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SPIRITUALISM IN FRANCE.

By WILLIAM HOWITT.

JEAN HILLAIRE, THE MEDIUM OF SONNAC.

'Tis not through priests, 'tis not through schools,
God's voice has reached the ears of men ;
But oft through children and through fools
His words have roused the world: what then ?

Is God a fool through fools to speak ?
Not so, who seek their own are fools ;
Their stubborn purpose He will break,
And thwart the ends of cunning rules.

If by the prattle of a child,
God proves that He can speak and hear,
And sinners are from sin beguiled,
Shall priests, whose arts have failed them, sneer ?

Poems by DR. BRERETON, 1865.

A GREAT fact, which has recently manifested itself clearly to the eyes of the British public in the *séances* of the Brothers Davenport, namely, that under the influence of spirit new laws become apparent in matter, has been for ages equally manifested in a great variety of physico-spiritual incidents. In the numerous cases in almost all ages as recorded by the best historians, of the moving of stones and other substances by disorderly spirits, numerous examples of which will shortly be given in this Magazine ; it was seen that matter not only was made invisible whilst it was in the hands of spirits, and thus enveloped in their atmosphere, but that they could, without any difficulty, cause at their will, matter to pass through matter of the solidest kind, as easily as light can pass through glass, and with as little trace of passage ; yet, in spite of a host of facts of this nature being before the public, and standing on the pages of authentic history, our physical philosophers continue as blind to them as if there had never been a whisper of such a remarkable thing. It is extraordinary that the very men who pride themselves on their

exclusive study of nature, on their intense and life-long study of it, on their discoveries in matter, and who are come to believe in little besides matter, should have their profound ignorance of these laws of matter, which are more remarkable than any which they have yet found out, forced upon their attention by that philosophy which they affect to despise, namely, by Spiritualism. Matter passing through matter without any rent or breach to any part of such matter, as evidenced in the *séances* of the Davenports, is not, as I have said, exhibited in those *séances* alone. It is a fact, attested by thousands of instances, occurring in various ages and many countries. Is it not, then, a rather satisfactory Nemesis, that the great material *savans*, sneering at Spiritualism, should thus find Spiritualism exposing their blindness and superficiality, even in their own vaunted and exclusive province? The spirit of a single American Indian can come and show them material laws that the acutest of them have never for a moment dreamed of.

It is not to be expected that the old stereotyped specimens of material science, the old race of Faradays and Brewsters, will ever venture to look at such laws made obvious from such a source; but some day, and probably not a very distant one, some great mind will appear who will break through the paralyzing prejudices of his caste, and boldly facing and explaining these great laws, will make a grand reputation out of simply following his common sense, and open up a new epoch in science pregnant with the most extensive and beneficial changes in the arts and sciences, and whole economy of human life.

Amongst the many very remarkable mediums in France, and chiefly in the South, Thérondel, Ermance Dufour, Madame Cornet, Madame Costel, the healing mediums of Castres and of Marmande, Hillaire, &c., such facts are frequently presenting themselves. Hillaire is perhaps the most remarkable medium that France now possesses, and as these properties of matter have been more prominently exhibited through his mediumship, we will select him for notice. The whole will be drawn from a memoir of him published during the present year:—*Les Miracles de Nos Jours; ou, les Manifestations Extraordinaires obtenu par l'intermédiaire de Jean Hillaire, Cultivateur à Sonnac, Charente-Inférieure, par Auguste Bez. Prix 2 francs. Paris, Chez Ledoyon et Cie Dentu, Libraires, Galerie d'Orleans, Palais Royal.*

Jean Hillaire was born in February, 1835, at Sonnac, in the Canton de Matha, Lower Charente. His ancestors, like his immediate father, had been always cultivators of their little vineyard, and the father was also a *sabot* maker. To both these pursuits Jean was brought up, working in the vineyard in summer, and making *sabots* in winter. His ancestors had always borne a high character for probity and good disposition. Jean

received only sufficient education to enable him to read and write, and with arithmetic sufficient to keep his little accounts and make his bargains. M. Vincent, the mayor of Sonnac, gives a testimony dated October, 1863, to the excellent character of Hillaire, as well as of his parents, and says that the effect of Jean's spiritual mediumship, combined with his moral standing, has been to convert his neighbours and associates from their different vices to orderly and religious people. Jean seems to have no brothers, but four sisters, three of whom are married.

At a very early age Hillaire had several extraordinary visions, in fact, he became cognizant of spirits. This occasioned him so much annoyance from his father because he could not see the apparitions when Jean said they were there, and from the ridicule of his neighbours, that he went round to the other extreme, and became one of the most thorough scoffers at such things. He was obliged to put great compulsion on his conscience in pursuing this course, but he persisted in it ten years. In 1863 a whole world of new ideas invaded the village of Sonnac. M. Berthelot, proprietor, had received the *Livre des Esprits* of Allan Kardec, from his brother-in-law, M. Bonnet, the architect of Saint Jean Angely, a member of the Spiritualist Society of that town. M. Berthelot and five or six friends promised themselves much amusement in reading this odd book in the winter evenings, but the further they went in it, the more they were struck by its facts and doctrines. In a word, they became zealous Spiritualists, and sate every evening at their *séances*. They speedily possessed themselves of the *Livre des Médiuns*, too, and the news of their proceedings caused much fun and quizzing amongst the neighbours, foremost amongst whom, by his caustic epithets on these simpletons, was Jean Hillaire.

But on the 10th of February, in the midst of the most tempestuous weather, and in the darkness of the night, Hillaire felt himself strongly urged to go to the farm, at some distance, of M. Renaud, where the Spiritualists were holding their *séance*. The rain fell in torrents, and the north wind drove it along in a hurricane through the pitch darkness, but a voice seemingly at the ear of Hillaire kept crying, "March, march! brave the cold and the tempest, brave their fury, haste to the farm!" In spite of the entreaties of his wife, Hillaire went out, and reaching the house of Renaud, found him and his friends sitting in *séance*. Hillaire's arrival caused no little astonishment, but invited to join them, he speedily seized a pencil, and his hand was carried rapidly over sheets of paper laid before him. Sheet after sheet he filled, but at first only with confused scrawls, then letters, words, phrases—a word, he had become a medium, and returned home sobered and amazed.

From this moment he became an eager reader of the works of Kardec at all leisure hours; his evenings were spent with his spiritualistic friends. These were neither poets, savans, nor members of the Institute, they were simple countrymen, relations, friends and neighbours. Their communications coming from their departed relations, were very much on their own plane, were neither correct in orthography nor punctuation, and would have excited the ridicule of the learned scribes of the cities. Nevertheless, they were such as went to the hearts of these simple men, and produced a thousand times more effect than the most magnificent sermons of Bossuet, Massillon, or Lacordaire.

