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MARY JANE.\*

AJAX defying the lightning and struck down by the trident of Neptune in the midst of his impious menaces, an enduring spectacle for all succeeding time; the antediluvian stealthily treading in the slime of creation, as he seeks his prey, and making indented footsteps which harden into fossils by means of which the Water-houses and Owens of the latter days will construct for you the picture of his life; the ancient Scythian burying his king in one of those majestic mounds, and placing him on horseback with a court of vassals surrounding him, all transfixed and gaunt, and found after thousands of years by us when we occupied the Crimea, still holding the same grim position as described by Herodotus; these and similar examples have been brought to our mind, by perusing the work with the above feminine title, one more appropriate, it would seem at first sight, to the *Family Herald* in describing the loves of the kitchen, than to any explanation of Spiritualism, "chemically," or otherwise.

Who or what is Mary Jane, that these grandiloquent ideas should connect themselves with her? That must be now our business to shew. One of the great props of materialism has fallen. Ajax has been struck down. We may examine the fossilized footsteps at our leisure. The old Scythian king is standing for our convenience in his old armour transfixed upon his horse, and will stand for all time. The materialist and the coffer have been struck down. We need not be in a hurry, for we have succeeded in obtaining photographs of these curious instances for the benefit of our readers.

In the annals of the human mind changes are not counted by centuries, but by differences; and ideas may undergo all the changes from the budding spring to the icy winter in a moment—they may become fossils in an hour and lose their life, preserving only a stony form of what once they were. An instance of this

\* *Mary Jane, or Spiritualism Chemically Explained, with Spirit Drawings; also Essays by, and Ideas (perhaps Erroneous) of "A Child at School."* London, 1863. Price 2s.; to be purchased only of THOMAS SCOTT, Printer, Warwick-court, Colborn.

is now before us so notable that it ought to arrest the attention of all thinking men who would inquire into one of the great facts of human nature. A cry is often heard from the puzzled sceptic, that the inquiry into the facts of Spiritualism, should be made by some man of science who can come fresh to the subject with mind unprejudiced in favour of it, but here is the case of a man of science and a confirmed materialist throughout a long life, with a mind prejudiced by matured convictions, not only formed but printed in the very book before us, driven against his will to be an inquirer and a believer by facts coming from his own wife's mediumship. The whole story is printed at his own expense, and told throughout the book in nervous language, full of humour, and of the sort of strong sense which characterizes the materialistic mind. Not that he has yet got out of his materialism, but nevertheless he fully acknowledges the whole class of marvellous phenomena which it was a main object of his book as he projected it, to disprove the possibility of. Even now, according to the very title of his work it is a case of "Spiritualism chemically explained." It would be almost too much to expect more for the present, and we are thankful for the present instalment, which is a full acknowledgment of the facts denied throughout his life, and still denied and derided by the mass of the scientific public.

The book takes the scientific and critical world in the rear, while they think that they are stoutly battling in the front. They have now once more the same evidences coming from the Spiritualists and the Anti-Spiritualists, and this will greatly discomfit them, as it justly should do. There is a point beyond which even science and criticism cannot hold out against the most unwelcome fact. The next move, and it will be a great one, will be to admit the facts and to deny the spirit agency in them, and for this last purpose the curious theory of the writer of "Mary Jane" will be an assistance for a little time, but not for long. It is certainly ingenious and bold, and only lacks one element—possibility.

This curious book appears to have been a long time on the anvil. From the address at the commencement of it, the beginning of it appears to have been printed as early as 1858, and the last date towards the end is the 16th of May, 1863. It consists of a series of essays entirely disjointed, and on very various subjects. The more serious of them involve the highest metaphysical speculations, and they are treated according to the most approved materialistic views. The writer was evidently expending himself upon them and discoursing wisdom on "Light, Instinct, and Intellect," "Elements of Man," "Spontaneous Generation," "On the Principles of Human Intellect," "Life,"

“Religion,” “Creation,” “Infinity, &c.” We should have thought that “Infinity” would have been large enough for one essay without the “&c.,” and he has taken particular pains with the essay “On the Origin of Jewish Religion,” in which Moses appears to be much more severely handled than even by Dr. Colenso. This last brings us to page 300 of the book, which is published in handsome small folio, in fine type, and with a splendid margin, and it was evidently intended to be the closing chapter, when a very remarkable and unexpected incident occurred, which changed the even current of the author’s life, and the destiny and even the title of his book. On the evening of the day on which his book was to go to the binder, he became a Spiritualist! The most unfortunate part of the business was that his book was all printed, and the only choice lay between destroying the sheets containing these brilliant chapters, or honestly to gibbet himself by publishing the whole as it was written, for the benefit of the scoffing world. To his infinite credit he chose the thorny path which has given us the theme we are dwelling on. One by one he saw his choice and favourite essays dropping out of his book, and the views of a lifetime changed in an hour, for he has the sound wisdom to perceive the immense value of the simplest spiritual phenomena when once scientifically proved, and he has, what is even more rare, the candour to acknowledge his conviction. The closing chapter of the preface should be a caution to all who are warring against facts and hugging favourite and baseless theories. The author naively says:—“I must also remark that the whole of the work was written and printed, and ready for the binder, before I had the slightest knowledge on the subject of Spiritualism or Odylic vapour, as my original article “On Belief,” proves; *but, if my present views on this subject are correct, all that I have written on light, instinct, intellect, spontaneous generation, the principles of human intellect, and other analogous subjects would require to be remodelled*; as the consideration of every subject touching or relating to the production, nature, and progressive changes of organic life, of all descriptions, and of instinct and progressive intellect, *must be influenced, or rather must take a new track, by the indubitable certainty that there issues from the human body, totally unconsciously, a vapour, combining power, thought, and the power of expressing that thought*; and, by the strongest chain of circumstantial reasoning, analogous vapours exude from every particle of organic creation; *nor do I think that this description comprehends the whole of this vast subject.*”

There are several quiet hits at “table turning” and “spirit-rapping” through some of these chapters, but our author does not fairly enter upon the subject until we come to his essay on

"Belief." He there recounts his adventure with his friend Mr. Wason, whose name is well-known to our readers as one of the boldest champions of these despised facts. Mr. Wason had been brought up in respectable orthodoxy, and had so continued until about twenty-six years ago, when the author inoculated him with his strong materialistic opinions. All Mr. Wason's former faith was annihilated, and for twenty-six years he was one of the strongest of the apostles of that school, and so continued till he heard a few "raps" on a table. The material school had no room for such visitors as these invisible rappers, and he at once saw that he had been led for all those years through a weary wilderness of unbelief. He endeavoured now to return the compliment to his old friend by converting him to a belief in the facts of Spiritualism, and the author tells us how he set about it, and what was the result. He says:—

My old, esteemed, and valued friend W——, a few days ago, made it a personal matter of reproach to me, that I did not believe all the things or occurrences he stated to me to have personally witnessed at a *séance*, where there were some persons called mediums, and other parties of distinction and education present. Now I have known W. intimately for many years (with a long interval while he was abroad); and, certainly, if there be a truthful man in existence, he is one of those men who, in former days, would have gloried in martyrdom rather than allow that he gave up an iota of belief;—a man whose convictions are so strong, that he not only firmly believes a thing himself, but insists that everybody else ought to believe it too. He pressed me so, on the ground that not to believe him was a personal affront, that if I had not possessed a very amiable patient temper, I should have been affronted; indeed, for the moment, I rather put out, until I had collected my reasoning faculties, and then I told him that he had no right to insist on my believing; that belief was a matter of conviction and not of force; and thus commenced the train of thoughts to which the question, "What is Belief?" gave rise.

Before proceeding on that question, some of the preceding occurrences of interest or amuse you. Before I left England, W. was always what might be termed a very materialistic character, such as might be expressed in the words, "I believe what I see, and I am not to be gammoned by any nonsense." When W. heard from a mutual friend of my return, he wrote me a letter, and after the usual congratulations, went at once at great length into the subject of his having become a convert to Spiritualism, requesting me to go and see some very good honest mediums in London. *I replied that I thought the best thing he could do was to go to some highly respectable lunatic asylum and state his belief, which would entitle him to immediate admission:* and as for the mediums, as he was coming to London to the Exhibition, that would be time enough for me to go with him. So he came up to London, and I found my old friend as deeply dyed in Spiritualism as ever a piece of cotton which the linendraper tickets "fast colours, warranted to wash well." Whatever subject was talked of seemed secondary to him; and at the very first chance, up came Spiritualism like a cork which you have momentarily forced under water. In short, there was no peace till I went with him to see these two female mediums. All our hands were put on the table; the table moved and jumped, quantities of raps were heard, and the elderly medium declared that a number of spirits were present. The real business then began by the table turning towards me several times, and the medium asked vocally if the spirit wished to speak to me, which the spirit answered by three raps. This spirit said his name was William; and as the mediums knew my name, and I confessed to an uncle who died forty years ago, the spirit declared himself my uncle, which he spelt with the spirit alphabet "unkel," besides spelling my name rather phonetically. I said I wondered my uncle had forgotten his spelling, but

was told that the spirits did not always spell correctly. A lady present was told by a spirit " *You shall have power to believe yourself, and convince your husband.*"

On our return home, I summed up the *séance* to my friend W., as follows:—" You took me to see a table move, and to hear certain raps, which, through the alphabet, spell certain words, and you asserted that there was a communication of intelligence in those raps, not emanating from the media, but from unseen spirits. I did not see how the table was moved, as we were all round it, nor do I know how the raps were produced; but as to any communication bearing the slightest analogy to your representations, that has not taken place; and I certainly would not spend another half crown on such nonsense." Some days after, W. and I, and B., were at the Exhibition, and the "ruling spirit," like a cork, came uppermost, and he asked if I had any objection to have the media at my house. "None in the world," said I; "but I have a great objection to pay them half-a-guinea for coming, besides their cab hire." "I'll pay that," said he; "I want to sift the subject to the bottom," and away he went; and at seven o'clock the two media came. By half-past ten, we were at a dead stand-still; still W., feeling that his cause was lost, persisted in sitting at the table and adjuring the spirits; at last, the elder medium said to the spirits, "Will you say any more to us?" three assenting raps followed. We were going to be gratified—the alphabet produced—and the spirit said the important words, "We are off!" followed by the diminishing rapping, indicating going away. The media put their hands off the table on their laps, and said it was all over. W. paid them at least half-a-guinea and their cab hire. When they were gone, I summed up as before. We have seen tables, and chairs, and a sofa move; but they did not move unless the hands of the media were on them, or their feet could get at them. Further, we see this time that we can imitate the movement of the table ourselves, keeping the thumb and fingers of the hand on the table, by the pressure of the muscles of the hand behind the thumb. W. got very angry, said if I would help him to investigate and discover the fraud, he would be glad to send them to the tread-mill. I replied, that if they ought to be sent to the tread-mill, and I was the magistrate with full powers on the occasion, I should send him to the tread-mill too, for not having made proper use of his reasoning powers.

Shortly afterwards he tells us that the mediums moved the tables themselves, and that he thinks so because he does not believe in spirits at all, and is not aware of any invisible electric force that could move a table, so that for him, as he thought, the question was settled, and for ever. But when he thought, good, easy man, full surely his book was finished and going to the binder, strange things appear, and an appendix has to be written, from which we shall now make considerable extracts:—

*March 20, 1863.*

The foregoing was written five months ago, and to get at once into the middle of the very singular events which have happened to me since, I copy part of a letter.

*"Monday, March 16.*

"My dear Mary,—Thank God, as the people say, I have done reading about spirits. I have read the following works:—

The reality of spirits and their direct writing, by Baron			
Guldenstubbe	... ..	... ..	pages 216
The Book of Spirits, by Allan Kardec	... ..	... ..	" 474
The Book of Mediums, by Allan Kardec	... ..	... ..	" 506
Incidents in my Life, by D. D. Home	... ..	... ..	" 288
Spiritualism in America, by B. Coleman	... ..	.. ..	" 87
Spirit Magazines	... ..	... ..	" 300
Researches into the Vital force, by Baron Reichenbach	... ..	... ..	" 463
Heaven and Hell, by Swedenborg	... ..	... ..	" 560

Pages 2,894

which I think is pretty well—and I have seen as much, or more, about it at home as all the books put together contain.

"I have seen a table move, totally alone; and a chair move, totally alone; move, just as you see a leaf carried along by the wind on a turnpike road, and I have reasonable conversations with Mary Jane whenever I please;—but I have neither seen nor heard any thing to convince me, in the slightest degree, that Mary Jane is the spirit of a deceased person. It is only a hitherto unexplained phenomenon of nature, which, until chemists and scientific men analyse, will be made use of to get money from the many."

I shall now proceed to give a very condensed account of what has happened to me in the last four months, and which induced me to peruse the 2,894 pages before mentioned, and which, most assuredly, I never should have done. *Had not events thoroughly convinced me that the narratives in those books are perfectly true, and that the parties have seen all they state they have seen; only, I must be allowed to remark, that to our eyes, the sun goes round the earth, but it is not so in reality. I will trouble you to look back to the remark, "a lady present was told by a spirit, you shall have power to believe yourself and convince your husband" Now, this lady was my wife, and if there was one thing more than another which made me utterly discredit the so-called spirit manifestations, it was this communication; because she herself believed the whole thing "got up." It was singular, however, that the medium's prophecy was to be fulfilled, not only to the letter, but tenfold corroborated.*

My friend W. came again on a visit, just after the Exhibition was closed, and proposed one evening a general sitting down to table-turning; and some young ladies being home from school, and visitors present also, the round table was fully occupied. I did not sit down, as it appeared to me perfectly useless—as it had already been demonstrated that a table turns, and scientific men said that the very sitting down with intent would cause such an action as to commence a movement; and other scientific men said that by sitting at the table, a kind of nervous action was brought on, by which the table was moved, although the party was totally unconscious of giving it any impulse. Well, the table turned, and one accused the other of pushing it, and the evening ended as most table-turning evenings do—in nothing being elicited except that the table turned.

