, then raised from it as if by some unseen attraction, the table meanwhile oscillating, and cracking, and tipping, more like a thing alive than an inanimate substance. Every time that my hands came off the table, it followed them along the floor for nearly half a yard, and returned to its former position at my request. Possibly I produced a magnetic effect upon the members of the circle whose hands were on the table, causing them to push the table after me when my hands were raised from it, and to bring it back to its former position when I desired it to return there. I do not therefore, regard the phenomenon as a conclusive proof of spirit agency. The raps, however, were unmistakeably produced by an invisible intelligence. The spirit answered our questions. A spirit purporting to be related to the medium was asked what it died of, and then was spelled out by means of the alphabet, "Aneurism." Another spirit told us that it was a year old when it entered the land of spirits, and it gave its initials; the length of life stated, and the given initials corresponding to the circumstances connected with the death of an infant related to the medium. The following is a portion of the dialogue that was carried out.

Mr. S. "Can you bring the spirit of Dr. M——y, formerly of Maitland, and recently deceased, into the room?" Spirit. "Yes."

Mr. S. "Is he here now?" Spirit. "Yes."

Mr. S. "Will he communicate?"

No answer could be got to this question, nor could we obtain any further communications of importance.

Mr. S. "Will the English mail reach Wollongong to-morrow morning (this was the morning after the *séance*)?" Spirit. "No."

Mr. S. "Will Mrs. S. receive a letter from England by the mail?" Spirit. "Yes."

Mr. S. "Will she receive the letter to-morrow?" Spirit. "No."

Mr. S. "Will she receive it on the following day?" Spirit. "Yes."

This information was incorrect. I knew at the time it was given that the English mail would reach Wollongong on the following morning, and hence was surprised at the rapping agent stating that it would not. I had received English papers brought by the Bombay steamer, and, therefore, knew that the mail went in Sydney, and that it must be down in due course on the following morning. Mrs. S. did receive a letter, but not at the time the rapping agent stated.

ould. The spirit clearly fell into a mistake, or else we misunderstood it, or it misunderstood us. Had there been any thought-reading in the case, the rapping agent might have seen, by looking into my mind, that the mail would certainly arrive on the following morning.

In the early part of April, I invited a number of ladies and gentlemen to come to my residence on a particular evening, for the express purpose of witnessing manifestations of spirit presence, in order that they might be convinced of the truth of Spiritualism by the testimony of their own senses. I found out, however, that I had reckoned without my host. We formed a circle, I called the spirits from the vasty deep, but they would not come to us. There were manifestations, certainly, but they were of a very refined and delicate nature, and very far from being sufficiently broad and glaring to attract the notice of sceptics. A few of the gentlemen who attended on that occasion, assembled on the following evening, and sat in circle for about half-an-hour, without the medium being present, and without obtaining any indications of spirit presence. On two subsequent occasions, I had opportunities of testing these mysterious rappings, and on each of these occasions, I received indubitable evidence of the presence of an unseen intelligence. In both cases the raps were produced away from the medium, as well as close to her, on the table, on the walls of the room, on matting that covered the floor, on a child's chair, and on the back of the medium's chair. None of us could have produced these raps, without the others detecting the trick, unless, indeed, some sort of machinery had been employed for the express purpose of imposing on the credulity of the circle. As the *séance* took place in the writer's parlour, any machinery that was there must have been there with the writer's cognizance and sanction, and could not have been there otherwise. But it is unnecessary to pursue this ridiculous supposition any further.

I may here remark that raps, cracks and noises can be made by any one, even by a child, and can be made, too, in such a way as that they shall appear to answer questions. These noises can be made voluntarily, and, perhaps, are sometimes made involuntarily by persons sitting in circle; and, in either case, are doubtless, often mistaken for veritable spirit-raps. But they are quite distinct from the rappings of spirits, and can scarcely be confounded with these rappings by anyone who has heard both. The slipping of the skin of the hand on the surface of the table, slight pressure, producing almost imperceptible vibration in the table itself, the movement of the body in the act of breathing, the creaking of the chairs, owing to the slight rocking of the bodies sitting on them, the slipping of the foot in the boot, or of the boot against the leg of the table, all respectively produce noises, and creaks, and raps; and hence, those who are so ready to play at the game of imposture may by these, or other means, deceive the people, and make them accept ordinary sounds as manifestations of spirit-presence and power. But all these sounds are localised and easily detected. They do not move away from the place where they are at first produced, when you search them. If the raps are produced by the creaking of the chair in the first instance, the chair must continue to produce them, otherwise they will cease to be heard. All this must be obvious. Spirit-raps, however, will as a general rule, be made in any way the members of the circle choose to dictate. Sometimes, indeed, they are made quite contrary to the wishes of those present, and quite out of the reach of every one in the room, thereby showing that the agent that makes them is independent of human control. I have heard them made on a ceiling which no one standing on the floor could touch.