Amongst the spirits who most frequently communicated through them were the fathers of Jean Bonnet, Hillaire, and Madame Berthelot. Very soon they promised them direct writing, but for some time this promise was not fulfilled, and on their inquiring the cause of it, these spirit relatives informed them that, to their great disappointment, they had found that they were not able to do it, and that they were daily praying that this power might be conferred on them, and had faith that it would be, as it was for a good purpose. In a little time it was realized. Having written a number of questions on a sheet of paper, and laid a pencil with it, they had the satisfaction to see the simple answer "Yes" written to one of these questions, and afterwards extended replies signed by the fathers Hillaire and Bonnet, some of which have been given in the volume by M. Bez in their genuine orthography and phraseology.

Hillaire soon began to see spirits again visibly, and was desirous of seeing some of his departed relatives. On the 30th of May, as he was hoeing his vines, the sun being very hot, he sat down under their shade to rest himself a little, when a stone was thrown and struck the iron of his hoe. He started up, and gazed around on all sides, but no one was to be seen; and he sat down again. Another stone more violent than the former, struck his ear, he sprung up, and sought all around, but in vain, no one was to be found; and the sky giving signs of thunder which began to growl, he returned to his cottage, and related what had happened. The next day scarcely had he reached the same spot, when turning round, he saw his father advance smiling towards him, and he saw him stoop, take up a stone, and strike his hoe repeatedly with it to make him comprehend that it was he who had thrown the stones the day before. A long conversation took place between the spirit-father and the son in the flesh, and the father explained to Hillaire the method by which spirits by a combination of the fluids which belong to all bodies which surround us, and the especial fluids emanating from the bodies of the mediums, are able to seize on and move material

substances, and communicate with spirits incarnate. Hillaire from this time received continual visits from his father; he became conscious of the thoughts of the people around him, and often astounded them by telling these thoughts to them. His father took him in a vision into the spirit-world, and shewed him things too extensive to be detailed here.

In July, Hillaire went to Saint Jean d'Angely to attend a *séance*, where he saw several spirits clearly, and described them so accurately that they were recognized by their friends there. The account of this *séance* was given in *La Ruche Spirite Bordelaise*, in the fourth number of that journal, in the latter half of July, 1863. The description of him given in that journal is:— "Hillaire is a simple peasant. He is about eight-and-twenty, of a fresh complexion, a good figure, a gentle manner, a look frank and open, and an expression rather serious than gay; though his education is limited, he appears intelligent." The description of the persons whose spirits he saw, evoked universal astonishment, and especially of one having a wooden leg, this appearance being assumed by the particular spirit to identify himself to his friends.

At a *séance* at Sonnac some days after, a spirit, calling himself Dhionnet, declared that he had been murdered by four men on his own property at Brissonneau. He gave the names of the two principal murderers, but refused to give the others, because, though the murder had taken place in 1708, some of their descendants were yet living in the place. The spirit described the exact place where he had been buried by the assassins; and the mayor of Sonnac who was present, and who came from Brissonneau, became greatly moved, and said that, on that very spot some time before, his men, in making an entrenchment, had found two skeletons who had evidently been murdered and buried here. When the register of the parish was examined, two men of the names given by Hillaire were found to have been living at Brissonneau at that date, but their names had long disappeared from the parish.

In the month of August the autobiography of Home reached Sonnac, and occasioned a somewhat vehement discussion amongst the Spiritualists, many of them treating the accounts of Home's floating as most improbable, and invented to amuse the credulous. Amongst these disbelievers was Hillaire, who objected, as many persons have always done, to the performance of these manifestations in darkness. Toward the end of the month Hillaire was at Brissonneau, and had a warm dispute with some zealous advocates of Home's truthfulness, and on his way home to Sonnac he found himself actually walking in the air, and carried against a poplar tree, at which he made a clutch. Borne, however, past it, and soon after set on the earth again, without

any shock, he asked himself if he were awake ; but, seeing a piece of poplar bark in his hand, he hastened back to the tree, and saw, twenty feet from the ground, the place whence the bark had been torn.

From this time the fame of Hillaire's wonderful mediumship spread far and wide, and his life is one scene of manifestations of the most extraordinary kind, the most wonderful feature of them being their perfect verification on the spot. I can only give a mere glance at these. In 1863, he was invited by the Spiritual Society of Bourdeaux to pay a visit to that city, where he arrived on the 7th of that month. The account of the *séances* there are published at length in *La Ruche Spirite Bordelaise*, warranted as correct by the president, M. Sabo, and the members of the society. In the *séances* held there he went into trance, and saw and conversed with spirits, giving both what he and they said aloud, and in a manner which astonished those present, as they fully recognised these spirits, though they and their histories were wholly unknown to himself. At Saint Jean d'Angely, some time before the spirits had said they would bring actual physical substances to him, and now one of them openly put a curious piece of petrification into his hand before all the company. The whole of the gentlemen present gave their names publicly as witnessing all that is related.

The fame of Hillaire's manifestations spread far and wide through the country, and excited a vivid sensation, some laughing, some crying "magic!" "sorcery!" and declaring that the medium of Sonnac had sold his soul to the devil. Hillaire received more invitations than it was possible to accept, and at the same time his spiritual friends made him understand that it was by no means necessary to throw to the swine of incredulity, of blind and hardened scepticism, the treasures which God had reserved for those who had a reasonable faith, were free from the shackles of preconception, and really seeking for truth. He accepted, however, the invitation of M. Vitet, a gentleman of Briou, who thence became a warm and cordial friend of his. With M. Vitet he visited Barbezière, in the Canton d'Aigre, where at a *séance* amongst people of whom Hillaire knew nothing, he saw and gave such accounts of their departed friends, and remarkable passages in their lives, as threw the whole company into agitation, including the mayor and head of the institute. Similar, and equally surprising *séances* took place at Briou, Chaillot, Saint Jean d'Angely, Bourdeaux, and other places, equalling in the marvellous manifestations and revelations anything yet heard of.