#### THE RETURN FROM THE CITY.

*The next day, when I returned from the City, my wife told me that the table turned for her. "Indeed," said I; "how came that about?" "Well," said she, "yesterday evening, Mrs. ——— declared solemnly and positively that the table moved for her, declaring she was not in joke; so I thought that if it moved for her, I did not see why it should not move for me, so I determined to give it a fair trial all alone, and I took the small japanned table and determined to sit steady at it for half-an-hour, and if by that time it did not move, to give it up altogether. Well, in about twenty minutes I felt the table distinctly move, and I got frightened and got up. Recovering myself, however, I again sat down to it, and then it moved in five minutes, and now it moves quite easily in two or three minutes after I put my hands on." I cannot say that I was convinced. However, after tea, I sat down with her to the same table, and certainly the table moved about in a very unaccountable way. It was not to any particular point in the compass—now here, now there, getting into a corner of the room, and then, when I thought it must stop there, backing out and going somewhere else. I then said, "Let us try the large rosewood table," and, to our surprise, it moved nearly as easily as the small one. For some evenings the same phenomenon occurred, and I asked a friend or two to see it. They thought it very strange, but still they showed how very slight a pressure will move a table, particularly when the finger ends become damp. In a word, my friends said, "It appears to be, but it cannot be."*

The author now begins to find himself on the believing side, and calls his friends sceptics:—

A great point I wanted to establish to my justly-sceptical friends, was, that

the table really moved without any lateral pressure whatever; and the nearest approach I made to that was with a small round slate chess table, on which I laid a napkin or muslin handkerchief. Now, the slightest attempt to move a table—putting the hands on the handkerchief—is detected by the handkerchief wrinkling up. Yet, when my wife put her hands on the handkerchief, the table moved without causing the least wrinkle of it. So matters went on. The fact of the table moving on the one hand, and the absurdity of it on the other.

#### SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENTS.

The next question was: Where did the motion originate? My wife said she felt it come from the feet of the table; that they seemed to drag and commence the motion; was the motion, then, commenced by the effort to get rid of the power given by the feet? I got a large piece of glass, and laying it on the table, she put her hands on it; *but the glass moved immediately semi-circularly off the table.* I then got a four feet circular sheet of zinc, which covered all the table, but when she put her hands on it, *the zinc moved semi-circularly off the table, till it hung down*; the table did not move. I got a wooden top made, placed it on the table—*that moved off similarly without the table moving.* It was clear, therefore, that the power was a surface power, and not a power which acted by charging the whole table. At times the table became very violent indeed, tilting and striking with one leg so violently that we desisted, if it was late, in order not to disturb the house. It was clear that something issued from the hands which was a moving power, and the question arose whether it issued equally from the feet—to test which, I had a flat deal framework made two feet square and three inches thick, and supported on small castors. When my wife stood on it, there was evidently an endeavour to rise, when any inequality of the bearing permitted it; but when she sat down, and placed her feet on it, it began turning violently, so as to twist her ankles, and finally launched itself violently to four or five feet distance from her. The power, therefore, emanates from the feet as well as from the hands. Now arose another question: Did this power pervade the whole room, or was it confined to the furniture only? To test that, I took the four feet zinc plate, and had a deal framework made under it, so that it could be hereafter converted into a table (on which, in fact, I am now writing), and, by means of a new sash line, which led to a pulley, suspended it, face downwards, by the lamp hook in the middle of the ceiling, directly over the table. We had not very long to wait, for, in the course of the evening, the zinc disc was seized with a most violent rocking.

#### FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS.

Two evenings after that, we had supped as usual, and, before going to bed, I had occasion to go into my study, adjoining the sitting-room, leaving my wife seated at the table, under the zinc plate. All at once, I heard a most fearful shriek; and hurrying back, found the room in darkness, and my wife fainting, and the zinc plate lying on the top of the supper table. I lifted the plate off—nothing was broken, though the table was covered with decanters, glasses, &c.; the lamp was upset, but not broken. My wife said that, while sitting waiting for me she looked up at the zinc plate, and saw it all luminous, and saw it descend gradually to the table, when she shrieked. I wanted to replace the zinc plate, with a stronger cord, next day, but she said she would never enter the room again if I did. However, here was clear proof that the motive power pervaded the whole of the room, and this serves as corroboration of the statements that Mr. Home is carried up to the ceiling, and writes his name there, while so borne up. Here is the case of a lady, who looking on the whole in the light of a conjuring trick, sits down to try a very light table for half an hour, and succeeds in getting it to just move in twenty minutes; and, within three days, from a consciousness of her power, causes the heaviest table to move,—*not only the table, but I got on it, and it still moved.*

#### AN UNDEVELOPED MEDIUM.

Matters were in this state when, one day, a lady called who had given much attention to Spiritualism; and, on our relating our experiments to her, she said.

"Mrs. — *is an undeveloped medium.*" Singular term; however, we were not destined to remain long in suspense as to her meaning. She sat down to the table with my wife. The table began moving as usual. She struck the table three smart raps with her knuckles, and said, "Come, good spirits, rap." The good spirits or the table immediately rapped in response. She then began talking to the table in the manner formularised in the spiritual books, and the table answered. She then made an alphabet, and began making the table talk. I was present, and must say that the poor table exhibited great want of grammatical education, for it put a dozen of incomprehensible consonants together, worse than a Welsh or Polish name, at last ending with baby. However, this was a new and great phase, for we were beginning to get tired of a table which only moved about in a most irrational manner; so, I made myself acquainted with spirit language, which consists in conventional rapping; that is, one rap means No; two raps, Doubtful; three raps, Yes; five raps is asking for the alphabet; when, in reading over the letters, the spirit or the table will rap three times at each letter it wishes written down, and so communicate its ideas.

#### A NEW CREATION.

I found myself now in presence of intellect; in fact, of an intellectual being; for, as I was satisfied that the phenomena depend on the emission of certain elements, and that the phenomena cease the instant the hands are withdrawn from the table, it was clear that the intellect was *a quality or property of those elements—or, perhaps more correctly, of that combination of elements.*

#### THE CHRISTENING OF MARY JANE.

This matter had to be investigated chemically, and *this new Being had to be christened*; for, as I did not wish to make a single false step, even in nomenclature; and as I had no proof whatever of its being a spirit in the sense usually attributed to that word—that is, the soul of a departed person—and, as I had already one clear cause for the movements of the table, in the same emanations from the human body which produce mesmeric sleep and the (probable) sleep of the sensitive plant, I did not choose to embarrass myself with two causes, even by the adoption of a name, until intimate scientific conviction should oblige me to. *Still, an intelligent being, to be talked to, must have a name, and the house was full of children from school, and country servants. How it was I don't know—having no relative, nor knowing any lady of that name—but I christened the new comer "Mary Jane," and it answered to Mary Jane, and from that time forward Mary Jane has been with us at any time we choose to talk with her, and has even repeatedly called for the alphabet, and given us a very sensible opinion on the subject we were discussing, when we did not think of appealing to her.* You may be sure that, on finding a third party so unexpectedly domiciled with us, we asked it every possible question, and we received replies, the sense and accuracy of which pleased and startled us, as clearly proving a distinct and partially superhuman intelligence.

#### CEDANT ARMA TOGÆ.

Here I beg scientific men to note a further remarkable circumstance; namely, that from the time the intellectual phenomena took place, the table ceased moving. The chemical emanations which took place, instead of causing the table to run about like a wild animal, took entirely the shape and quality of intellectuality. When we sat down to the table for five minutes, and I said, "Mary Jane, are you there?" three responsive raps answered me, and the conversation began, to the evident delight of Mary Jane, *who often objected to our going to bed, even at two o'clock in the morning.*

#### THE PHENOMENA GROW SLEEPY.

But now a further progressive phase took place; it was not necessary to sit at the table; if my wife lay on the sofa, the responsive raps would come apparently from behind the sofa; and even in bed, the conversation was carried on by Mary Jane, either by raps over our heads, or apparently on a chest of drawers close by



the bed. One night after we were in bed, I was talking with Mary Jane, and I perceived that my wife was getting sleepy, and it entered my mind to test whether the emanations continued during sleep, so I continued the conversation. *By degrees, the responses became slower and fainter, and by the time I was convinced that my wife was just asleep, they ceased altogether.* Matters were in this state, when we changed our residence, and some very highly talented lady friends having taken a great interest in these phenomena, and being also mediums, though not of the power of my wife, we agreed to hold regular *séances* excluding all other visitors.

#### MARY JANE ANSWERS MENTAL QUESTIONS.

We agreed perfectly that each person should treat the phenomena as he or she believed; and, consequently, we adhered to talking familiarly with Mary Jane. They addressed it as "Dear Spirit," or "Good Spirit," and it appeared that the responses they got satisfied them that they were talking with the spirits of departed relatives. We did not know what questions they asked, for they said, "Dear spirit, will you answer me a mental question?" "Yes," the reply was given. "Yes," or "No." To the remark "Are you quite sure?" three very slow and distinct raps were the confirmation.

#### AUTOMATIC WRITING.

About this time another phenomenon took place. At the house of a lady friend, a pencil and paper had been put under the table, and a so-called spirit-writing had been produced. I bought a porcelain slate, wishing to see whether our Mary Jane would write or draw under the table; so the next evening I said to my wife, "We will put the slate and pencil under the table, but previously lay the slate on the table, and hold the pencil in your hand for a little time, so as to mesmerise it." She did so, and immediately exclaimed "My hand is being moved." "Let it move," said I. The left hand covered the end of the pencil, the hand moved rapidly, and then three raps were heard, and the hand stopped. She handed me the slate, and a sentence was written on it. Since that time she has continually written; or rather, *Mary Jane has guided her hand, she covering her hand with her black silk apron, writing rapidly any opinion Mary Jane chose to give, but utterly unconscious of a letter she had written.*

#### MARY JANE HAS MUSICAL TALENTS.

I must not omit the musical talent of Mary Jane. At a *séance* (out) my wife had held a guitar in her hand under the table, and it had been played on by the good spirits of that domicile, so I could not do less than procure any and every instrument Mary Jane might like to play on: and I purchased an excellent guitar, an accordion, and a child's drum, and borrowed a violin; none answered well except the guitar; the accordion and drum were sounded a little; as for the violin, after Mary Jane had sounded a few discordant notes on it, she undid all the pegs, loosened the strings, broke down the bridge, and wrenched it out of my wife's hand.

#### THE MUSIC MASTER.

It looks very easy to play the guitar, so my wife determined to take lessons, which gave rise to a curious *quid pro quo*. A relative of Mr. W., who performed on the violin, mentioned Mr. W.'s name, to that relative I mentioned the phenomenon, that if a medium held a guitar, and another played a violin, the so-called spirit would accompany on the guitar—and the said relative promised to bring his violin some evening to try. I mentioned the circumstance to my wife, that she might not be surprised if a stranger called, but I did not say a word on Spiritualism to the staid guitar master. Now, it is much easier to see a guitar played than to play it one's self; and in the first lessons, the strings hurt the fingers, and the notes are very puzzling. My wife, who was in the habit of having her hand guided by Mary Jane, got out of patience, and thinking it was to Mr. W. that I had mentioned about the guitar being played, exclaimed, "Oh dear, I wish Mary Jane would teach me to play." "Who, ma'am?" said the guitar master. "Why, Mary Jane," said she. "And pray, ma'am, who is

Mary Jane?" said the bewildered master. "I don't know," said my wife. "Mr. S. says it is Mary Jane, but I do not know what it is."

#### MARY JANE ACCOMPANIES THE VIOLIN ON THE GUITAR.

I believe that Mr. W. thought his pupil rather more than eccentric. However, as Mr. W. played the violin, I engaged him to come one evening, and we had a grand concert. My wife held the guitar, resting on the floor under the table, Mr. W. played the merriest waltzes, and Mary Jane accompanied them on the guitar, the faster the better. I tested, then, a circumstance which has reasonably thrown so much doubt on Spiritualism; namely, that the "spirits" will not do any thing while they are looked at, and you have seen that in the *séance* in Bloomsbury the "spirits" said, "Come to the table." My reflection led me to surmise that there issues from the human eye a stream of animal magnetism of much greater power than we have the means of taking measure of, and that probably this stream of magnetism paralyzed the action of the stream from the hands. Now, I happened to sit so at the round table that by bending my body slightly to the left, I could see the guitar; whereas, while sitting upright, I could not. Imagine now the fastest waltz being played on the violin, and accompanied by the guitar; when I bent my body quietly round till I saw the strings, the guitar ceased playing instantly. I recovered my upright position; the guitar resumed the accompaniment. I repeated this several times.

#### THE TABLE KEEPS TIME WITH THE MUSIC.

In the midst of this concert, my wife holding the guitar, which rested on the floor, in her right hand, she removed her left, which had been resting on the table, on to a small light circular deal table with castors, and which I had covered with zinc; immediately this light table began literally to dance and keep up to the music, footing it with one of its three legs, and altogether presenting most ludicrous scene.

The poor music master was fairly confused; he had before asked my wife when I was out of the room; "What is Mary Jane, ma'am; is it making you have got under the table?" My wife replied, "You may look under the table; I don't know what it is; Mr. S. says it is Mary Jane." What is her name? It answered, as instantly always to "Mary Jane," as a new servant would, if you told her that, for family reasons, she must answer to the name Susan. "Good Spirit" would have alarmed children and servants; "Mary Jane" alarmed nobody.

#### THE TABLE MOVES OF ITSELF.

Before getting to our *séances*, I must relate to you the circumstances under which I saw the greatest physical manifestations which came under my notice, never having seen Mr. Home carried up to the ceiling and round the room; which, however, I have not the slightest doubt of.

Accordingly, we put it on the table, and sat down to it. It appeared immediately as though all the smothered discontents of the table began to stir and stamping with such violence as to frighten my wife. My wife was frightened, and took off all but her little finger; still the table was outrageous. I wanted to explain to them the phenomena philosophically, and said, "Mary Jane, if you won't be quiet and reasonable, we shall take our hands off." The violent movements continued, and I said, "Let us take all our hands off, while I explain." We sat each of us at about a foot from the table, no one touching it; on a sudden the table moved of itself, right up to my wife; and a chair, which was standing alone, three feet from her, moved two feet towards her just as a leaf moves on a turnpike road by the wind.

#### MARY JANE HIDES THE ELASTIC.

Before I get to our regular *séances*, I must relate three or four (of many) occurrences, which, from the difficulty persons will have of believing them, would not print, if similar phenomena were not related in the publications of Mr. Coleman and Mr. Home. As I considered that a feeble degree of light

not total darkness, was as essential to the production of some of the phenomena as it is in photographing—I got some cotton lining and strong elastic, and made a kind of petticoat to the table reaching nearly to the floor. When this was put on, it was pulled off downwards over the border rim of the table twenty times; and to the question “Mary Jane, did you pull it off?” the answer “Yes,” was given. Next day, the piece of elastic was missing—could not be found; I brought another; we hunted for the elastic everywhere; my wife took an umbrella and felt over the tops of the picture-frames. That or the next evening, Mary Jane said, “Look in the umbrella,”—and—tucked in closely and neatly in the top of the umbrella, was the elastic—the missing elastic. Another elastic was missing; Mary Jane said, “Look behind you;” and, stuffed in the bottom of the arm-chair that was found. By-and-bye, all the elastics (three) were missing, and I took a cord to fasten on the petticoat. On asking Mary Jane, “Have you hidden the elastics?” “Yes.” “Are they in this (drawing) room?” “No.” “Are they in the back drawing room?” “No.” “Are they down stairs?” “Perhaps.” And we found them all in a bundle on the bookcase in the parlour down stairs.