It appears to me that the only way of testing the truth of Spiritualism is to put the question to Nature—that is, to experiment. To sit round a table giggling, laughing, cracking jokes, and deriding Spiritualism and Spiritualists, as I have seen many do, and as I have done myself, is not the way to discover the truth. The facts of Spiritualism are circumstanced exactly like the facts of the physical sciences. The chemist, or the electrician, observes a fact and makes a statement about it, and that statement is believed, because there is no reason to doubt its truth, and because everybody knows that any man can test the truth of the alleged fact whenever he likes. Hence hundreds of facts are believed solely on the testimony of one or two persons. In fact, the belief of a large portion of man-

kind in what is popularly called physical science, is neither more nor less than a blind and unintelligent faith. It is not necessary, however, that faith in science should be either blind or unintelligent—inasmuch as it may be based on knowledge. So is it with respect to Spiritualism. We may believe it on the testimony of others, or we may put the question to experiment, and ascertain the truth more directly. The latter is the plan I adopted, the results being such as I have previously recorded. These results leave not a shadow of doubt on my mind as to the fact of our being surrounded by invisible and intelligent beings, and as to the additional fact of our being able to communicate with them almost whenever we like.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Wollongong, April 30th.

F. S.

NEW CONNEXION SPIRITUALISM.

WE have received the following letters confirming the truth of the spirit of Mrs Burley appearing to her nephew, as stated at page 227 of the last number:—

“ Manchester.

“ SIR,—My friend thought the Rev. T. Mills had omitted to state several particulars which were quite necessary before the story could be credited; in fact he concluded, or nearly so, that the young man, for anything that appeared in the account, might have given the story long after the death and burial of Mrs. Burley; and he half reached some other conclusions which to his mind were just as fatal to a full reliance on the story. I said, that all he desired was implied in the narrative. I suggested he should write to Mr. Mills, and the two accompanying letters are the result. Your obedient servant, B.”

“ 18, Victoria-street, Manchester,

“ April 6, 1863.

“ DEAR SIR,—In your narrative of the death of Mrs. Thomas Burley which appears in the *M. N. C. Magazine* of this month, you relate some singular incidents in the postscript, which have formed the subject of conversation between Mr. B. and myself, on account of their similarity to many of the phenomena in connection with Spiritualism. I shall be glad if you will favour me with a reply to the following queries:—

“ 1. When did the boys return home?—was it immediately after the circumstance, and before or after the aunt's death had been mentioned or made known to them?

“ 2. Has the other boy corroborated the account as given in the *Magazine*?

“ 3. Has the family which was ‘startled’ by the occurrence in the house where the incident happened, corroborated the statement?

“ 4. When did the boy first give the account referred to?

“ 5. Have you had the accounts direct from the boys and family referred to?

“ I remain, yours truly,

“ Rev. Thos. Mills.”

“ JOSEPH S.

“ Wolverhampton, 9th April, 1863.

“ DEAR SIR,—In reply to your queries, I have to state that the boys returned home immediately, and before the aunt's death could have been known to them; that I believe the other boy's testimony agrees with all that James Evans states; that James Evans stated, when first he appeared, all that he has since affirmed, as far as he could amidst his violent weeping, indeed he did so to me, who was one of the first to see him; and that during his illness which followed, and in which there was little hope of life, he always confirmed the first statement, sometimes in an affecting manner. He has since joined the church and received the sacrament. The boys are fifteen years of age.

“ In kind regards to Mrs. S—— and Mr. B——

“ I am affectionately yours,

“ Mr. S——”

“ T. MILLS.