On the 18th of November, 1863, as Hillaire was passing the evening at Briou, in the family of M. Vitet, he fell into a trance, and in that state put on his overcoat and hat, took a basket

which he had from a table, put it on his arm, and went out. M. Vitet, his wife, and Mulon, the servant man, followed him, and saw him taking the way home towards Sonnac. He was walking at a quick pace, and they followed as fast as they could. Hillaire was quite unconscious of them, being in his trance. Suddenly they began to perceive that the pebbles and gravel on the road made no sound under his feet, though they ground loudly under theirs, and looking closely they saw that he was walking in the air. Astonished at this phenomenon, they made additional efforts to come up with him, when, at once he fell upon his knees in the middle of the road, and conversed audibly with spirits, whom he called by their names. M. and Madame Vitet, and Mulon also, threw themselves on their knees around him. Anon, Hillaire rose and pursued his way towards Sonnac. Mulon, in order to observe him more closely, ran on before, and seated himself in the middle of the road, to examine carefully Hillaire's feet as he came up. To his astonishment, he saw him marching considerably above the surface of the earth, and as he arrived at Mulon, he passed over his head without touching him, or being aware of him, though he appeared to M. and Madame Vitet to have actually trodden on Mulon's head. Just before reaching his home, Hillaire suddenly awoke, and was greatly astonished to find himself there, and his friends from Briou with him. He related that during his trance a spirit called Felicia, had taken him into Italy, and showed him her tomb in a cemetery at the foot of a mountain, past which ran a railroad. The spirit, Felicia, turned out to have been the first wife of M. Sabo, of Bourdeaux, who died in Italy, and was buried in a cemetery at the foot of a mountain, but past which no railroad ran at that moment, but which has since been made exactly as he saw it.

After this we have accounts of a number of *séances* at different towns and villages, where the most remarkable demonstrations of the visits of spirits well known to the company, but wholly unknown to Hillaire, are attested by the signatures of the mayors and principal inhabitants of the places. Of these I can only select two. One is that of a shower of stones which took place at M. Vitet's, at Briou. There were present besides the family, Messrs. Vincent, Berthelot, and Godin. It was Christmas eve, and the spirits informed them that they wished to celebrate the birth of Christ by a remarkable phenomenon, a shower of stones. They recommended them to engage in earnest prayer, and in the midst of it there came a sound as of a great tempest, and the house shook as if agitated by an earthquake. In the midst of this, Hillaire rose up and walked about, visibly agitated. A stone fell in the midst of them. Thinking the promise now

completed, the guests took their leave, and returned to their homes at some miles distance. Arrived there, however, they were impelled by an intense inward feeling to return to M. Vitet's, and whilst they were in bed at midnight, when all the doors and windows were fastened, a shower of stones took place in the kitchen, with such force as to leave dints in the boards of the floor. The house, it should be remarked, was not only well locked up, but stood solitarily in the country, surrounded by great courts, in which ranged stout watch-dogs, so that no one could possibly approach it. Amongst the stones which they collected, real pebbles such as the roads were paved with, was found an antique salt cellar, in terra-cotta, painted and varnished like porcelain, which M. Vitet's father recognized as having been lost thirty years before, and sought for all over the house repeatedly, but in vain. This is now preserved as a precious relique, as well as some of the stones themselves.

During these *séances*, M. Vitet, who suffered dreadfully from an asthma, which had resisted all the science of the physicians, sate in an easy chair, which was also his place of rest during the night, for he could not lie down, but he was cured by a simple decoction of herbs prescribed by the spirits, and at the time of the publication of this memoir during the present year, no symptom of the complaint has returned. The recipe is given in the book.

The last marvel which I shall quote is the most astonishing of all, and the writer, M. Bez, says he was a witness of it, as well as Messrs. Vincent, Mayor of Sonnac, and head of the institute, Berthelot, Héraut, Roby, Bâtard, the Vitet family, and M. Vitet, senior, Godin, Ballanger, &c., &c., all most honorable people, and who are ready to assert the facts occurring before their eyes. I quote the account in the author's own words:—

“After a general prayer addressed to God, and a welcome to good spirits, Hillaire fell into the magnetic sleep, always the precursor with him of some important manifestations. Five minutes had not passed, when the medium saw three spirits, Catherine Begeon, mother of one present; Felicia, from whom *La Ruche* has often inserted beautiful communications; and St. Bernard, the great spiritual guide of the Spiritual Society of Saint Jean d'Angely. Catherine Begeon held in her right hand a ring, which she presented to Hillaire, St. Bernard and Felicia aiding her by all the power of their magnetic fluid. After some minutes, Hillaire sprang at one bound upon the table; he extended his hands to receive the ring. All present could see it: it seemed to adhere to his right hand, held perpendicularly. Hillaire threw down the ring; it fell on the table near me, and to my surprise did not roll or run along the table, which most rings are used to do, but remained fixed on the place as a bag or small

lead would have done. I seized the ring, and examined it minutely. It was of massive gold, and very heavy. It was handed from one to another through the whole company, who were eager to examine it too. Hillaire during this time was in conversation with the spirits already named. He asked first whether the ring was petrified; then whether it was of real matter, and would not disappear in the same way as it had come. Having received satisfactory answers, he desired to know to whom it should be given. He then descended from the table, seated himself, still sleeping, took a pencil and wrote mechanically, 'It is for thee, dear Hillaire, that thou mayest keep it for the rest of thy life. Catherine Begeon.' "

Having thanked the spirit for the beautiful ring, he asked for which finger it was intended. The ring at this moment had come into my hands. Hillaire, by a mechanical movement, extended his left arm towards me, and protruded the usual finger for a ring. I placed it upon it, and Hillaire clasped it, and thanked afresh the spirits and God, the Master of all things, who had permitted them to see such amazing facts, to convince men of the existence of the soul, and of its individuality. The ring was much too large, the thumb itself could not have filled it, and I heard several of those present say what I myself had thought: "This time the spirits have deceived themselves; they have made grand error in the size." Hillaire took off the ring twice, and handed it to the company that they might examine it at their leisure; and each time that he received it back, he put it on his finger, clasped it affectionately, and returned it. The third time in putting it on, it could not be again removed; it became instantly contracted. In his sleep, Hillaire made repeated efforts to pull it off, and we began to fear that he would do his finger some violence by his abortive attempts to remove it, when, all at once, he advanced towards a person in the middle of the company, and extending his hand, said, "There, incredulous one, since you still doubtest, pull off the ring thyself." This person seized the finger, and pulled the ring with such force, that he tore the skin from the knuckle. He then became pale with emotion, the perspiration streamed from his brow, and he confessed that at the moment that Hillaire came up to him he was thinking that there was some trick about the ring. He confessed himself conquered by the evidence.

The same evening Hillaire, when completely awake, saw the spirit of the venerable St. Bernard, from whose right hand streamed a line of fluid, which fell on the ring, which, under its influence, still further contracted and pinched the finger; then the fluidic stream running from the ring towards St. Bernard, the ring gradually enlarged to its proper size, so that it was

easy without any chance of its falling off. This ring, we are assured, Hillaire still wears.

The sceptics who strain at some marvellous gnat, do not need such camels as these to astonish and disgust them. In fact, it requires some faith in persons daily conversant with what are called miracles to digest facts of this astounding description. But what is to be done when, not only through the Davenports in London, and Hillaire at Sonnac, but physico-spiritual phenomena, equally strange, and all indicating the same subtle laws of matter under the influence of spirit, are occurring in various countries of Europe, in such cities as Paris itself, and have been occurring in Greece, Rome, Syria, China, and India for many ages before our Saviour himself gave demonstrations of these laws after his resurrection, by passing through walls and closed doors in his body; appearing and vanishing at pleasure in and from the midst of his disciples? I satisfy myself on this occasion with quoting these few but startling incidents from a book of 156 pages, published at Paris in the present year of our Lord, 1864, with references to some scores and hundreds of sober and intelligent people, mayors and magistrates included, all still living in the country around Bordeaux, and extensively through the south-west of France.