#### AND FOLDS UP AND STOWS AWAY THE INDIA-RUBBER COVER.

Another circumstance proving (if no trick), the power of this phenomenon. I wanted to try an India-rubber covering on the table. I asked Mary Jane if she would like it. “No.” However, I went and bought a piece of India-rubber cloth, and my wife and I laid it on the table in the drawing room, and went to dinner in the parlour. When we came up to tea, it had disappeared. Now you would think that a roll of India-rubber cloth,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet square, could not be easily hidden; we could not find it at all. Mary Jane said she did not like it, and had hidden it, and would not tell us where it was. Four or five days after, it was found neatly rolled up and hidden behind my wife’s guitar case in the corner of the back drawing room. When I found it, I thought—well, if you will not let it be put on the table, it can be put under the table, and will be smoother for you to walk on than the carpet, so I laid it on the floor and put the table on it; it remained there that evening, but next day it was gone. It was not found till, in hunting for some missing cards, it was found (not rolled as before) but neatly folded up and stowed away in a cupboard in the back drawing room, which was never used. We feel sure that our servants had nothing to do with these transpositions, nor would I relate them, if the same sort of action was not recorded in Mr. Home’s and Mr. Coleman’s work.

#### HOW MARY JANE STOPS ALTERCATION.

To revert again to the conversation—our Mary Jane has always been a kind and good adviser, and would never allow any disputing; and, once, when an altercation was getting unpleasant, she stopped it with a crash like a sledge hammer on the table that made the bottles and glasses ring. “There,” said I to my wife, “you had better say no more: Mary Jane won’t have it.” If the sentiment she wished to express was more than Yes or No, she rapped five for the alphabet, and always spoke quite to the point in the fewest possible words.

#### ECCENTRICITIES WITH THE GUITAR.

If my wife is holding the guitar, Mary Jane will carry on the conversation by sounding chords on the guitar, in preference to rapping on the table. Another curious phenomenon for science is the following:—We were three, at a lady’s house, at the table; my wife held the guitar, which was being played on. Without thinking of any results, I got up and went to the fire. The guitar stopped. “You have broken the chain,” said the lady. I sat down and placed my hands on the table. The guitar resumed the tune. I repeated this three or four times. Again, Mr. W. was playing the violin, I and my wife at the table, the guitar accompanying. I told Mr. W. not to stop playing at anything I might do. I got up from the table—the guitar ceased responding. I went to the other side of the table, and, standing as far off as I could, took my wife’s other hand. In ten seconds the guitar resumed playing. I dropped the hand, the guitar stopped; I took it again, and it continued.

## LUMINOUS HANDS.

Before I continue the history of our drawing *séances*, I must extract from my diary a circumstance which has thrown very considerable light on this phenomenon, and which, like every other discovery I have made respecting it, happened entirely by chance.—“Feb. 1st. At about nine o'clock in the evening I had gone upstairs, and returned into the drawing room, when my wife said, ‘Come here a minute.’ I followed her into the back drawing room, she shut the doors, and said, ‘Look at my fingers.’ I looked, and saw the tips of them covered with a phosphoric light, which, however, immediately went out. ‘Stop a minute,’ she said, and in half a minute showed them again illuminated as before. ‘Look at it,’ she said, ‘by keeping the ends of my fingers tightly pressed together. And then, when I open them, there is the light.’ ‘How did you find it out?’ said I. She replied, ‘While you were upstairs, I had the cramp in one of my fingers, and I pressed them together with the other hand to deaden the pain, and when I opened my hand, there were the lights.’ ‘It is phosphoric light,’ I said.

“Feb. 2.—Our friends came to the *séance*. I read them the minutes of the above-stated event (as there was no one with us when it first happened) and we then adjourned to the darkened room to see it. As she opened and shut her hand, it had the appearance of glow-worms moving about. Mrs. — said she saw a half-luminous vapour from the whole hand.

“Feb. 3.—Our friends being present again, we adjourned at nine o'clock to the dark room, then darkened more effectually than before. The lights appeared, and Mrs. — said, ‘See how it fumes.’ On a sudden, taking my wife’s hand, she exclaimed, ‘How strongly it smells of phosphorus!’ The other lady saw it also, and found phosphorus. So did I, and my wife smelt her own fingers with much alarm, and said, ‘It is very strong of phosphorus.’ ‘But,’ said I, ‘excuse me, is there any smell of phosphorus when I do not produce the lights?’ ‘None whatever.’” She then again stated, “I produce the lights by putting the ends of my fingers and thumb together, and pressing them against my hand until it is almost painful; and then, on opening the fingers, there are the lights. Since that period, my wife has had a very severe illness and inflammation of the lungs, from imprudently staying in a damp garden, and was consequently under very strict medical treatment; and during that time the phosphoric appearances on her fingers ceased entirely; and once, in sitting down to the table (which the doctor prohibited) it would scarcely move.”

## THE ODYLIC VAPOUR DOES IT.

I shall conclude this book by a narrative of what happened yesterday, May 1st. A lady, who has been present at the *séances*, called to pass the day. It was about one o'clock. This lady had been acquainted with Baron Guldenstubb, the author of *La Réalité des Esprits et le Phénomène merveilleux de leur Énergie directe Démontrée*. In conversation with my wife in the drawing room, on the subject of the phenomena, she said, “Mr. S— says it is a vapour; let us try it.” They took some sheets of note paper and held it between the palms of their hands, and then put them into a tight-fitting drawer, in an antique table in the drawing room. They left the room, and came into the garden, and amused themselves till dinner. At dinner, in the parlour below, the lady said, “Mary Jane, have you drawn a picture for me?” “Yes.” “Shall I fetch it?” “Yes.” She went upstairs to the drawer, and found two flowers drawn in crayon colour.

## THE TABLE IS MADE LIGHT AND HEAVY.

The *modus operandi* of these phenomena is very puzzling. A table is moved violently, things carried about, a man raised up to the ceiling, and it is that which prevents belief, except by those persons who see the phenomena too often to doubt. What we want is the law of nature by which it is done. Examining that, we have one law of nature equally wonderful, if we had never seen it. An ignorant savage has been accustomed to see everything fall to the ground. Let him for the first time see a magnet lift a piece of iron, he will be puzzled, till it is explained that the power of attraction of the magnet is greater than the attraction of the earth. So in this case, the power of this vapour overcomes the earth’s power of attraction. One of the first instances I saw of this power, was

hat a lady at the table said, "Good spirit, please to make the table heavy?" He then told me to lift that side of the table, and it was excessively heavy. "Now make it light," she said, and I lifted it like a feather; this resolves the phenomenon into a law of nature, and there ends reasoning. Quicksilver has the property or quality of being liquid at ordinary temperatures; it is a law of nature, I never heard any reason given for it. The same may be said of water becoming ice; it is a fact, or we may state it in this way. Water, quicksilver, and iron are naturally solid, but the addition of different degrees of caloric render them all liquid. So it may be a law of nature that the emanations from organic bodies may possess the power of overcoming the principle of attraction.

#### AUTOMATIC WRITING.

Looking at my memoranda, I find the following on the subject of the medium's mind being guided:—As to any collusion, the following method destroys that entirely. I write a question on a slate without my wife seeing it. I turn that slate over on the table. She covers it with her silk apron, and Mary Jane guides her hand. She neither knows the question I have written, nor the answer Mary Jane has given; and yet, in every instance, the answer is perfectly pertinent to the question.

#### DIRECT DRAWING.

I now come to the most singular, and though not more extraordinary than the other manifestations, still, perhaps, the most valuable. I mean the direct drawing. Monday, Feb. 9.—When I went up to tea, I found the ladies round the table, making Mary Jane tell them which dominoes to play—the dominoes being turned face upwards. By-and-bye, Mary Jane asked for the alphabet, and said, "Have patience and you shall have a flower." The ladies had put two sheets of paper and a pencil on the carpet under the table. Perhaps half an hour after, Mary Jane was asked if she had written anything. "Yes." The sheets of paper were found folded up with a flower drawn on each—the one a Tulip, and the other a Rose, drawn in that style of Penmanship in which schoolmasters draw swans, rather roughly done, but quite clear drawings of the flowers. The ladies were highly delighted, thanked Mary Jane, and asked who the drawings were for—and in this, and all subsequent drawings, the same ceremony was observed, Mary Jane answering "No" until the right person was named.

#### DIRECT PAINTING, MARY JANE FINDING HER OWN COLOURS.

Our *séances* became now more interesting; for, every evening, flowers of some sort were sketched with the pencil, and the style of sketching improved—when a new phase took place. We had been out at a *séance*, when, among other table productions of that hospitable mansion, was, on a paper folded up very small, a very "smudged" design of flowers, in colours. Where the colours came from, no one knew. *I asked Mary Jane if she wanted any colours.* "No." Considering that this mysterious being might possibly condense colouring matter out of the atmosphere, possibly photographically, I enumerated all the photographic materials—nitrate of silver, iodine, &c. &c., all which she negatived, except chloride of gold, to which she gave an affirmative "Yes." So I took some straw paper, and soaked it in an extemporised solution of chloride of gold and iodine; the ladies put under the table what paper they pleased—thin letter paper, French note paper, &c. *From that time we ceased putting any pencil under the table, as we got a kind of crayon-stencilled-looking flowers.* The paper seemed indifferent, whether chemically prepared by me, or French glazed note paper. As I considered that every production of this mysterious being must have its origin in the imagination of some one present, I thought that the stencilled-looking flowers might represent some pattern in one of the papers of the rooms. But no. However, to try, I went and bought a very pretty room paper, with a pretty flower design on it, and, cutting off a piece, made a covering to the table with it, considering that my wife or the other ladies sitting and having it before their eyes might give a clue. *The next day the paper was found torn by invisible hands, and finally carried away in bulk, and hidden in the cupboard of the back drawing room, but an endeavour had been made, or was the next evening, by the same*

*invisible agency to copy the flower centre-piece of that paper, as though it were done by damping, super-position, and pressure. That, however, was not continued by Mary Jane; but, in return, every evening brought a visible amelioration in the style of execution and design, the extraordinary colours and composition of which preclude the idea of human agency; or, at least friends that have seen them state their utter incapability to comprehend how they could have been done, or where the colouring matter could have come from. Matters being so, one evening a lady asked "Dear spirit, could you draw me a butterfly?" The reply was, "To-morrow;" and next evening a butterfly was sketched in crayon on a paper with other drawings of flowers, and Mary Jane in due form declared it was for the lady who had applied for it, and received her thanks.*

#### MARY JANE VARNISHES THE COLOURED DRAWINGS.

To return to our *séances*, every evening we put paper of all sorts under the table, and asked Mary Jane if she wished to play dominoes or cards; and at about ten o'clock, divided, or rather let Mary Jane divide, the five or six drawings we found under the table; but we were very much puzzled how to preserve them, as they are done in a kind of crayon colours—red, green, purple, yellow, and blue—artistically but incomprehensibly laid on, but which are susceptible of damage by rubbing. So we discussed the subject of varnishes: when one lady said, "Dear Spirit, could you not varnish them for us?" An affirmative three raps said "Yes." We all laughed, and exclaimed, "Why, Mary Jane is going to varnish them for us!" The next evening, when we took up our pictures, we all remained mute with astonishment, for the last picture taken up *was in a style entirely different from the preceding ones, and perfectly varnished.* What shall we arrive at next? we asked one another. Here is nothing but paper and cards, which each has bought where he or she chose, put under the table—no colouring matter of any sort put; some of the paper put in small paper books: and yet, here are exquisitely finished varnished drawings produced.

We lost ourselves in surmises whence our mysterious friend could produce the colours; we knew she was quite capable of taking things about up and down stairs, and hiding them, and three or four days after telling where they were; we also knew, from our own experience, as well as from spiritual books, that she could write and draw flowers when pencil and paper were given; but the colours—did she steal them from the paper on the wall? Or did she take a box of crayons? Or did she condense them from the atmosphere, as flowers seem to get their colours? We can neither comprehend nor explain. We were the same parties throughout, with the exception of the lady who very positively declined putting her head under the table, and one servant girl of nineteen, who, at all events, never touched anything under the table.

Whilst this part of the story is being printed, the author determines to have fac-similes of many of these wonderful drawings in his book; and he sends them to be copied and coloured in chromo-lithography. There are several beautifully printed sheets of them, one as the frontispiece, and the others at the end of the book, and it is principally on account of them and of the small edition which the author has printed, originally for private circulation, that the price has been fixed at one guinea. However, it is worth much more than that to any one who is interested in the subject, and especially if he be a sceptic, and should, in consequence of seeing them, be induced to enlarge his mind to the required dimensions to believe in them. The author gives the following

#### NOTICE RESPECTING THE DRAWINGS.

The ladies brought with them their own note paper, and frequently marked

it. In the earlier drawings, those in black, a pencil or crayon was put under the table. This was discontinued as soon as coloured drawings began to appear. No colours nor pencils were then put under the table—nothing but the paper. Sometimes the paper was put under the table at one o'clock, and a short *séance* held, and resumed at seven or eight o'clock. Sometimes some of the paper was put down at the evening *séance*. At about half-past ten, notice was given by the alphabet, "Look under the table"—and the drawings were found; sometimes two, sometimes six. The drawings were single, each on a different sheet of note paper.

In a postscript of the 21st April, 1863, the author says:—

#### FURTHER DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS.

April 21st, 1863.

The chromo-lithographer tells me it will take fourteen days to lithograph Mary Jane's pictures, and that there are seven colours to be printed, one a-day. Well, reader, the originals of those pictures were made in the following manner:—

The ladies bought French note-paper in Regent Street, each according to her fancy, and I generally prepared some paper with photographic chemicals. All these papers were put under a four-feet rosewood table—sometimes one lady would put all her paper in a book, another would put it loose—sometimes it was put under the table, and a *séance* held at one or two o'clock for an hour—sometimes some papers were placed at the beginning of the evening *séance*, say at about half-past seven. At about half-past ten Mary Jane would say, "Look under the table." If asked before, she would reply, "Not yet;" and when we took up the papers we found those drawings—sometimes two, sometimes six. *There were no colours nor water, nor anything but the plain paper put under the table*, and the parties engaged in the *séance* sat round as usual, and generally took tea, played at cards or dominoes, and talked with Mary Jane or, as they called it, "good spirits," during the whole time; and whenever the question assumes an important shape, as clear proofs shall be forthcoming as that the sun shines.