UNSEEN VISITORS.—STARLIGHT MUSINGS.

O holy ones! O watchers calm!
 While night anoints the earth with dew
 In silent love, can any harm
 Befall us as we gaze on you?
 Gazing on you we honour Him
 Who sends to earth your welcome light,
 Across this dusky ocean dim
 Which circles round us every night!
 Do spirits from your distant shore,
 Ye homes of bright tranquillity,
 Sail sometimes, to see earth once more,
 Across this intervening sea?
 Stand by us, when at solemn night,
 As once they did, for peace we yearn;
 Whisper the secret "All is right!"
 Then, blessing us, unseen return!
 It must be so; and living ones,
 Unseen, although they are so bright,
 Shedding their life around like suns,
 Fill now the darkness with delight!
 The starry air is full of bliss,—
 What evil can the soul befall?
 The soul with friends surrounded is,
 And, lo! it loves the Lord of all!

T. T. LYNCH.

THE DAVENPORT BROTHERS.

BY BENJAMIN COLEMAN.

WARNED by past experience of the unreliable character of some of the known American mediums who have disgraced themselves by mixing up fraud with reality, I at first accepted the introduction of the Davenport Brothers, who brought a letter to me from a valued correspondent, with reserve. I wished, before committing myself to a belief in the integrity of the phenomena exhibited through them, to be thoroughly satisfied of the facts by close personal observation. The fullest opportunities having been freely afforded me, I am now in a position to express a decided opinion upon their claims, and which opinion, I am happy to say, is entirely favourable to them.

The association with the Davenports of a gentleman of the high character and intellectual acquirements of Mr. J. B. Ferguson, could, under ordinary circumstances, be a sufficient guarantee for the respectability of their conduct as mediums. But with a confident truthful nature, a deep experience in the higher range of spiritualistic philosophy, and a full knowledge of the realities of the whole subject, I thought it possible that he might be innocently compromised by men, who, though mediums, could not be entitled on the same grounds as he, to the same amount of confidence and respect; and therefore I felt justified in not, without full inquiry, risking any reputation which I may possess as a competent and intelligent witness of such facts as Spiritualism and its phenomena present.

Whatever advantages there may be to the cause and to the Davenports in having an advocate so well qualified to protect it and them from the assaults of a sceptical multitude, I cannot express a feeling of pain and regret at seeing such a man as Mr. Ferguson exposed to the insult and obloquy to which his position in relation to the Davenport exhibitions necessarily subjects him. But like a true philosopher he appears resigned to this, and he expresses his determination to go through with his task at all hazards. I am sure that every one of right feeling will appreciate the sacrifices he is making, and will wish him God speed in defending these otherwise helpless young men from the storm of indignation, falsehood, and vituperation which baffled science and religious bigotry are pouring upon them.

I did not meet the Davenports when I was in America, but I received a full account of their extraordinary powers from Professor Mapes, and in my American Notes published in the *Spiritual Magazine*, Vol. II., I said:—"The spirit known by the

name of John King is the chief actor in these manifestations; with this spirit Professor Mapes assured me that he had *conversed for half-an-hour*. The voice, he said, was loud and distinct, and spoken through a trumpet. He shook hands with him, the spirit giving a most powerful grasp; then taking his hand again, it was increased in size and felt as if it *were covered with hair*. The professor was accompanied only by his own friends, among whom were Dr. Warner and Dr. Wilson. They had a jocular sort of evening, into which King entered heartily, and at length played them a trick for which they were not prepared, and which rather astonished them. Their hats were suddenly whisked from their heads and replaced instantly. Turning on the lights, they found each of their hats was turned inside out. Dr. Warner's gloves, which were in his hat, were also turned inside out."

I never doubted the testimony of Professor Mapes, who is well known as a man of high character and eminent as a professor of chemistry, but it was difficult to realise the statements he made to me, especially that of having held an oral conversation with the spirit known as John King. I am, however, now in a position to corroborate this extraordinary fact, for I too have conversed with this spirit. I had been sitting with the Davenport party at their own apartments and was about to leave when Mr. Ferguson suggested that we should try to obtain manifestations. The brothers consented, but Mr. Fav begged me to excuse him, as he had an engagement elsewhere. I retained the easy chair on which I was seated; Mr. Ferguson and the Davenports sat at a distance of about six feet apart from me and from each other. On the table were a speaking trumpet, tambourine, and guitar, the table being also about four feet from any of us. Mr. Ferguson placed on the table a folded paper containing some questions, a sheet of blank paper and a lead pencil. The light being put out we sat a short time in silence when a startling bang was made upon the tambourine, which instrument with the guitar was instantly put upon my knees, and a hand gently caressed me on the head. A stream of light passed across the spacious room and was succeeded by another rising from the floor to the ceiling: To my surprise a voice then spoke to me through the trumpet, which was brought within a few inches of my face, and in a clear, distinct, and sonorous tone I was thus addressed:—"How are you Coleman?" "Oh!" exclaimed both the youths, "that's John—that's John; we have not heard him speak for a long time: keep him in conversation, Mr. Coleman," I then said, "You appear to know me, John?" A.—"Yes, I know you in spirit." Q.—"Have you ever seen me before?" A.—"Yes, I saw you in America." Q.—"Do you think, John, that you will be able to convince the sceptics in this country?" A.—"Yes, we

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have power enough to make them surrender. There is a lady standing by your side, Coleman." Q.—"Can you tell me her name?" A.—"Kate!" Q.—"I do know one of that name who is in the spirit-world, tell me her surname?" At this moment one of the Davenports said—"I hope you will be with us to-morrow night, John." The voice, turning from me, said—"Certainly," and then turning in the opposite direction as I could easily detect by the sound, the spirit said, in a jovial tone of voice, "How are you, Ferguson?" Turning again to me a large hand was passed over my head, and patting me in a kindly manner upon my shoulder, the voice said, "I must go now; good night." Mr. Ferguson said, "I want you to answer the questions I have written before you go." We heard the spirit rapidly writing, and on restoring the light we found there had been written, on the sheet of paper, in a bold, intelligible hand, "Can't reply now—J. B. K." which are the initials of the name by which this spirit is known—John B. King.