#### MARY JANE DRAWS WITHOUT THE MEDIUM.

I must return again to our Mary Jane. I write now for the guidance of those who study the phenomena—hitherto all the manifestations have seemed to accompany the continued flow and presence of the Odylic vapour—it is true that Mary Jane has, at various times promised to visit the ladies present at their own houses, and to make her presence known, but these promises had never been fulfilled; at least, to the knowledge of the parties. However, the following occurred:—On Sunday last, we were saying that, now that our drawing medium was gone to Paris, we could get no more crayon drawings—when my wife said, "Mary Jane, will you make for me a coloured crayon drawing?" "Yes." "For certain?" "Yes." "Will you give it me to-day?" "No." "To-morrow?" "No." "On Tuesday?" "Yes." "Can I depend on it?" "Yes." We speculated occasionally as to whether she would fulfil her promise. Tuesday evening, at half-past nine, Mary Jane, by the alphabet, indicated to me a drawer upstairs, and there I found a coloured crayon drawing. Now, it is only by looking at similar events that we can realise this phenomenon—that is, a first recollection, then work done in the absence of the medium.

Having now given a short statement of some of the principal phenomena mentioned by the author, we find that our space will not allow of our going into the equally interesting series of deductions and reasoning to which they gave rise in his mind. His ideas are both novel and bold, and they are put forward in the genuine spirit of a philosopher and man of science. We hope to do justice to both him and them in our next number.

We have had the pleasure of making the personal acquaint-

ance of the author, and we find that the phenomena are not only continuing, but that they are increasing in intensity. Not only are similar drawings to those published in the book still being produced under the circumstances there stated, but Mary Jane is placing half a dozen such drawings at a time, some of them with upwards of twelve colours, in small boxes, the previous emptiness of which is certified by several persons, who on closing the box covered it with paper tightly gummed down all round and marked with their autograph. This has been frequently repeated, and when the box has been opened two or three days afterwards as many as six coloured drawings have been found in it, whilst the paper was found to have been undisturbed. The same has occurred when the box has been entirely enveloped in tightly gummed paper; also when blank pieces of paper have been placed in sealed envelopes, they have been found painted upon when the envelope was afterwards opened. These are by no means however the only phenomena which are occurring in this, which is one of the best attested and most remarkable cases of mediumship, or Mary Jane-ism.

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### SIR WILLIAM à BECKETT THE JUDGE.

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“A Daniel come to judgment, yea, a Daniel!”  
*Merchant of Venice.*

OUR readers will be surprised and delighted to learn that the facts with which they are so familiar have at length had judgment passed upon them by a legal celebrity of no common pretensions. The ex-Chief Justice of Victoria whose name graces the head of this article, enjoying his *otium cum dignitate* in a rural vicinity of this metropolis, has once more assumed the judicial horse-hair, disposed of the evidence, and delivered judgment.

The occasion of this important event was a review of Mr. Home's book, *Incidents of my Life*, in the *Inquirer* newspaper, an organ of the Unitarians, in which the learned judge is reputed frequently to appear as literary censor. In the present case there can be no doubt of the authorship, as the article is signed by his initials, W. à B. An unusually large space is devoted to the task—upwards of eight columns—through which the judge disports himself with fine Roman vigour, and without any, the smallest, misgiving as to the justice of the verdict which he instructs the *Inquirer's* jury of readers to return. It is quite refreshing to see such whole-souled and hearty assurance. Never before, we venture to say, was judge less encumbered with any regard to evidence. In fact, evidence in such a case would seem, in his opinion, to be an entire superfluity. Listen: “As there are some



things to which we instinctively give our faith, so there are others to which we instinctively refuse it, and it is in the latter we class the phenomena which Mr. Home invites us, in his book, to consider as the work of spirits." Thus does this judicial luminary, with a charming frankness, exhibit his radical and dominating principle of judgment, and, with a modesty quite Hibernian, dispose of the facts before him, notwithstanding that, in a previous portion of his review, he has admitted that the facts "have been witnessed by too many persons of unimpeachable veracity to justify our treating them either as illusions or delusions!"

True, our cautious critic adds, "So far as the eyes and ears of the spectators are concerned," as if there were salvation in that against his admitting too much! Overpowered for the moment by the weight of the testimony, and conscious himself of the overwhelming force of "instinct," the only escape for his scepticism was this attempt to limit the competency of the witnesses. To their eyes and ears the facts no doubt *appeared* to take place; but, for his part, he requires something more reliable than the evidence of the senses even of "many persons of unimpeachable veracity."

Lest our readers should imagine the Judge to treat the faculties of his fellow-men with exceptional contumely, however, let us hasten to apprise them that he does no more by theirs than he would do by his own. Of the "*séances* presided over by Mr. Home," he says, "we confess to our curiosity having been excited to learn a great deal more respecting the latter *than it would be possible to obtain as a spectator of his manifestations.*" What species of evidence would suit him better than that he could derive from his own observation he does not condescend to say. When, however, he thus discredits his own observing powers it is no wonder he disbelieves in other people's. He assumes to know (by "instinct," we suppose) that there are things to learn respecting the *séances* which no spectator is permitted to witness, and he desiderates that some one behind the scenes should give him the information. In vain we point to the testimony of "persons of unimpeachable veracity" and universally admitted ability, that no such things were there; that the events took place in their own homes, under their own arrangements, excluding the possibility of the deceptions he insinuates. He knows better: "there are things to which we instinctively give our faith;" and these be of them!

This, then, is the outcome of Sir William à Beckett's examination of Mr. Home's book, *viz.*, that Mr. Home is an impostor, and that those who testify to the validity of the facts he records are, simply, "Mr. Home's dupes." Could the force of "instinct" further go?

Mr. Home has enjoyed the most intimate intercourse with men of undoubted character and position in society in America, England, France, and nearly every important state in Europe; been under the closest observation of the most astute *savans*, lawyers, statesmen, and men of eminence in all departments of human enquiry in all these countries; nay, has even been subjected to the scrutiny of Sir William's peculiar favourites, the most accomplished professors of the "Herr Frikell and Robert Houdin" order, whose familiarity with all the resources of their art would surely give them satisfactory ability to expose his tricks and contrivances if he had any: yet has he passed through these ordeals for the last dozen or fifteen years, illustrating the phenomena which occur through his mediumship—and these witnesses, with one consent, assert, not only that they have not detected any contrivances by which he could accomplish the manifestations they witnessed, but that it was impossible he could have any without their having detected them, and they accordingly affirm their belief in the ultra-mundane cause of the phenomena. Further, Mr. Home has enjoyed, and still enjoys, as a welcome guest and friend, access to the homes of persons in every way the equals of his censor; and one of these, who possesses a name in literature compared with which Sir William à Beckett's is that of a nobody, has, in the introduction to Mr. Home's book, borne testimony to the simplicity and purity of Mr. Home's character and aims. Yet, with a confidence in his own infallibility bordering on the sublime, our ex-Chief Justice sets up his own instincts against the eyesight, the experience, the knowledge of these witnesses of unimpeachable veracity and acknowledged ability, and declares Mr. Home an "impostor," and these men his "dupes!" The amusing thing, too, is that he dubs these men who *have* investigated and attained their conclusions by strict intellectual process, on due induction of facts observed by themselves, "credulous" dupes; he himself, who decides by "instinct," without evidence and against evidence, being, of course, the only true philosopher! A more ridiculous misapplication of terms was surely never made.

Sir William would seem never to have considered that it is not *what* a man believes, but *how* he attains his belief, that determines his credulity or incredulity. A man may be credulous to any degree, and yet have no belief in a spiritual world at all. One man, conscious of good faith in himself, and possessing a wide experience of a similar principle in others, inclines, as Sir William would say, "instinctively" to believe what men of unblemished reputation tell him. Another, who is conscious of infirmity of moral integrity in himself, or whose experience has lain chiefly amongst the inferior grades of human nature—not

uncommon hangers-on about the purlieus of law courts, we understand—is naturally prone to imagine deceit and imposture. The one may be unduly credulous of good, and incredulous of evil intent; the other, his counterpart, incredulous of good, but the veriest slave to suspicions of evil—both may be equally credulous, only of opposite things. We suspect Sir William's bias is not towards the former. The force of the instinctive judgment under which he commenced his review is seen throughout the entire article. No finer illustration is within our recollection of the power of "dominant ideas." The only parallel we remember is that of the author of the paper on this subject, which appeared some years ago in the *Quarterly Review*, and was said to be the production of a distinguished physician and physiologist. There the author was so dominated by his own idea, that he could neither see the limit of the principle he was expounding, nor the validity of its co-ordinate; and the result was, one of the most partial criticisms upon the phenomena which had, up to that time, appeared. Similarly, Sir William à Beckett, in the article before us, is so completely dominated by the aforesaid instinct, that he cannot, apparently, perceive the inconsistencies into which it has plunged him, nor even appreciate the meaning of his own language. No imperfection of expression on Mr. Home's part, however easily explicable, but is construed into support of this omnivorous instinct; the Bench is vacated for the Bar; and certainly no Old Bailey special-pleader was ever more pragmatical, word-catchy, or one-sided. "What it may be in connexion with Mr. Home's organization, which makes chairs move, tables rise, floors tremble, accordions play, hand-bells jingle, we cannot even conjecture; but to have the fact thrust upon us as a proof of spiritual agency would, if we were to accept it, be such a violent jerk from the ridiculous to the sublime as to go far towards displacing our sanity." Yet his very next sentence supplies the "conjecture" of imposture, to which we have already adverted! He is so demented by his instinctive repulsions that, as we have said, he has ceased to appreciate the meaning of even his own language. But it is to the enumeration of the phenomena just given, as occurring in Mr. Home's presence, that we would now direct attention. And we would ask him, "Why, O Upright Judge! stop short in your enumeration just where you do? Why not go on with the other facts affirmed by the same unimpeachable testimony, and some of them inseparably attendant upon even those you do mention?" From a retained special pleader the *suppressio veri* is to be looked for, as a matter of course; but from a Lord Chief Justice, let us admit, we are shocked to meet with so little justice, and so shallow and self-condemnatory a subterfuge. The manifestations

of intelligence and affection, of special knowledge and peculiar sentiments, may have little weight with you, and afford you little aid in conjecturing the cause of the phenomena; but it was surely due to the jury you were addressing that this evidence should not have been ignored and concealed from them? Was it not also due to them that you should have pointed out the similarity of many of the present facts to some of ancient times, record of which is to be found in a book not yet altogether discredited, even in the ranks addressed by the *Inquirer*, moderate as is their faith in the supernatural? Why, for instance, suppress the fact that "*the handwriting on the wall*" has its modern analogue? that apparitions of individuals passed from earth appear to, and are seen and known by those present with whom they are in relation, just as a certain Saul of Tarsus was arrested on his journey to Damascus by One who is recorded to have appeared, after death, more than once to favoured disciples? Nor would it have implied any extravagant acquaintance with the facts if you had acknowledged that the appearance of the same One in a certain upper room, when the door was shut, had likewise been paralleled in these "modern instances;" that even His condescension to the weakness of one Thomas, by embodying himself and submitting to the sceptic's touch, in proof of identity, was only a manifestation greater in degree, commensurate with the greater power of the Agent, and possibly the peculiar fitness of the mediums around him, but in no way different in kind from the modern phenomena in more than one of which, recorded in the book then under your own eye, proof of identity is given by the grasp of the hand. Nor would it have been any more than justice if still other facts had been added analogous to those which other hostile critics besides yourself at least profess to believe, notwithstanding that the evidence for them is not, either in quantity or in quality, a tithe of that in support of the modern facts, credence to which you and they "instinctively refuse." This, however, would have implied a really judicial mind—one less prejudiced, captious, conceited, and wilful—one possessing more affinity with the fishermen, and less with the Scribes and Pharisees of old—one, in short, very different from that of the author of the review before us.

After the indications already submitted, our readers, we fancy, will not care for further specimens of Sir William à Beckett's criticisms. It is not every day, however, that they have the benefit of seeing how the super-eminent legal mind really deals with evidence when it condescends to notice its existence at all; so we venture to crave their indulgence for yet a few examples.

Mr. Home's experiences at the Chateau of the Marquis de

\_\_\_\_\_ is the subject of the following exposition and comment:—

“On his second evening at the Chateau, as the family were about to take tea, a table from the further end of the room where they were sitting ‘came up with extreme violence.’ No damage seems to have been done to any person or thing, ‘but,’ says Mr. Home, ‘we were all rather startled, as we were not expecting any manifestations.’ This is a strange confession for one who, throughout his book, is constantly informing us that he is conscious of no mental or physical connexion with the manifestations which occur in his presence, and that ‘as to the peculiar laws under which they had become developed in his person he knows no more than others.’ If this be true, how can he ever have any *expectations* on the subject, and why should he be startled by their appearance at one time more than another?”

Astonishing penetration! Mr. Home must be confounded now. What sort of a world has our learned pundit been living in? Of course he never presided over any cause in which an unexpected altercation took place between opposing litigants; and never in his life was surprised by a squabble among the polite, sweet-tempered, smooth-tongued gentlemen of the long robe? At any rate, if unexpected “violent manifestations” of this kind ever did occur in his presence, it *could* not be true that he “had no conscious connexion” with the production of them; or, if true, how could “he ever have any *expectations* on the subject, and why should he be startled by their occurrence at one time more than another?”

Equally profound and inexplicable is the Judge’s difficulty as to the non-occurrence of manifestations at some of Mr. Home’s *séances*, “*although* persons were present most desirous of witnessing them;” which he is pleased ingeniously to interpret as meaning “that the manifestations are greatly helped by the presence of believing spectators.” And then, with marvellous perspicacity, he sees there is no possible reconciliation between this fact and the principle, that to be too eager and expectant of spirit manifestation “*had a strong tendency to defeat the object;*” and to render the incompatibility more emphatic he puts the quotation in italics, as we have presented it!

But in further illustration of the puzzles with which he imagines that he poses the Spiritualists in general and Mr. Home in particular, and for the solution of some of which he actually speaks of “waiting for a second edition” of Mr. Home’s book, the following is, perhaps, the most unique piece of pragmatistical dialectic the controversy has yet developed:—

With reference to the quality of this peculiarity, we demur altogether, if it be as independent of his volition, as Mr. Home alleges, to the designation of it as a

"power." He himself tells us that "over the manifestations which occurred in his presence he has not, and never had, the slightest power, either to bring them on, or to send them away, or to increase or lessen them." And elsewhere, he calls them but an accident of his organization." What does he mean, then, by constantly referring to the varying nature of his power, and his consciousness of its diminution at particular periods? On one occasion, as we have seen, his "guardian spirits" told him he would lose it for a year, but his reply to them might have been, "How can I lose what I do not possess? If you mean, dear spirits, to keep quiet for the next year in my presence, that is your affair; but if it is mine, I should have found it out without your telling me." By the way, Mr. Home does not inform us of the *number* of his guardian spirits, or whether they made their private communications to him in vocal chorus, or by alphabetical rappings. Nor does he inform us whether they are the same as the spirits which appear at his *séances*; but if not, how came they to have such a control over the latter as to be justified in predicting their non-appearance?