With more frequent and close opportunities than of judging of the Davenport manifestations, than perhaps any other person in London, and keenly alive, as I have indicated, to the possibility of imposture in such parts of the exhibition as professional conjurors have vainly tried to imitate, I feel justified in stating that the suspicions engendered by the misrepresentations of the press, and willingly accepted by the multitude to uphold erroneous theories, are, in my deliberate judgment, altogether unfounded. The manifestations witnessed in the presence of the Davenports, and their companion, Mr. Fay, from first to last, are, in my judgment, positively effected by some intelligent invisible agents, and are not produced by the active agency or co-operation of either of these young men or of any confederates. I, and others who have had sufficient experiences of them believe that no rational solution but one can be given to account for these manifestations, and that one is, that they are effected by spirit-power. True, that the tying and untying of ropes, and playing inharmonious tunes upon musical instruments do not appear at first sight to be a very elevating occupation for the denizens of a higher sphere, and especially if we are to admit the claim which they themselves invariably make, that they are the spirits of mortal men and women who have lived on this earth. But let the objector pause, and ask himself what he knows of spirit-life, and if he believes in the history of the Bible, whether such spiritual manifestations are inconsistent with the facts which that sacred volume teaches throughout. If we believe with the glorious Milton, that—

"Millions of spiritual beings walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep."

or with St. Paul, that we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses; then, may we with perfect reason believe that spirits out of the flesh may occupy themselves in ways as many—high and lowly—as do the spirits in the flesh.

If it be objected that spirits would not descend to such unseemly methods of making their presence known, that rapping in, or tilting a table, is wanting in gravity, and beneath the dignity of such exalted beings, a reasonable and, I think, a perfectly satisfactory answer can be made; and on this point I will borrow the general reasoning, though not the precise words, which the Rev. Robert Smith has given in reply to this oft repeated though very natural objection.

Hitherto, if a departed spirit made itself visible, the apparition was pronounced an optical illusion, and the man supposed to be the most intelligent applied a blister or gave an opiate or a stimulant to lay the ghost. If the seer persisted in his assertion, against such authority, that he was sure the spirit-form of his sainted mother had stood by his side, evincing an anxiety to speak to him by signs or words, he was laughed at by others as a ridiculous and very weak person entertaining obsolete superstitions, and was told of the ghost on the moor which, after frightening so many, turned out to be a harmless white horse. No one ever suggested that there possibly might be on the moor a spirit form as well as a white horse.

If the dwellers in the spirit-land attempted to make themselves known by haunting houses, running up and down stairs, opening and shutting doors, making the furniture crack, and other noises, some Dickens of the day found an easy solution by reminding the narrators that rats played remarkable pranks, and their own over-excited imagination did the rest. If history was appealed to, to demonstrate that the spirits of the dead have never ceased throughout all ages to manifest themselves, as proved by Howitt's *History of the Supernatural*, the recorded facts of history were stultified; and the knowing ones would sagely shrug their shoulders and pity our credulity.

If the Bible were quoted to establish the verity of inter-communion between the living and the dead, then it was said the age of miracles had passed away, though no authority exists for such a dictum, and the man who dared to lend a listening ear even to the possibility of holding converse with spirit intelligence must be either a fanatic, an infidel, or an impostor. Thus it became indispensable that if our spirit friends and relations desired to hold communion with us they must come by some new methods, that neither the doctor, the philosopher, nor the priest can prevent. Such are the varied physical phenomena of the present day. Tables, chairs, musical instruments, and the

like, are not to be dosed into oblivion by the doctors, nor terrified by well-meaning but narrow-minded clergymen, nor reasoned away by philosophers, nor put out by the ridicule of the press and the impudent pretensions of ignorant conjurors. The evident object is, under the permission of an Almighty ruler, to attract attention, "to confound the wise," and to demonstrate the presence of agencies other than unintelligent matter, and thus sooner or later to compel a recognition of an all important truth by means best suited to the corrupt and materialistic tendencies of the age.

In this view the most fastidious of Spiritualists may be able to reconcile themselves to the Davenport class of manifestations and see in them a powerful means of arresting the multitude when the higher and more beautiful teachings of Spiritualism would not touch them.

With the general character of the Davenport manifestations and the comments of the press the reader is doubtless acquainted. A valuable summary up to that date is recorded in the last number of this journal. Having had as I have said special opportunities of witnessing them, I have collected a few incidents from my own observations and from the statement of friends, which will tend to remove any lingering doubts as to the entire integrity of the Davenports and Mr. Fay, and of the reality of the very remarkable manifestations obtained through their mediumship.

At Captain Goff's rooms there were present ten or twelve persons, including two of the gallant Captain's female acquaintances, one of whom was tolerably staid in her manners—the other, a handsome young woman, entered into the affair pretty much in the same spirit of fun and revelry as characterized the men.

The Davenports were tied by Mr. Lindau in a way which was more severe and intricate, they said, than they had been tied on any previous occasion in London. The rope was passed and tightly bound round their arms; so much so as to discolour the skin; then round their wrists, bringing their arms straight down by the sides of the chair, instead of behind their backs; the ends of the ropes being unravelled, were brought beneath the chair, and there tied in a number of small knots. This very elaborate and ingenious method of tying impressed the young men with the idea that Mr. Lindau was a professional hand, but they were in error; he had only been taking lessons from Herr Tolmaque, the conjuror, who had no doubt assured him that the Davenports could not get out, if tied in that particular manner. The inference being that *he* could not had he been so bound. The company being asked if they were satisfied, assented, and showed by significant

gestures that they were more than certain that they had at length got these young "conjurers" in a fix from which they were not very likely to be extricated, without appealing to the mercy of the gentleman who had bruised their flesh, in showing his dexterity in the art of rope-tying.

The lights being put out, the musical instruments were carried about in the usual way. The young lady, in the exuberance of fun and scepticism, threw herself on the floor, and flinging about her arms, as she afterwards acknowledged, tried to catch the invisibles, as they passed the instruments over and around the assembled guests. The time at length came for the liberation of the captives, which, to the evident surprise and chagrin of all, was accomplished, though occupying two or three minutes more than usual. At the same moment, with three quick movements—as described by one of the gentlemen—he and the "young lady" were tied by the invisible operators together by their legs, the cord being fastened with a knot above the lady's knee, close to her skin. She could not remove it herself, and Mr. Ferguson had to perform the delicate operation of liberating her. The young "conjurers" escaped detection on this as on all other occasions; and Mr. Lindau, in speaking of the events of the evening to a friend of mine, frankly admitted that "the performance was very clever." He did not mention *the* most clever "trick" of the evening, which possibly had escaped his memory.

Among many other private *séances* which the Davenports have given, one of the most successful was at the Camp at Aldershott. A gentleman who was present described to me the incidents of this evening, which did not materially vary from the ordinary character of others, except that after the brothers had been very dexterously tied by two officers, who had been practising all the day, the ends of the rope were held by two private soldiers, to give the additional assurance that the captives did not move from their seats. The soles of their shoes were also covered with wet chalk. When the coat of Mr. Fay was removed, one of the soldiers' coats was put upon him, whilst his hands, as usual, were tied together.