The hypothesis is, that some change was to take place in Mr. Home's constitution or state which should render manifestations through its medium impossible for the time stated. If his special "peculiarity" was to leave him for a season, *no* spirits could manifest themselves in virtue of his presence. This was far too obvious an explanation to suit the case, however, and the brilliant imagination of our poetic judge sees at once the far more imposing and improbable one of different sets of spirits controlling one another! Then, descending to the region of prose, in deference to the enquiring minds of his readers, he propounds the interesting and profitable query, "how came the one set to have *such* control over the other as to be justified in predicting their non-appearance?" How, indeed!

But the great card of our critic is his righteous indignation at the "blasphemous pretensions" of Mr. Home to have any mission "to convert the infidel, cure the sick, and console the weeping."

If Mr. Home were really under the belief that he had such a mission, and sincerely desirous of *performing it*, he would be at some pains to seek out the class of persons who most stand in need of his aid. Instead of confining his ministrations to palaces and chateaus, and the mansions of the rich and titled, we should have thought a more available crop of the infidel, the sick, and the sorrowful might have been found by him in those wretched lanes and alleys which one bearing a name too holy to be profaned by mention in connection with his own would not have disdained to visit. \* \* \* \* We are not aware whether he has ascertained by experience that the furniture of hovels and cellars is unfavourable to spiritual manifestations, but, as he says he does not know the extent of his own power, he has no right to conclude that only such upholstery as finds its way into gentlemen's drawing-rooms is in a condition to call it into play. *Until he has made the experiment—until, in short, he is to be heard of in those places where a missionary both from God and man is most required, let him, in heaven's name, cease talking about his "glorious mission," and discontinue his blasphemous pretensions.*

What, however, if infidels and "persons who most stand in need of his aid" are more numerous in "palaces and chateaus, and the mansions of the rich and titled," than in "the wretched lanes and alleys" aforesaid? We venture to assert that a case of greater pharasaic judicial *blindness* was never exhibited than the one before us. Notoriously, the occupants of the "hovels and cellars"

stand far less than these in need of the revelations of the future existence, of which Mr. Home and others are the mediums. It is precisely in the classes amongst whom Mr. Home has moved, in whom the lower intellect has been cultivated at the expense of the higher, that scepticism of the future life, and of the very existence of a spiritual principle distinct from the bodily organization most prevails. With this scepticism goes necessarily the lack of consolation to the mourners of those classes who are "weeping for their children because they are not." The bringing of conviction to them, that those they mourn for are not lost, but only gone before; nay, may be even now more truly near them than when they lived in the body before their eyes, at once dispels their infidelity and dries their tears. To say that Mr. Home has been instrumental to this end in thousands of cases, is only to state the bare fact. His "mission" therefore requires no other vindication, so far as these relations of it are concerned. How much still remains for him to do both in these respects and in "curing the sick" is somewhat beside the question. Enough has assuredly been done to at least justify the modest claims which Mr. Home really makes, so far as he personally makes any; and certainly there was a weight of evidence in the book under examination which ought, if candidly accepted, to have shielded him from the contemptuous imputations of one of the most narrow-minded, bigoted and prudish critics who has hitherto assayed to pass judgment upon him. We venture to add the opinion that no one needs more than Sir William à Beckett himself the very proofs he so much despises. A mind more utterly closed against human testimony, in this matter, more cramped by prejudice, and yet possessing many attributes of a respectable if not high order, we have never encountered. Even the review before us, notwithstanding its glaring defects, bears evidence of a conscientious industry, and manifests his having really read the book he has criticised. The vexing thing is, that his wilful "instincts" have completely overborne his better judgment, coloured every dubious passage that arrested his attention, and suggested always the worst of alternative interpretations; so that his very conscientiousness has only been impelled to ransack the book for proofs in support of his foregone conclusion. The result is briefly told—and we take a cheery good-bye of the learned judge, by frankly assuring him—that his review of Mr. Home's book is, of all we have yet seen, at once the most painstaking and the most preposterous.

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## THE EXPERIENCES OF A MEDIUM.

By JACOB DIXON, L.S.A.L.

## I.

SIX years ago the present writer contributed a series of papers to the *Yorkshire Spiritual Telegraph*, entitled "How I became Convinced." In the concluding one of these papers he said, "At a future opportunity I propose to state the results of my practical examination of the following question: 'What are the relations—physical, moral, and intellectual—between man in the earthly and man in the spiritual spheres of existence?'" What I am enabled to say on the subject at present is nothing more than a contribution towards an answer to this question, in the form of a narrative of my own mediumship. The facts and communications in which a given medium is concerned can only convey a partial answer to such a question. For a general answer the collective experience of a multitude of mediums is required.

Shortly after the date of the last of the series of those papers I became acquainted with a literary gentleman who informed me that he was a medium for spirit-writing. He had not, however, attended to the faculty for some time, because of the nonsense which was most frequently written. I expressed a desire to see a specimen of such writing. Holding a pencil, his hand seemed presently to be grasped by another unseen one, and page after page of writing was done, partly in answer to questions, partly not. The writing was in various characters and styles. To my question, addressed to the invisible writers, whether I, also, was a medium for writing, the answer, through his hand, was, "Sit opposite this medium every time he comes, holding your pencil as if ready to write, and we shall, after a while, be able to use it." In about ten days, sitting thus when he called, and sometimes alone, I at length found my fingers in motion, forming the elements of letters; then, after some days, a line of letters; then short words; at length, after some weeks of this apparently preliminary exercise, a perfect sentence was written. For three months I had scraps more and more lengthy, more or less coherent; sometimes the writing ended before a sentence was completed, as though the requisite force was exhausted; sometimes a communication would commence with seriousness, then, the handwriting changing, it would end with something frivolous; sometimes, it would even be characterized by malice towards one or other person with whom I was on terms of friendship or affection; at other times, it would be found to be a tissue of falsehoods. I felt disposed, on such occasions, to throw down the pencil, and not take it up again with the object of being a medium for spiritual writing. What



inclined me to patience was the fact that some of the communications exhibited thought and feeling commending themselves to some critical friends as well as to myself. It was evident to us that I was open to the *rapport* of spirits of diverse conditions. How could I secure that of the better sort, and keep remote the lower? The friend whose presence had facilitated my being brought into this exercise was not surprised at my experience—it was similar to his own—and he had preferred to continue his attention to the subject by means of a seeing medium and a prepared mirror. But such mirrors I found—employed with a prescribed formula of adjuration—were not free from the intrusion of undesirable spiritual presence. Seeing, then, no peculiar virtue in the method by the mirror, I resumed the mode by my hand and pencil, or pen.

The writing was always preceded or accompanied by certain sensations: sometimes it was one of aching in the shoulder, and this was so painful occasionally as to compel me to throw down the pencil; at others, it was one of galvanic prickling at the elbow; at others, of numbness of the hand or fingers. I discovered, after a time, that the writing which was accompanied by the sensation at the shoulder was associated with an influence of a malevolent kind. Sometimes, being incited to hold the pencil by one of the other sensations, that of the shoulder would suddenly come on. I learnt, also, not only by this sensation, but by a certain style of handwriting, certain turns of phrase, certain obsolete words, to recognize the *rapport* of a spirit of duplicity and malevolence, although the invisible mover of my hand might sign the name of one or other of my departed relatives and friends.

I adopted a modification of the adjuration employed in using the mirror. Did this keep off such? Not at all. Whatever spirit was in operation, it seemed to be competent for another to put the former aside. Again: a communication, quite unexceptionable, might be commenced; to finish it I had to turn over the page; putting my hand to the paper again, behold! a different influence is in operation, with the gnawing sensation at the shoulder. This light *rapport* of some spirits, and the facility with which lower ones substituted theirs, was at length recognized: thus, sometimes the subject of the writing would be suddenly dropped, and the injunction "Lay down the pen," be written.

Did any action of my own mind mingle with that of the spirit in some obscure way? Questions like this are common, and I will answer it by a quotation from my diary. I find there (Nov. 26, 1857) that, much wishing that I might receive a communication from a well-remembered friend, Dr. Alexander Clarke, deceased twenty-seven years, the following came through my

hand:—"The spirit of Clarke must not communicate with you, because he lied the last time: he told you he was in the eighth sphere—he is in the first—he must remain there some time: he is a lying spirit of malignant character." It had been written some weeks before, that Clarke was in the eighth sphere; not recognizing such a sphere, I had regarded the writing as from some miserable joker. I said, "There must be some mistake." "The Clarke I speak of," was the rejoinder, "departed earthly life September last year; the one you are thinking of was Clarke, of Lewisham." Hereupon the Clarke, so alluded to as having departed a year before, wrote about particulars which had escaped my memory. Now, if my own mind had been somehow the active operator in the writing, my hand ought to have traced something about Alexander Clarke, of Lewisham, and not of another for whom I felt no sympathy. The writing from the intruding Clarke which followed showed that his company in the spiritual state, although worse in degree, was the same in kind as when in the body. It also showed me that the company which was attracted to me was worse than I had supposed. I asked myself, Is the cause internal to myself or is it external and magnetic? This question was answered in the course of my experience. But let us take things in order. For purpose, taking what I have said as preliminary; to extract from my diary communications as they occur in the order of time, omitting very many, making only such remarks as may be necessary to understand them. I begin, then, my extracts six months from the commencement of my mediumship. To separate the wheat from the chaff during that first period would be unpleasant if not unprofitable. At that date, then, I find that I headed a page thus—*Holy gifts should be rightly used.* The comment upon this, by the spirit, was:—"Should be, but not by some spirits. Some spirits are incapable of seeing the godliness of the gift of mediumship. Some spirits have not the spiritual sense to shew forth the godliness of the gift, so far as they are concerned. Spirits are not so advanced in thought as you are until they have proved themselves above temptation, or until they are superior to the attractions of sense. Spirits have attractions to sense, and to the objects of sensation: they are subjects of sensation from the material sphere. Spirits have relation still to the material world. They are spirit, soul, and body: soul because they are direct emanations from God—spirit because direct emanations from nature—body because direct emanations from God and nature growing together. Leave it for the present." I leave readers to make their own comment upon communications. My transcribing does not imply endorsing them. I received all as "materials for thinking."

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of that some of the members  
recommending themselves to  
It was evident to me  
diverse conditions  
keep inside the  
of my being  
written—  
—his

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It was one evening about the  
said that I was sure his  
from one whom she loved.  
nephews and nieces as  
their children; loves all man-  
icularly his love for her and her  
ers well as a fine boy of eleven,  
earth to enter upon the state of  
God." Then followed immediately:—  
her uncle William. Love one another,  
ou. How great and good are the works of  
are His words to man in His word—the  
eat, how good, are the shadows of his redemp-  
and at large!"

1857.—I had been visiting a sick friend who com-  
to me the sudden death of a Mr. C., whom I  
own through his having become from assistant the pro-  
or of the school where my son was at the time. My friend  
"And to think of his being cut off just at the moment  
ompleting his alteration of the house; I am told that he has  
ed it into quite a palace." I said, "I hope he has turned his  
mal along with his external house into a better condition:  
change—if all said of him be true—was needed; for a  
to die in the full course of self-seeking, who held all ties  
pt money-ties with a loose hand, for such a man to die  
lenly seems to me a serious thing." "What, according to  
notions," asked my young friend, for I had spoken to him  
it Spiritualism, "would be his state now? I think he was  
t you say." "When such a man," I said, "wakes up in the  
r world he finds himself, I conceive, with spirits who, un-  
wn to himself, have long been his associates: hitherto his  
pters and servants they are now masters from whom he can  
nore disengage himself than can a nail from a magnet. I  
imagine his dismay, for there was much natural good in him.  
ile in the body he could divert conscience by the excitements  
ense; but now he is in a sphere of evil unmitigated. The good  
im may revolt; but how can he escape? Only by magnetic  
ort with spirits in a higher state. But for this he has to  
through an ordeal of inmost repentance, renunciation of self,  
prayer to God. But these he used to laugh at." "You  
a dismal picture," said my friend. "Yes," I said, "and  
ay not be exact; but similar pictures are drawn in spiritual  
munications, as to men of similar history. But, after all, it  
ot for us to pass judgment; we all need a merciful one."  
ving my friend, I came home. After dinner, while reading  
ething from my diary to my wife and son, I felt the writing-

sensation in my arm, and held the pencil for some comment. The following came in a new handwriting:—"O eternal Father of Heaven, gracious Son of God, and Spirit of God, hear the prayer! Terrible, oh! terrible, is the fate of the wicked, self-seeking sinner. You described his situation to young Williams correctly. I am C——. The heaven and hell I derided are real states of existence. The Omnipotent God lives." I said that I heard that morning of his death from young Williams with whose family he had been intimately acquainted. On my wife making some remark, I said that he always seemed to me a worldly man. The pen went on again:—"Worldly indeed, my dear sir! I cannot, great God! call you friend. The Omnipotent Lord has shewn his love to you, but you will pray for the sinner. O what a sinner! How often I have laughed at you for a fool in talking of clairvoyance. You should both love and fear. O God, hear my prayer; Let my cry come unto Thee!"

Turning over my diary, now, I find, with numerous disjointed communications from long-forgotten friends and associates,—chiefly on a low plane—short and sharp sermons from my father, and injunctions to lay down the pen; I find also frequent commencements of sensible writing ending abruptly with the letters "S. M." With respect to these letters, I found that if I continued to hold the pen after they were written, the aching of the shoulder would come on. Questioning once the meaning of these letters, it was written that it meant to intimate the approach of a spirit of malice. Short prayers I also find written, some in my behalf, some in behalf of the writers, in which I was asked to participate. With respect to the latter the following was written:—"May 1st, 1858. My dear medium—You are more charitable than wise in mingling your magnetic aura with that of a spirit who declares himself evil. Blumenfeld makes me say that he was advanced by your prayers; but you were prevented from coming into *rapport* with many good spirits by such communication with him." Then comes in a handwriting almost the fac-simile of the earthly writing of Blumenfeld, the German Pantheistic Professor, whose history I related in the *British Spiritual Telegraph*:—"Unbounded love of truth is the all-important guide to man in philosophizing. God and man are one. Make a book on a never-ending progress to perfection. Your monadial theory lays the foundation of a philosophy of a greater scope than Jackson Davis's; for you make a demonstration of a commencement of every being from God. My dear friend, my fate was to make a——" Here the writing abruptly ended.

The next time I opened my writing-book, I remarked that the want of persistency in communications was very remarkable: feeling the movement, I held the pencil, and the following came:

“ My dear medium—Many times you are at the disposal of the malicious spirit on account of the great many people who come to you ; but a man of good brings good spirits with him—such is your cousin who has just gone. Make him welcome.”

The following was written after reading a sermon by Spurgeon on *The Mission of Jesus Christ*:—“ I believe that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. I want to address you on the same subject. You are to understand that man was created male and female. Jesus Christ was male in the body and female in the soul. To understand that you must read the Old Testament. My dear sir, you read that the man was created double : that woman was separated from him when in a deep sleep. What is meant by that is that man is not monadially single ——.” At this point I was called away ; on return I hoped that the subject might be continued. “ You are not at mind with the spirit who wrote, and he has gone. Much depends upon the state of the mind when you write.” This was written very slowly, and signed by a name which, through the medium before-mentioned, always followed rapid writing. I said, “ You don’t write fast through me.” “ No ; you are more impressible to the thought-action of spirits. You are a medium for impressions more than for mechanical movements ; but you do not distinguish the impressed ideas from your own. You are sometimes in a good state for our acting upon your sensorium. You might make yourself more impressible to us, my good sir. You are most impressible when you are most disengaged from things around you.”

Soon after my being used in this way, it was intimated by a spirit signing the name of my father—who had left earth nearly a quarter of a century—that my two children (the first still-born, but at maturity ; the other deceased at five months old, twenty years previously), would be enabled soon to write through my hand. And at various times I had had, as if from the latter, scraps of sentences in a minute writing. It was also intimated that I should know the former by the name of Thomas Theodore, and the latter by the name I gave him, Jacob Secundus D. This is one, *Aug. 29*:—“ My dear mother, mother, mother,—You are not much better than when I wrote before. Why do you weep ? I am happy. My good father and mother, make me happier by making your own Father in heaven more the object of your thoughts and meditations.—J. S. D.”

*Sept. 5.*—We had just bid a farewell good morning to a neighbour, whom we agreed to be of the obtusest in everything out of his business : this we thought a pity as he was such a “ friendly good fellow.” I felt the vibration, and, holding the pen, this came :—“ Many duties or occupations are accommodated to individuals of ordinary capacities, on account of their being

adapted to their minds or tastes, and order is thus maintained in the economy of the Almighty's work, where otherwise disorder would ensue. Man has to advance to his Maker by work and study. Man must draw his own development or advancement by a diligent cultivation of his own nature and own acquirements. Advice from spirits can only be of service and account when he accepts it as lending him this sort of suggestive aid. Depend upon us only as giving suggestions. May you go on determined to be your own history-writer. On this self-reliance men must build, and they will say afterwards that they made the day their own." Then in different writing:—"Many times spirits only suggest thoughts,—move the mind. So many are about you now that it is difficult to write all we would say."

Nov. 20th.—In the interval between this and the last date, it pleased the Almighty Father to remove from his earthly parents, our dear son Robert, whom may He ever bless! The communications from him, and on his account, I may hereafter present in a separate register; I cannot yet. Spirits, of the same various kinds, I continued to find, were able to institute *rapport* with my hand, spirits, by their own declaration beneath me—some seeking for prayer in their behalf, others not; spirits above me, who prayed for me, and who made confession of Christian faith. I found that communications from all but the latter kind were likely to turn out spiritual annoyances. I therefore made it a rule to have no writing not heralded by a formula to that effect. At times, however, the handwriting would change from that of a spirit who had used the formula to some other. If I distinguished the change, I required the formula again; if repeated, very well: if not, I laid down the pen. A young friend, B. L., had, in the meantime, joined us. He became interested in the communications, and at his request, we used to sit for them after the business of the day was over. I find the following, but on what occasion or question I do not remember:—"The object of my writing is to say that Satan is not an individual spirit but a complex of spirits of a most evil character." B. L.'s father was a member of a religious congregation, and the son was well posted in its doctrines. He made a little speech here, and asked a question, to which the answer was:—"William Hitchcock" (the name of the spirit, I suppose) "is not a teacher of divinity." The writing resumed: "We are sometimes accused of inconsistency in our communications—we are disturbed in our action" (my wife had risen from the table to attend to some domestic affair) "at the breach of circuit. When a circle is formed it should be custodied until the spirit has ceased to say what he has to say, but this apparent inconsistency is often to be ascribed to causes operating in the circle. My dear Mrs. D. thinks she may

rise and leave without interrupting the proceedings, but not so. Many times, when a communication would be continued, the medium is called away. Again, unless sympathy with the spirit is felt, strength of action is not to be expected. The nice adaptation of force to produce the writing is a matter of calculation. Since that is the case, no disturbing element should be allowed to intrude on the part of those who assist." To the question, "Can you explain the nature of the force and the mode by which you operate?" it was answered, "We are not only the regulators of the force but the chief originators of it. Magnetism, self-originated, marks the operation in all its stages. Magnetism gives the key to all the physical phenomena of mediumship. Nothing else can make it comprehensible. The early sages of the world made profound and serviceable discoveries in the subject of mediumship by the aid of magnetism. From the time of Moses down to that of Mesmer—must leave off for the present." And so the writing ceased abruptly.

*Nov. 21st.*—This evening an Italian friend, named Accolti, was with us. He said he knew of writing mediumship twenty-five years ago at Naples, where at that time he lived, and where it was privately cultivated by a few, it being denounced by the priests. On our sitting down I read the communications of a few previous evenings. Holding the pen, B. L. asked a string of questions, to which short answers were given through my hand. While this was going on, Accolti wrote on a scrap of paper, which he folded and laid near me; saying, "When Buxton's questions are answered will the spirit favour me with an answer to this?" Immediately this was written:—"The Satan of New Catholicism seems a blunder." On unfolding his paper I could not read it: his question was in his own language. He said it was—"Is the doctrine of the Catholic Apostolic Church right in regard to Satan?" Accolti said he was a member of that church, and asked the spirit in what it was a blunder? "It implies sovereignty against God. Souls are not under any dominion but their own and God's. Accolti defines Satan as sovereign of hell." Hereupon ensued a discussion between Accolti and the spirit, which might not interest. What interested me was the fact of an answer being written through my hand to a question not known to me either in language or subject. Later the same evening, I had resumed the pen on feeling the admonitory sensation; B. L. approached and leaned familiarly over the table to watch the movement of my hand. It was written:—"Sit down—sit down—sit when we announce ourselves. The announcement of the spirits' presence should cause attention. Christ is our master and the recollection of Him should pervade the assembly.

The Saviour seeks man by all mediums if they are disposed to serve Him. Some mediums are impressible without piety; some are above the—” Here the handwriting changed: “Mary Anne, dear cousin—Seek the adorable Saviour, and it will be well with you. My dear sister in the Lord.—Harriet Clarke.” The handwriting had changed again. “I never knew a Harriet Clarke,” said my wife; “Your husband did,” was written. I exclaimed, “Dear me, have you left the earth?” Harriet was the sister of Alexander Clarke, whom I have previously mentioned. “Yes, I have been here some year or two. To me the change has been a happy one, indeed. I was a lunatic. A dear friend told me of your mediumship, and I hastened to greet you, and thank you for your good offices at a time they were needed by me and my father; and which we never had the opportunity of reciprocating. Alexander is desirous of accosting you.” I explained to my wife that on the death of Dr. Alexander Clarke, with whom I was at the time residing as assistant, I remained with his family until his affairs were settled. The writing was resumed in the well remembered characters of my friend:—“My dear Mrs. D., I have endeavoured to salute my good friend for a long time. My dear sister Harriet was long in the infirmity of insanity.” Then the handwriting changed to hers again—“The infirmity showed itself soon after my dear brother’s departure, as you may remember;” (there were some indications) “and the only——” Again a change in the writing—“Mary do not keep away from your duties.” I asked, “Can I not receive my friend’s testimony?” “The spirit of Clarke has gone.—S. D.” This sitting gives a good instance of facility and shifting of *rapport*.

Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup>.—At our evening sitting, my friend wrote again:—“Alexander Clarke. My dear friend D.—Self-denial is the soul’s alliance to God. No man can seek God who is self-indulgent.” Then, in reply to some question—“My dear Mrs. D., I was. My friend D. makes no mention of circumstances which he might, to shew that.” I said, “I prefer to remember circumstances which shew self-sacrifice on your part.” “Thanks, my dear friend; I was self-sacrificing to my father and sister, but not to God.” My wife said, “If he was good at home in his family, I do not think there was much wrong in him.” The comment on this was:—“Home is the safeguard of morals, but morals are useless without religious devotion to God. Sin is the inevitable result of that indifference to religion which characterized me. Sin is the concomitant of God-denying; morality makes no counterpoise to that.” “Does he mean that he thought there was no God?” was asked. The spirit responded to this:—“How a man can think so surprises me now that I am here; but when on earth such was my thought, because I never permitted myself to reflect



on the great and surprising evidences of His existence and action. How I could have been so blind I am astonished now myself. The beauties of this state of existence are beyond expression, but those of the earth are magnificent and overwhelming." The handwriting changed—"My dear medium, we don't wish to occupy your attention too long.—W. Hitchcock. Make an end now. Farewell." I have no other communication recorded of a spirit from whom I had expected so much.

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### THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE, AND PROFESSOR CHALLIS, OF CAMBRIDGE, ON SPIRITUALISM.

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THREE years have elapsed since the article "Stranger than Fiction" appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine*, and since then an impression has existed that no unkindly feeling towards Spiritualism existed in the mind of the editor of that journal. The inference was a natural one, for the public generally conclude that only such contributions are allowed to appear in its pages as are approved of and believed to be worthy of the attention of its readers.

To atone for the mistake of three years ago, it now resolves to make plain the follies of Spiritualism—to show how utterly fallacious are all the proofs of its reality, and how foolish and weak-minded are all its advocates. The task is a sensible one, if there is anything to put right; for if the public mind is running astray on such a subject as the supernatural, the sooner it is arrested and brought to truth and reason the better. We claim the same mode of developing the truth or errors of Spiritualism that is applied to all new objects of thought—all new sciences and discoveries. We ask this and nothing more. For facts will have to be multiplied and general principles established in connexion with Spiritualism, just as in all other departments of human investigation, before the public can repose a settled belief in their truth and reality.

It is somewhat amusing, however, to know on what grounds the *Cornhill Magazine* attempts to prove the fallacy of Spiritualism. It asserts that the proofs of supernatural influences are utterly worthless, *because of their improbability*; and that, although millions of persons may attest the truth of the phenomena, yet because of the assumed improbability of such facts, they are all to be described as foolish fallacies.

It is only necessary, therefore, to deal with the improbability of the case, in order to test the value of the argument so laboriously elaborated. On the word *improbable* hangs the

whole argument—the essence of the article is concentrated in that idea. There is no reason why we should deny that much that appears at first sight to be improbable is connected with Spiritualism; it carries us almost to the antipodes of modern research, and excites the mind to fathom some of the mysteries of an unseen world. The human mind has been almost wholly engaged in unravelling material questions, during the past half century—no doubt for some wise and beneficent purpose—and now, it may be, for a purpose equally wise, enquiry is being directed towards the supernatural and unseen. But whilst we admit that much that appears strange and improbable is to be found in Spiritualism, we totally deny that those things that appear to the senses, and which are called supernatural, for want of a better word, are beyond the cognizance of the human understanding. They are, on the contrary, exceedingly simple and conclusive, capable of more complete demonstration than usually attends the discovery of new facts, in other and more material branches of human enquiry: for instance, to communicate passing events in England to a distant part of Europe, by the electric telegraph, appears at first sight improbable, and yet we seldom meet with a person of moderate intelligence, who will say, as is said by the *Cornhill Magazine*, that because it appears improbable it must be a fallacy. Again, Admiral Fitzroy telegraphs to a seaport that a storm will occur at a certain time. That he should be able to foretell the coming event is highly improbable; the storm, however, frequently occurs exactly as the Admiral announces, and yet, although the fact is witnessed by the disbeliever himself, he must needs account it a fallacy, because of the improbability that such novel communication will prove correct.

The disciple of improbability cannot of course believe in the miracles related in the Holy Scriptures; his argument shuts him wholly out of that region of the mysterious, however divine its nature and teachings. The improbability of such events, it is argued, should stamp them as utterly unworthy the attention of intelligent minds.

All new discoveries have something of the improbable in them to some minds. The peculiar tendency of each individual's mind to accept or reject the proof of a new discovery is the measure of its improbability. To one person the evidence will be conclusive; a few moments' investigation suffice to place it in the storehouse of the mind, and to classify it with some kindred fact. To another the demonstration would fail to pronounce conviction; experiments and tests would be needed time after time, until the mind becomes at last subdued by the proof so oft repeated. Then the improbability that once existed would

vanish, and the wonder of the past would become the familiar fact of the present; such is the laborious process of acquiring knowledge: it cannot be secured by any other means. The advocates of Spiritualism asks no other mode of investigating; they seek no other support than that which results from the honest exercise of an intelligent and enquiring mind.

There is strong presumptive evidence that the writer of this article in the *Cornhill Magazine* has become almost a believer in the truths of Spiritualism. It is not necessary to strain the argument to arrive at this conclusion. We assume, of course, that the writer has carefully weighed the evidences of the truth of Spiritualism, and has sought for such proofs as have produced conviction in other minds of equal intelligence to his own. To suppose the contrary, would be to indulge in the *improbable*, and to assign a position to the writer which we charitably hope he does not deserve. Having investigated his subject, we may assume that the proofs of fallacy would have been readily and abundantly furnished had they been discovered. The article, however, controverts nothing, but on the contrary, it admits the completeness of the cases named by the well known writer of the former article, and by Dr. Gully, Mr. Home, and others. Hence we are led to the conclusion that the evidences of the truth of Spiritualism were found to be irrefragable, and as disbelief must still have scope for further activity, it seized upon the absurd idea of improbability. Surely this idea is but the invention of a mind that has grappled with the manifestations of the supernatural, and having failed to find any other explanation than that furnished by the supporters of Spiritualism, yet being determined still to disbelieve it, shelters itself in a mist of its own making.

Altogether the article is not creditable to either the writer or to the Magazine, for it is altogether shallow and unprofitable. The main purport of it appears to be to inform the public that the writer does not believe in the statements made three years before in the same Magazine, which he admits to have been made by credible persons. How this affects the truth or falsehood of the statements themselves is not very apparent, nor is it easy to say in what way the public can be supposed to be interested in the belief or non-belief of the writer. Such articles merely reveal the egotism of the writer, and do not touch the real question at issue. The best commentator on such an article is our new friend "Mary Jane."