After supper the Davenports and Mr. Fay invited the company to join hands round the table at which they were seated, when the same manifestations were repeated—the instruments, which had been laid upon the table, were carried rapidly over their heads and played upon. In a company of not more than ten or twelve persons, this mode of proving that the instruments are handled whilst the mediums are passive can always be effected, and it is perhaps the most conclusive test of the presence of some active invisible agency. The readers of the Magazine will

doubt recollect the description I gave, two or three years ago, of a *séance* at Boston, at which I and four friends were present, the medium being a young girl, when a number of instruments, including a large bass viol, were played in concert, in capital time and harmony, by the spirits. And in the October number of this Journal a correspondent, signing the initial "C," gave a most interesting and graphic account of a similar *seance* which he attended recently in Boston, when there were more than a dozen instruments used, including a drum and two guitars, and, as he describes, "the most elevating and indescribable effect was produced by these simple instruments, playing singly or combined the commonest and most familiar airs."

It will be thus seen that there are other mediums through whom manifestations similar to the Davenports are obtained, and in the musical display greatly excelling anything I have yet heard in their presence. The exhibition of spirit-hands and arms, through the mediumship of the Davenports and Mr. Fay, is truly wonderful, and is, as far as I know, unequalled. I find in a recent American paper the following announcement of another medium who is able to produce *in the light* similar manifestations to those now exhibited through the Davenports.

The manifestations by spirit power through the mediumship of Henry B. Allen, a young lad from Vermont, as we learn from reliable sources, are of a remarkable character, and are creating more sensation than usual inasmuch as they are all done in the light. While the boy is in plain sight of all in the room, musical instruments are played upon, and spirit hands to the number of five and six are seen at the same time—giving great satisfaction to all who witness the phenomena. Mr. J. H. Randall, an able lecturer in the spiritual field, a short time since met this boy medium in Vermont, and was so struck with the truthfulness and convincing character of the manifestations through him, that he engaged his services to travel with him in his lecturing tours; and, we doubt not their united efforts will be the means of opening the windows and letting in the light on the souls of many who are now suffering for the want of it.

The sceptics, who continue to join in the cry of imposture, and attribute the production of the varied Davenport phenomena to clever legerdemain, are either unacquainted with the history of American Spiritualism, or they dishonestly ignore the facts attested by hundreds of thousands of unimpeachable witnesses.

At the same time, phenomena quite as extraordinary, though different in character, are daily witnessed in private families in this Metropolis. For instance, I gave an account (Vol. IV., p. 23 of the *Spiritual Magazine*) of the mediumship of Mrs. F——, the wife of a well-known gentleman residing in London, through whom some of the most marvellous manifestations have been obtained. This lady and her husband accompanied me to witness the Davenport exhibition, on the evening when the members of the press were present; and whilst "the leaders of public opinion" were assembled were making "sceptical manifestations" of a

most unseemly character, one at least had proof positive of the existence of an invisible "force."

I am assured by Mr. F——, that whenever his wife visits a place of public entertainment the spirits accompany her, and invariably amuse themselves by playing practical jokes upon those who may be seated near to them. On this particular evening, the gentleman who sat immediately before Mrs. F—— was repeatedly moved about on his chair. Mr. F—— called my attention to this somewhat amusing and curious display of spirit-power. First, his chair was pulled suddenly back, which caused him very naturally to look behind him. He had scarcely re-adjusted it, thinking, no doubt, that it was moved unintentionally, when it was as suddenly pushed forward; then it was turned half-round, and thus, some half-dozen times, he was forcibly pushed about. Looking in vain for the cause of this tormenting rudeness, he at length turned angrily round as if to remonstrate, when he was disarmed by the innocent face of Mrs. F——, who said, with great seriousness and simplicity, "I have seen that your chair has been moving about, sir, but I assure you that I have not touched it, nor has any one here moved it." "What," he said, "has no one touched my chair? why, I declare I have been nearly thrown on my face two or three times! That's very odd."

Now, it is very possible that this persecuted gentleman may have written one of those clever articles which appeared in the London journals on the following day, in which such things were declared to be "imposture" or "delusion." If this article should meet the eye of the gentleman in question, I hope he will give me the opportunity of satisfying him that he was really lifted and pushed about by the same force that is engaged in producing the Davenport phenomena.

It will be remembered that for a long period, and up to within a few months past, the entertainments at the Colosseum were enlivened by Mr. Taylor's pretended exposure of Spiritualism. I say *pretended*, because I am not sure from some remarkable facts which he related to me several years ago, which he said were witnessed by himself and his late wife, who was the clairvoyante, and no doubt a powerful medium, that his exposition of "the delusion" of Spiritualism was sincere;—but it was the popular side, and it paid! He and Mr. Bachoffner, the manager, knew that the truth would *not*, even had they recognised it. Be that as it may, Mr. Taylor now admits his error and professes his full belief in Spiritualism and its phenomena, and says that his conversion has been brought about by the fact that his eldest daughter has developed as a medium, and through her he has witnessed phenomena as remarkable as any

upon record. In a conversation I recently had with Professor Taylor he expressed his conviction that the Davenports were impostors, and gave as his reason that they were afraid to let him tie them. I treated his opinion as worthless, since he had not then seen them. A few days afterwards I attended a *séance* at the Hanover Assembly-rooms, when they were about seventy persons present, and among them was Mr. Taylor, Mr. Bachoffner, Mr. Sutton (Professor Anderson's imitator of the Davenports in the rope-tying part, which is the only part the conjurors do attempt, and the least interesting of the series of their manifestations), and Mr. Lowe, of the *Critic*, which journal has ceased to exist, though "its spirit" of opposition still lives in the person of its obdurate and hard-headed editor.

Mr. Lowe was selected as one of a committee of two, and a Colonel the other, who superintended the cabinet exhibition. These gentlemen tied the brothers to their seats, and though Mr. Lowe endeavoured to lead the audience against receiving each result as satisfactory, by a variety of petty quibblings about the arrangements, and claimed the privilege of doing as he pleased as their appointed representative, he only succeeded in eliciting murmurs of disapprobation and a few sharp hisses at his querulous and manifestly unfair conduct. Professor Taylor frequently rushed upon the platform to satisfy himself that the brothers' hands had not been liberated when hands appeared at the aperture, and the musical instruments were played upon and ejected from the cabinet. This occurred on this occasion once when the centre door was wide open. As a final test to prove that the natural hands of the Davenports were not used to produce the effects which were heard and seen, the Colonel filled each of the youths' hands with flour after they had been firmly tied behind their backs. On the doors being closed, two clean hands were immediately presented at the aperture; the musical instruments played a tune in concert and in tolerable harmony, and finally the Davenports walked out of the cabinet unbound, with the ropes neatly coiled, every knot untied, and with the flour still remaining in their clenched fists. They were dressed black; in not a spot of white could be detected on their clothes, nor on the ropes or floor of the cabinet.

Mr. Taylor, in an evident state of excitement, again rushed upon the stage, seized both of the youths put his hands into their empty pockets, and eagerly felt their slender persons from head to foot without discovering any thing concealed, and I am sorry to say, without expressing any opinion for or against the result. Mr. Lowe, however, was more true to his instincts. He did express his disapproval, it was not satisfactory, he said, to him because he had not been allowed to *put pieces of*

paper into their hands as he wished to do, deeming that pieces of paper (part of a letter) would have been a much more satisfactory test than flour!! The company were then invited to form a semi-circle, to witness the second part of the *séance* which requires the lights at intervals to be extinguished. Here Mr. Lowe again showed his animus by doggedly refusing to join hands with the rest of the audience, desiring to remain at some distance behind the table upon which the guitars and tambourine were placed. He was compelled at length to take his choice of either leaving the rooms or of complying with the conditions; he sulkily chose the latter alternative and remained.

Mr. Ira Davenport and Mr. Fay then seated themselves in front of the table, and Mr. Ferguson, who conducted the *séance* asked that two persons should be appointed to tie them to their chairs. Mr. Taylor and his friend Mr. Bachoffner immediately stepped forward uninvited, and commenced tying the young men. Mr. Taylor went to work with a will, and speedily trussed up Mr. Fay in a very mysterious and dexterous manner. He had obtained at length the desired opportunity of showing his prowess and the utter helplessness of his prisoner.

The lights were then extinguished and on the instant the guitars were thrummed upon and went whirling over the heads of the audience from one extreme to the other of a semi-circle measuring at least forty feet.

Whilst the instruments were flying about in the way I have described, one of the audience who was seated about the centre in the front row, lighted a wax taper which fully illumined the room, and showed the young men passively seated and fast bound to their chairs as they had been left. This act, committed by a well-dressed young man, was in violation of express conditions, not for covering fraud, as Mr. Ferguson said, but to protect the audience and more especially the mediums, from the forcible rebound of the instruments. The precaution was evidently a necessary one, for on this occasion one guitar was instantly dashed at the feet of the delinquent and the other flew back striking one of the brothers on his knee. Nothing could have happened more satisfactorily to disprove the imputations which the conjurors allege and the general public believe, that the guitars are wielded by the brothers, fast bound as they are known to be, or by their supposed confederates.

The audience resented this outrage and the young gentleman was compelled to leave the room, which he did amidst an outburst of cheers for the Davenports. Darkness being again established we could hear the invisibles busily engaged in untying the prisoners, and in two or three minutes, when the light was restored, the young men were found calmly seated and at liberty, with

every knot in the ropes taken out, Mr. Fay showing his arms and wrists deeply indented by the severity of Mr. Taylor's ingenious manipulations. But I regret to say he still exhibited by a shake of his head, though he said nothing, that he was not quite satisfied.

I have taken thus much trouble to describe this *seance* at the risk of being considered tedious, in justice to the Davenports, and in support of my matured opinion, that the suspicions of trick and confederacy are altogether unjust and unfounded. I know not whether Mr. Taylor still considers the Davenports cheats, but the reader will, no doubt, agree with me, that his opinion is valueless, whether it be for or against them. Nothing could more completely test their integrity than the special incidents of that evening, of which I have still others to record. The most extraordinary phenomenon witnessed in the second part of the *seance* was the removal of one or other, and sometimes both of the coats of the young men, and putting them on again *whilst their hands were fast bound behind their backs*.

At a private *séance* at the house of a friend, the coat of Mr. Fay was taken from his back, and my friend's coat, which had been laid upon the table close to Mr. Fay for the purpose, was put upon him—both operations occupying but an instant of time. On the same occasion, a still more bewildering fact occurred, by the removal of Mr. Davenport's waistcoat while his coat remained on. The waistcoat lay at our feet, with his watch in the pocket, and chain hooked in the buttonhole, just as he had worn it the moment previously. I pondered over this apparent annihilation of material law, until I almost persuaded myself that this feat at least must be accomplished by legerdemain; and when I was assured that there were persons (of whom we have since heard so much) who could liberate their hands in a very short time after they were to all appearances fast bound, I was more than ever inclined to think that this coat-and-waistcoat-removal was a dexterous trick, accomplished by slipping their hands out of the cuffs and replacing them. It is true that there was a difficulty in reconciling that idea with the fact that such an operation—taking the coat off, then the waistcoat, and then putting the coat on again—could possibly be done noiselessly, within a few feet of the audience, in a period of time no longer than it takes to strike a light with a lucifer match. But then, again, I reasoned with myself that *if* any one could slip their hands in more or less time, after being tied as were these young men, it was only a question of degree, and the result *might* possibly be accomplished by long practice. I am now, however, after considerable opportunities for closer observation, quite satisfied that there is no trick in the matter, marvellous and inexplicable as it most certainly is.

On a subsequent occasion, I saw the same phenomenon when the wrists were secured with soft copper wire, from which the hands could not be slipped, in addition to the rope, and I am confirmed by the incidents to which I was about to refer before making this digression.

The light being extinguished, the request was made by Sir Henry de Hoghton that Mr. Fay's coat should be taken. This request is always repeated by Mr. Fay himself, made in a subdued tone, to the invisible operators. He had scarcely uttered the words before Mr. Ferguson struck a brilliant light, and I saw the coat leaving the body of Mr. Fay, and all could see its flight in the air until it reached and rested on the knees of Sir Henry, who sat in the centre of this large semi-circle, some ten or fifteen feet distant from Mr. Fay. The light being again put out, Sir Henry, as it afterwards appeared, had taken off his own coat and laid it on his knee, *not on the table, near Mr. Fay*, as it usually is. He then said, "Put my coat on Mr. Fay." We heard the rush of the coat through the air, and, in less time than it takes me to say it, in fact, not more than a second or two, Sir Henry's coat was found, not on Mr. Fay, but on Mr. Davenport, over his own coat, his hands, as I have said, being fast bound behind his back, his legs also bound to the legs of the chair, and the chair fastened to the legs of the table. Nothing could be more satisfactory and assuring. Nevertheless, Mr. Lowe stepped forward at the close of the *séance*, under pretence of complimenting the man whom he had, by every act throughout the evening, endeavoured to show up as an impostor, and begged to propose a vote of thanks to Mr. Ferguson for the trouble and patience he had exhibited in conducting the *séance*; but he, Mr. Lowe, was sure the audience would agree with him in thinking that they really had not witnessed anything that could not be fully explained by known natural laws. I interposed, and said that I hoped the ladies and gentlemen would not be misled by Mr. Lowe, who, as editor of the *Critic*, was deeply committed against the subject, and whose conduct this evening they could all appreciate. I am happy to say that not a single response was made to Mr. Lowe's disingenuous appeal. He was "left out in the cold" to ponder on the folly of his obstructive conduct.