Another equally unsatisfactory review in the *Clerical Journal*, on Mr. Howitt's work, has been too bad even for its own friends to pass over in silence, and it has brought Professor Challis, of

Cambridge, who in the number of the 16th July, takes the Journal to task in a clever and well-reasoned letter, from which we will make a short extract. It is an easy task thus to set off one public writer against another, and we suggest that the press should have a private meeting together to arrange their differences on the subject of Spiritualism, so that they may be a little more of one voice. Professor Challis says:—

After reading the notice in the *Clerical Journal* of May 21, of Mr. Howitt's work on the "History of the Supernatural," I determined to commit to writing views which I have long entertained on the subject of Spiritualism, with the intention of giving you the opportunity of submitting them, if you thought good, to the readers of your journal. I begin with stating, that I have never at any time witnessed any phenomena of table-moving, spirit-rapping, spirit mediums, &c., nor been present on any occasion on which it was affirmed that such phenomena were seen by others. I was present on two occasions when the experiment of table-turning was fairly tried, and joined in one of the experiments, but no movement whatever took place. But although I have no grounds from personal observation, for giving credit to the asserted spontaneous movements of tables, *I have been unable to resist the large amount of testimony to such facts which has come from many independent sources, and from a vast number of witnesses.* England, France, Germany, the United States of America, with most of the other nations of Christendom, contributed simultaneously their quota of evidence. So prevalent was the practice of table-turning in France that the Archbishop of Paris deemed it necessary to address a circular to his countrymen warning them against abandoning themselves to Satanic influence. *In short, the testimony has been so abundant and consentaneous, that either the facts must be admitted to be such as they were reported, or the possibility of certifying facts by human testimony must be given up.* I refuse, for my part, to admit the latter alternative. The testimony to the character of the facts being admitted to be valid, the conclusion is inevitable that they were such as no physical laws can account for, and must, therefore, be regarded as supernatural, i.e., miracles. I refer, especially, to what was asserted respecting the movements of tables which took place in broad day-light, and were so contrary to physical experience, and yet so palpably real, that the evidence of their supernatural character does not appear to admit of question. And if, with respect to these, the supernatural must be conceded, it would be to no purpose to contend against the same element in the other classes above mentioned, because all these extravagancies appear to require like spiritual conditions in the operators, and to be referable to the same abnormal state of the human mind, if further evidence of the exceptional character of these manifestations were needed, *it might be drawn from the perplexed and contradictory, and even unfair, discussion to which they have given rise in the periodical literature of the day.* One writer asserts that they are all imposture, another that they are not imposture, but that there is nothing in them; a third declares that he won't believe them on any evidence. *Their asseverations amount only to proof of an unwillingness on the part of the writers to look an unwelcome fact in the face.* The more reasonable and manly course is to accept a fact, of whatever kind it may be, so long as it is established on incontrovertible evidence, and if it be of an extraordinary or miraculous character, to do our best to make out its bearing and significance. This is what I now propose to do with respect to the phenomena of Spiritualism, in no merely inquisitive spirit, but because these manifestations may be regarded as "signs of the times," which it is the part both of wisdom and of duty to endeavour to read aright.

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## PEEPING AND MUTTERING; OR, WHO ARE THE SINNERS?

By WILLIAM HOWITT.

"When they shall say unto you, 'Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? For the living unto the dead.'"—*Isaiah* viii. 19.

"And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks on the Sabbath Day. . . . And all the congregation brought him without the camp and stoned him with stones, and he died: as the Lord commandeth."—*Numbers* xv. 32, 36.

"Cursed be he that confirmeth not *all* the words of this law to do them."—*Deut.* xxvii. 26.

"Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."—*Matt.* vii. 5.

There are certain bewildered individuals, chiefly country clergymen and old ladies who are amongst "the silly women who are led captive" by them, who are continually dreaming that they and we are living under the Jewish law, though every morning they complacently consume swine's flesh in the shape of ham, bacon, or savoury sausages at breakfast, and are continually at dinner devouring things strangled, namely, fowls. These sinners, against their own creed, are, nevertheless, continually pointing in holy horror at the Spiritualists, who, they say, "seek to them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and mutter." It would be very obliging of these good Samaritans to let us know where these peeping and muttering wizards are to be found, for though I have been a Spiritualist these seven years, and in daily intercourse with Spiritualists of much longer standing, I have never been able to get a sight of these peeping Toms of wizardism, nor to find out any one who has. But when I am directed to the Jewish law as a code now in force and recognition in this or any other kingdom, I cannot repress my astonishment on looking round me, to find not this law, but the universal breach and rejection of it, and that fully as much amongst the pretended sticklers for it, as amongst all other classes of society. It is worth while, therefore, at a time when there is so much talk of hallucinations to look a little at this oddest of all hallucinations in those who complain of the hallucinations and mortal sins of Spiritualists.

The other day, a good simple soul of this tangle-brained school sent the following note to the editor of the *Evening Standard*, who inserted it as a matter of vital moment to the salvation of his readers:—

## SPIRITUALISM.

*To the Editor.*

SIR,—Of late the subject of Spiritualism has not come prominently before the minds of the public, and it is not, perhaps, generally known that many Christian

men and women—people, too, of high mental and moral attainments, are swayed in their actions by its insidious, ensnaring influence. Husbands hold communion, or fancy they hold communion, with the spirits of their departed wives; fathers fancy their children are hovering near them; wives ask the opinion of their lost husbands on every subject of moment; and these invisible agents are denominated familiar spirits! Sir, I can keep silence no longer while such delusion is going on, and in searching my Bible I find so many texts which seem to point against this, that I will add no more, but simply give a few passages, which seem to aim at this sad state of mind:—

2 *Sam.* xii. 23.—“But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.”

*Leviticus* xix. 31.—“Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them; I am the Lord your God.”

*Leviticus* xxii. 27.—“A man also, or woman, that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones, their blood shall be upon them.”

1 *Chron.* x. 13.—“So Saul died for his transgression, which he had committed against the Lord—which he kept not; and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it.”

14.—“And inquired not of the Lord; therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.”

These are only a few of the many passages which occur in the Word of God, and I hope you will think them sufficiently applicable to allow of your insertion in your journal.—I am, &c.,

RUSTICA.

In order to give Rustica a little intelligence from town, I dropped into the editor's letter-box the following comment on her innocent little billet; but as editors much prefer printing stale platitudes against Spiritualism to furnishing any useful information on the subject to their readers, the document never saw the light, so far as I know, for I never see this *Evening Standard of Judaism*:—

*To the Editor of the “Evening Standard.”*

SIR,—A friend has drawn my attention to a letter signed “Rustica” in your impression of Wednesday last. Rustica is in great trouble on account of the breaches of the Mosaic law by Spiritualists. The texts which she quotes, and which she thinks binding upon us, because they are in the Jewish law, are quite correct as far as they go; but if Rustica imagines that we here in England in 1863 are living under the Jewish law, I am bound to add to her trouble by bringing to her knowledge a number of other breaches of it. For, if we are to be Jews and not Christians, we must take the Jewish law altogether. It is not a law which allows of picking and choosing, cutting a cudgel out of its wood to break our neighbour's head, and leaving another because it would break our own. One of the most striking characteristics of this law is, that it demands a total acceptance of it and obedience to it. Here I quote for the benefit of Rustica, and all such ardent Israelites; the concluding words of Moses himself, after having recapitulated the entire provisions of this code. “Cursed be he that confirmeth not *all* the words of this law to do them.”—*Deut.* xxvii. 26.

Now, as I take it, from the name she has assumed, that Rustica is a lady living in the country, and that she is no doubt a grave matron, having a husband, a troop of active lads, and a number of men and maid-servants, in fact, that she is living as a lady of some good country house; I will point out to her what she has to do to show us that she is honest and in earnest, and how, in short, she must act to get rid of her sorrows over the breaches of the Jewish law. And, in doing this, she must excuse me using some very plain words, because, as she is a zealous stickler for the Jewish law, and, therefore, undoubtedly has it read daily in her family, this phraseology must be very familiar to her, and by no means offensive to her ears polite.

Well then, what she has to do, is to send at once for the family surgeon.

and have her husband, her boys, and all her man-servants immediately subjected to the greatest of Jewish rites. This rite is perfectly indispensable under the Jewish law, both in Jews and in Gentiles. Every servant and "stranger within the gates," is bound to submit to it. Let Rustica turn for proofs of this to *Genesis* xvii. 10, and to the rest of that chapter.

As soon as her husband has recovered from the effects of this rite, Rustica will, of course, desire to see him inferior to none of the Patriarchs in all Hebrew customs, and she will, therefore, have to look out for three or four additional wives for him and bring them home, and as many fair handmaids for concubines. For the propriety of this she may consult the history of the Patriarchs generally.

But having now made a very good Jew, and a most exemplary Patriarch of her husband, Rustica will unfortunately find that she has not brought by any means the whole of this most exacting law into operation. *Leviticus* xvii. 10, 14, will start up, and inform her that every man who has eaten flesh with the blood in it, must be cut off from his people; and as in this un-Israelitish nation, no man can have reached manhood, nor even boyhood, without eating black-puddings, fowls that have had their necks wrung, instead of their throats cut, and hares strangled in nooses by poachers, instead of being shot, Rustica will have nothing for it but to muster all the sturdy clowns of her parish, and make them haul away her husband, her sons, and her men-servants to the village green, and there "cut them off from their people," by the Mosaic mode of stoning them to death.

But Rustica, as the vindicator of the Mosaic law, cannot stop here. This law is equally decisive against all who have gathered sticks on a Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath.—*Numb.* xv. 32 to 36. Rustica will, therefore, have to assemble all the old women who have been guilty of the deadly sin of gathering sticks on a Saturday. She will have no possible escape from this, for the texts referred to are most peremptory on the subject, and relate the summary infliction of the sentence on a man caught in the fact.

Having dispatched all the old women and a good many children of the parish for gathering sticks, she will have then to deal with the "presumptuous persons" there. *Numb.* xv. 30, "The soul that doeth aught presumptuously (whether he be born in the land or a stranger), the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people." The next verse says, he "shall be utterly cut off." By the time she has dispatched the presumptuous—and I am afraid she will find the number great, unless her parish be much more humble-minded than parishes in general—she would have the blasphemers and cursers on her hands, and they must all be put to death.—*Lev.* xiv. 11, 16. All these being added to the gory stone-heap, the disobedient to parents, and those whose parents said they were gluttons and drunkards will have to be stoned too.—*Deut.* xxi., 18, 20, 21.

By this time Rustica will have brought her family and her parish to a tolerably pretty pass in carrying out the Mosaic law, nay, if she insist on its orderly execution, I doubt she will not have left a single soul, man, woman, or child alive, for "the stiff-necked and uncircumcised generation," the eaters of black puddings, of strangled hares, of hens and pullets with twisted necks, the gatherers of sticks on a Saturday, the cursers and disobedient, the drunkards and gluttons, make so formidable a portion of ordinary population, that the man who escapes Rustica's zeal for the Mosaic law, must be more than mortal.

But, as long before the consummation of this catastrophe—the result of an attempt to inaugurate the Jewish code in this Gentile country—Rustica would herself be arrested, tried and condemned for manifold capital offences against English law, and would be on the way to the gallows, no doubt the good chaplain would inform her of another book besides the Old Testament, a book called the *New Testament*, a *new* and very different law called Christianity, which Rustica, living in some very rustic place, seems never to have heard of, or if she have, does not happen to mention.—Yours,

Highgate, June 5.

WILLIAM HOWITT.

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These instances of the breaches of the Jewish law, by those

who are arraigning the Spiritualists for a single breach of it, are tragic enough in all conscience, but they are not a tithe of the breaches that these sticklers for the law are perpetrating on it every day and every hour of the day. They tell us that it must be kept because God decreed it, and Christ fulfilled it. True, God decreed it for the Jews, and Christ as a Jew fulfilled it to the letter; but, that done, he promulgated a new law for his disciples which is opposed *toto cælo* to the old Mosaic law. And this termination of the Mosaic law Moses himself foretold—telling the Israelites that God would raise them up another prophet like unto him, unto whom they were to hearken.—*Deut.* xviii. 15. And Christ confirmed this great fact of the limited term of the Mosaic law, saying “The law and the prophets were until John,” only. I have shewn both in the controversy with Mr. White in the *Spiritual Telegraph*, in the *History of the Supernatural*, and in this magazine, in the recent article on the lying faculty of the critical press, how fully and expressly Christ abolished the law against “seeking to the dead:” how impossible it was for him to establish Christianity without doing it. But Christ abolished that law generally; and his great disciple St. Peter declared that it was a yoke not to be imposed on the Gentiles, because it was a yoke which neither their (the Jew’s) fathers, nor they, he said, “were able to bear.”—*Acts* xv. 10.

And who are they in any Christian country who do profess to bear the yoke of this law? Who are they who are not breaking this law everywhere every hour, and in every possible manner? This law, it is said, is divided into two portions, the ceremonial and the moral law; but the truth is, every atom of the Mosaic law is moral law to the Jews: for that which is deadly in its breach is moral in its maintenance; and the declaration of Moses already quoted makes every iota of the law moral. “Cursed be he who confirms not *all* the words of this law to do them.” He, therefore, who sets himself up to select and except from this law subjects himself to a curse which nothing but the Divine ægis of the Saviour protects him from, who has extracted the everlasting and unchangeable moral law from the ceremonial law of Judaism, and by that law alone we are bound. Let the Rusticas and their clerical advisers search the Gospel, and find a single sentence there which forbids us to receive the visits of our departed friends and of our guardian angels, or for ever after let them hold their peace.

If we are bound by the Jewish law in any one particular beyond the express law of Christ delivered in the Gospels, we are as I have shewn, bound by all; and what a set of wholesale transgressors we must be. We have no ark, no daily sacrifice, burnt offering, peace offering, wave offering, or any other sort of



offering, but that of a pure and grateful heart. We have no scape-goats, we eat hares, rabbits, tortoises, eels, and numerous other things forbidden. We have no cherubim in our temples, no curtains of fine twined linen of blue and purple and scarlet, no coverings of ram-skins dyed red, and of badger-skins for our tabernacles. The lamps of sacred oil, and incense, and boards of Shittim wood, the ephod, the breast-plate, the Urim and Thummim, and a thousand other things are all wanting amongst us, which if the Mosaic law is yet valid, it is a deadly sin to be without. Instead of going to Sir Cresswell Cresswell for divorce, any unlucky husband is bound to hand to his suspected wife a cup of the water of jealousy. Every clergyman who does not wear fringes on his garment, and on the fringe a ribbon of blue, is a criminal. In the omission of a host of institutions of feasts and fasts, new moons, and means of cleansing from uncleanness, of the great rite of circumcision, we are desperately wicked, if the Jewish law is yet in force. Every man who does not marry the widow of his brother who has died childless, and raise a family in his name, is an especial wretch. Every woman who marries out of the pale of her own kindred is equally culpable, and her property is to be taken from her and given to her relatives. But, perhaps, in the matter of art are we the most monstrous and universal delinquents against God's laws, if Rustica's notion be correct. "Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters under the earth."—*Deut.* v. 8.

What is to become of all the nations of the earth? They are all given up to the most unlimited violation of this law. Sculptors, painters, engravers, printers, photographers, carvers in wood and in stone, potters and calico-printers, men and women of almost every mechanical art under heaven, are living in the most profound contempt and violation of this section of the law, and the Catholics are still more guilty of bowing down to these images and, as Protestants contend, worshipping them. Our houses and shops are crammed with the unholy images, our walls blush with the pictorial desecrations, our public squares, and most grand temples bear the most public testimony to our violation of God's most positive commands; and the very persons, those Catholic priests, and country clergy and good old ladies who pin their faith on their sleeves, are living in polluted houses, and carry on their persons, in their brooches, their lockets, their figured dresses, their beloved photographic albums, these abominations, these impious breaches of the Biblical ordinances.

Perhaps of all the *reductiones ad absurdum* this is the greatest. People who are living in daily contempt of the Mosaic law in a

hundred points, a score of which are of the deadliest dye, and for which this law says there can be no compensation, are charging the Spiritualists with its breach in one instance—that of going to wizards, and in having familiar spirits. Yet nobody has ever seen a genuine wizard, or has desired to have communication with a spirit more wickedly familiar than that of his own father or mother, sister or brother. And all the while the new law, given to supersede this impossible law—all the while this more gracious and compassionate law of Christ, they would quietly suffer to sleep and be ignored. But it is Christianity and not Judaism—a barbarous code enacted for a semi-barbarous race and time—which we Spiritualists alone accept and obey. If our enemies convict us of one crime on the Old Testament they cannot do it without convicting themselves of a dozen, all as decidedly pronounced worthy of death by the law to which they appeal.

But we deny all appeal to the Old Testament, except on matter of historical evidence. We assert the law of the New Testament as full and perfect. By that and that alone Christians can stand; by that and that alone can they be judged. Your talk with awe-uplifted hands, and raised eyebrows of feigned terror, about familiar spirits, and people that peep and mutter, is just so much trash and trumpery in the presence of the great and precious law of Christ—the law of reason and liberty. By that law he who wilfully seeks to devils or wilfully acts with devils, or men no better than devils in any way, condemns himself not on any express clause in the Christian code, but because he knows and feels that the love of God and the purity of soul required of him cannot consist with anything that is essentially evil. That was the noble self-action and self-responsibility which Christ inaugurated and established. Though a Jew and asserting that he came to fulfil the law, yet in this liberty worthy of God and worthy of man he broke the Jewish law in its contracted renderings right and left—he repealed the law of retaliation—the eye for an eye, the tooth for a tooth, system. He filled the High Priests and Scribes and Pharisees with terror at his doings. He broke the Sabbath by wandering through the fields with his disciples and allowing them to gather their neighbours' corn and eat it. He vindicated the right on the Sabbath to perform cures, to look after your sheep and cattle, spite of the words of Moses, that whoever on that day did anything whatever, even lighting a fire in his house on the severest day of winter should be put to death.—*Exodus xxxv. 2, 3.* To shew his view of this matter he sate down on Sabbath days with his disciples, when invited by publicans and sinners, to well-cooked dinners, which implied not only fires, but all sorts of domestic labour on that day:

he plainly stated that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. In the country and under the law where it was death to eat blood, he told his disciples that they should both eat his flesh and drink his blood, a saying so appalling that many Jews, we are told, left him immediately and ceased any more to follow him.

Such is the captain of our salvation; such is the liberty with which he has made us free. Accepting and embracing with sacred earnestness all the moral law which our Saviour has extracted from the old laws of Moses and of Nature, and which he has purified from the savage severities which are necessary only for men whose half-savage nature could be restrained by nothing less mechanical and rigid, we, with all Christians, do homage to the law of holiness in the heart, of purity in the life, and of that intellectual liberty which walks not by the letter of prescription, but by the spirit of truth and of a conscience void of offence towards God and man. As to the mere bogus of "wizards that peep and mutter," or any other antiquated and beggarly elements of a past and finished dispensation meant for men who, like children, required nurses and go-carts to keep them from continually tumbling, we freely leave them to those who think them better than "that liberty wherewith Christ has made us free." St. Paul proclaims the very same doctrine as Moses: that if you put yourselves under the Jewish law you are "debtor to do the whole law. Christ," he adds, "is become of none effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."—*Gal. v. 3, 4.* The question, then, for us is, not about peepings and mutterings, but whether we choose to be under the law, and "fallen from grace." It is very curious and significant that whilst the Commandments under Moses are ten, and are thus emblazoned in our Christian churches, the commandments of Christ are really but five.—*Mat. xiv. 18, 39.* And these five he again reduced to two—to love God and our neighbours, and on these two he declared, "Hang all the law and the prophets."—*Mat. xxii. 40.*

This, then, is our answer to all the references to the old law. We prefer the option placed before us by St. Paul, and abandon that law to all who desire to be "fallen from grace." We leave our old schoolmaster, the Law, as we have left all our other schoolmasters, who ruled us when "we were under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father." It was our "schoolmaster," says Paul, "only to bring us to Christ," "that we might receive the adoption of sons."—*Gal. iv. 5.* How little must those who would condemn Spiritualists by the old law, have read or understood the new law; when they would bring the sons and heirs of Christ again into the bondage of servants, and

under a yoke which even those on whom it was imposed could not bear, "neither they nor their fathers."

The worldly wisdom of the foolish man  
Is like a sieve that doth alone retain  
The grosser substance of the worthless bran :  
But thou, my soul, let thy brave thoughts disdain  
So coarse a purchase: oh, be thou my fan  
To purge the chaff, and keep the winnowed grain :  
Make clean thy thoughts, and dress thy mixed desires :  
Thou art heaven's tasker, and thy God requires  
The purest of thy flour, as well as of thy fires.

Let grace conduct thee to the paths of peace,  
And wisdom bless the soul's unblemished ways ;  
No matter, then, how short or long's the lease,  
Whose date determines thy self-numbered days :  
No need to care for fame or wealth's increase,  
Nor Mars his palm, nor high Apollo's lays.  
Lord, if Thy gracious bounty please to fill  
The floor of my desires, and teach me still  
To dress and choose the corn ; take those the chaff that will.  
*Quarle's Emblem.*

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#### IN REPLY TO A SCEPTICAL FRIEND.

Yes ! dearest friend ! 'tis true I hold  
(For all your gloomy doubts and fears)  
The faith in love that ne'er grows old,  
Nor withers in the track of years.

Though "gone into the world of light,"  
Our hearts beloved still are nigh ;  
They still—though passed from mortal sight,  
See every tear, hear every sigh ;—

Grieve over every idle thought,  
Are with us in the hour of prayer,  
Rejoice to see the soul outwrought  
In forms of use divinely fair.

They seek to wean the soul from sin,  
They strive to comfort those that mourn,  
They aid us in the fight to win  
The victory over hate and scorn.

Though parted from us for awhile,  
They still, like God, are ever near.  
Need this, dear friend, provoke a smile ?  
Is this a faith at which to sneer ?

T. S.

## Notices of Books.

### STRANGE THINGS AMONG US.\*

WE are glad to find that Mr. Spicer, who is known to those engaged in the spiritual inquiry, as the author of "Sights and Sounds," still retains his interest in the subject in sufficient force to impel his production of the present volume. It may be taken as a sequel to his former work, and to be, like it, a repertory of excellent ghost stories and other strange occurrences happening within the circle of the author's friends, or vouched for to him by trustworthy persons. "The circumstances of each case have," he says, "been verified with unusual care." With some of them we are acquainted, but others are new to us. They are all of them well told, and judging by their analogy to others of a similar kind, we see no reason to discredit them, though we think that a more plentiful supply of names, dates, and places, would have found for them a more ready acceptance with the public. The *Saturday Review* professes to believe that nothing happens to persons who are described by initials only. We prefer to judge by analogies and probabilities in such cases, and to make allowance for the weakness of the many who dare not let it be known that they have made acquaintance with the denizens of another world. They would as soon be seen walking down Regent-street arm-in-arm with a costermonger, as let it be known that their wives or children had appeared to them to comfort and console them in their bereavement, or that the communion of saints was possible in 1863.

Mr. Spicer himself is a notable example of this Nicodemian disease and unsoundness. Throughout his book he is painfully sensitive lest his own high reputation should suffer by its being thought that he is a Spiritualist. Throughout he writes in an apologetic tone, as if he regretted that there were such beings as spirits, and that there should be a spiritual world in which they exist, and occasionally have the power of communication with us. He professes to have a reverence for facts, and that alone has impelled him to bring his volume before the public; but he is careful, nevertheless, to disown the unfashionable facts of what he sneers at as "spirit-rapping." He is loud in his reprobation of the "spirit-rappers," but he draws a strong distinction, which we confess we don't see the force of, in favour of "table-turning." Let him shew us this weakness in his own

\* *Strange Things among us*; by H. SPICER, Author of *Old Styles's*. London, CHAPMAN & HALL, 193, Piccadilly, 1863.

words:—"Let us instance 'table-turning,' *an experiment entirely distinct from 'spirit-rapping,' although commonly associated with that most objectionable and imbecile practice.*" It is well known amongst observers that the two are intimately connected together, and that equally through both intelligence is displayed, and messages purporting to come from spiritual beings are spelt out by means of the alphabet. A considerable proportion of those under whose hands the table is made to turn or to tip, may, by more frequently experimenting, obtain the rapping sounds, and other more striking phenomena. This much is known from long experience, and yet Mr. Spicer finds himself obliged to draw the line somewhere, as to what he will and won't believe, or in other words between what is or may be made respectable, and what would bring him into ridicule amongst his literary associates, and so he draws it at table-turning. His next object is to make table-turning respectable, by attempting to account for it by "a certain fluid force, radiating in streams from many finger-ends," and he gives it a physical instead of a spiritual origin by asserting that "the magnetic current, and that alone, imparts the action." This fluid force which can thus govern matter, "is itself governed by the mere *will*, thus leading to the conclusion that the will of man is in itself a natural force." Here he stops with Dr. Leger, and adduces the curious phenomena appearing in the use of the magnetoscope, to prove his position. We wish that some new Mr. Rutter would invent another machine which we would call a philosophoscope, by which the short-comings of would-be philosophers could be gauged and rendered as apparent as are the results of the magnetoscope. If Mr. Spicer were subjected to this new instrument he would no longer be satisfied to "darken counsel by words without knowledge." He would find also how impossible it is to conduct an inquiry into a new and occult science, when one has prejudices and predilections in favour of or against certain classes of facts, and when one has to protect oneself from the ridicule of the *savans* of our acquaintance, by throwing overboard what may be disagreeable to them.

It would be far better for Mr. Spicer not to come again before the public until he has not only made up his mind, but feels himself at liberty to express his convictions. At present he has only appeared as a trimmer in the subject, and his book therefore is in frequent contradiction with itself. His facts are too large for his philosophy, and he trots about before us as an overgrown boy dressed in the tightest of nankeen pantaloons and round jacket, through which his nether and upper limbs project, and in which his middle refuses to be confined. His clothes are too small for him, and he evidently requires a new suit before he can make a decent appearance.

He does not see that after proving the existence of "a certain fluid force" and that it is itself governed by the human will, the question remains whether such will may not be exercised by spirits out of the flesh, as well as by those who are still encumbered by it. This force itself when brought into action either by his approved table-turning or by what he calls the imbecile practice of spirit-rapping, at once and almost invariably professes to be influenced by and to give messages from spirits, and he does not account for the phenomenon of the human will being able "*unconsciously to the operator,*" who produces the phenomenon by his human will, to allege falsely that it is not his will but that of a spirit which produces it. The human will must, therefore, be able to tell lies unconsciously! It is much easier to believe that spirits also have human wills of greater power than ours, and that it is their wills and not ours that produce the phenomena, by making use of physical laws existing for the purpose, in the very nature and constitution of mankind in all ages and countries.

If at this day we needed proof of the fact of spirit-rapping, as Mr. Spicer delights to call it, we should not have to go further than his own pages for excellent tests. Here is one of his stories:—

"A lady, known to the writer's sister, was, two or three years since, in close attendance on her father, who was suffering from an illness that almost forbade the hope of recovery. As she was one evening reading to the invalid, who was seated in his easy chair, she was interrupted by a tap at the door. Her 'come in' not being followed by the entrance of any one, the reading recommenced, but was again interrupted by a more emphatic tapping. Still no result followed the request to enter. Miss W—— then rose and opened the door herself. No one was to be seen! A little perplexed she returned to her seat, but had scarcely resumed her book when a third time the summons was repeated, and now, as it were, impatiently. The sick man rose from his chair. '*That is for me,*' he quietly said, and, opening the door, went into the passage. The next moment his daughter saw him sink upon the floor, and running to him, caught his last sigh."

The poor dying man not only believed more truly than Mr. Spicer, but gave a wonderful proof to others also. Mr. Spicer does not say if this daughter is also a disbeliever, nor what his (Mr. Spicer's) sister thinks of the imbecile practice of spirit-rapping. "Atmospheric changes and powerful electric streams subject to laws and conditions with which we are imperfectly acquainted," furnish Mr. Spicer's solution. He gives also the following story which appears far too large for the clothes into which he wishes to confine it:—

"Some circumstances of a kindred nature are known to have attended the last moments of a gentleman distinguished in journalism and general literature—the late Dr. M—— (Magee). For some hours preceding his decease a low incessant tapping sound was heard in the chamber, as though proceeding from the window, and defied all efforts to discover its precise locality and origin. This however, might soon have escaped remembrance but for a more inexplicable incident which immediately followed the sick man's dissolution, when the sound as of a heavy step was distinctly heard to quit the room of death, and descend stair by stair, passing the open door of the room below, but without revealing any object to the eyes of the astonished listeners."

Here not only are the raps heard, but the sound as of the footsteps of the retreating spirit. Is this to be explained also by atmospheric changes? Then, as if these were not enough, there is a somewhat similar case of the spirit of the adopted child of Sir M. and then Lady S. ringing at the bell twice, instead of knocking at the door, in the middle of the night, during which he was perishing at sea. As the butler was closing the door after the second ringing, Lady S. saw the lad standing at the foot of her bed, and on her accosting him, "What, Edward, you here?" *the figure disappeared.* In order to be consistent, Mr. Spicer should have said, "the atmospheric changes and the powerful electric streams subject to laws and conditions with which we are imperfectly acquainted," disappeared from her ladyship's sight.

There are numbers of these interesting and excellent stories throughout the book, but we must again complain that there are hardly any which are authenticated by real names, dates, and places, and on this account they lose much of their value, especially when vouched for by a man whose only theory of their possibility is so manifestly incapable of producing them. The best part of the book is that which is borrowed from Dr. Leger's excellent essay, and which we should copy in full but for want of space. Had Dr. Leger been spared till this day, when so much more is known of these curious phenomena, we may safely say that his mind was sufficiently expansive to have worked them into a much broader philosophy than was possible for him in his day. Of Mr. Spicer we cannot say so much, since he has had the benefit of this longer experience without being able to make this good use of it.

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