At the last *séance* I attended, an unusual number of hands were seen at the aperture in the cabinet. A group of four hands, of different sizes, were visible at one time, and two bare, feminine-looking arms at another. These were seen at the same time that the several musical instruments were being played upon, which conclusively negatived the presumption of imposture, even if the Davenports' hands had been at liberty, which they were not.

At the close of this *séance* one of the most astonishing of all

the strange phenomena witnessed in the presence of these young men occurred, and gives another proof of our erroneous ideas of the laws of matter. Mr. Fay had been tied to a chair in the usual way, his wrists being fastened by a series of knots behind his back, and the ends of the rope tied in a final knot beneath the seat of the chair. Upon this final knot Captain Drayson, of the Royal Observatory, at Woolwich, placed the impress of his seal in wax. When the invisibles commenced their work of untying, a request was made by Mr. Fay that the rope should be removed without breaking the seal, and consequently without untying the final knot, which under ordinary circumstances would of course be the first knot to untie to relieve the ends of the rope and enable the operator to unravel the other knots.

This seemingly impossible feat was nevertheless accomplished! When Mr. Fay was liberated, the seal and final knot remained intact, whilst the knots that were made to secure his wrists had been entirely removed.

The sceptical may smile at such a statement; the man of science, who fancies he knows all the laws of nature, will exclaim—"impossible." But the fact remains, and, witnessed as it was by twenty or thirty men, is unimpeachable.

I trust that I have, in this imperfect account of the Davenport manifestations, given a sufficient reason for declaring my full faith in their integrity, notwithstanding the almost universal condemnation of the Press, and the outcry of juggling and imposture.

"It is very clever," they say; "but no one of common sense would think of attributing such results to preternatural agency. The Davenports are, no doubt, cleverer conjurors than our hitherto inimitable Houdins, Frikells, Hermans, and Andersons. We must admit that their 'magical mysteries' have created greater excitement than has ever before attended the performances of all other adepts in the art of legerdemain." "Honestly admit," it is said in effect to the Davenports, "that you are highly gifted conjurors, and we will pay our money and fill your purses, but if you pretend to be 'preternatural philosophers' we are sure that you are impostors. There is no such philosophy, no such things as supernatural phenomena."

But whether the Davenport exhibition is all imposture or not, the claims of Spiritualism and its phenomena remain, and cannot be disposed of by invective or ridicule. As the Rev. Dr. Maitland said, in his essay on *Superstition and Science*, "You cannot step out and put your foot upon it as if it were a spider." It will be heard: if it be a dangerous delusion, the sooner it is disposed of the better for the interests of society. If the phenomena called "Spiritual"

be found to be real, and they can be shown to proceed from some yet unrecognized occult force in nature, science will have gained an important step in advance of her present knowledge. Whatever the result, it is all-important that a serious investigation should be made by a body of men duly qualified for the task, and now that the public mind is once more alive to the subject, it seems to me a fitting opportunity for enforcing the necessity of such an investigation, so that out of this empty Davenport controversy a practical good may be secured.

The Academy of Medical Science, of Paris, settled the claims of Mesmer in this way. That Spiritualism should be put in its proper place and authoritatively settled cannot be of less importance. In the mean time I venture to admonish the sceptical to be patient and careful.

THE DAVENPORTS AND THE CONJURORS.

AT the close of our remarks in the last number we summed up the case between the Davenports and the conjurors up to that time. It will be remembered that on one side were not only the testimonies of the twenty-four gentlemen of eminent scientific and literary reputation who joined in the report made by Mr. Boucicault as their mouthpiece, after an examination which appeared to leave no point uncovered, but also the testimonies of many of the leading men of the press, which found insertion however as if from correspondents only, in the leading journals. Mr. Oxenford in the *Times*, Mr. Edwin Arnold (not Matthew Arnold as we stated in error) in the *Telegraph*, the Rev. James Burns, D.D., and Mr. W. E. Hickson of the *Westminster Review*, in the *Morning Star*, Mr. Dunphy and Mr. Borthwick, the editor and the proprietor of the *Morning Post*, and Dr. Radcliffe and Mr. Hume Williams in the *Lancet*. There was also the fact of Mr. Sampson, the city editor of *The Times*, who is a known believer in Spiritualism, having a *séance* at his house, in which he made the most minute and satisfactory examination, and which, though he could not publish his observations in *The Times*, he has since given to *The Manchester Guardian*, for which he writes the monetary articles, in an anonymous letter, endorsing the phenomena. This was one side of the question on which we had to sit in judgment.

On the other side were articles ridiculing the absurdity of the alleged phenomena, by Mr. Hollinshead in the *Daily News*, he having never seen them, and merely taken up the position at

random of their being gross imposture and delusion, and the result of coarse and stupid conjuring—by *The Times*, in a note to Lord Bury's letter, in which he was reminded of the fable of the Stork among the Geese;—by Mr. Charles Kenney, in the *Standard*, who under the signature "Incredulous Odi" which he has since dropped, and who said that he could not "*adventure an exact explanation of how the things were done, as the modus operandi is at present an immature conception in my brain, but I have a shrewd guess at it*;"—by the *Saturday Review*, who also without visiting the Brothers, found that "the performances of Houdin, Frikell, and Anderson, and other masters of the art, are infinitely more clever and inexplicable than those of the Davenport fraternity," and who asked, "but who wants to find out a conjuror?"—by Mr. Edmund Yates, who does "the Flaneur" in the *Star*, and who learns "that the Davenports always stake about with them ten confederates in their audiences—" by Mr. Hutton, in the *Spectator*, who pronounced in favour of the legerdemain theory, and recommend an investigation by such men as Captain Inglefield and Lord Bury, assisted by physicians, and the sharpest of Sir Richard Mayne's force. Thus solemnly called on by the press, to rid them of the nightmare that was oppressing them, the conjurors were not slow to come to their relief, particularly as the press had made it the question of the day, by constant and reiterated and rabid articles; and besides, it was likely to be a profitable advertisement with the public, who were by means of the press worked up to the last pitch of excitement. Mr. William Morris, Mr. Henry Brown, and some other gentlemen of the Stock Exchange, had in their holy rage allowed Mr. Tolmaque to put his untied hands in their pockets, and to draw thence the means for a public exhibition which was to extinguish the Davenports, and he had had one preliminary sitting at the house of Mr. Morris, in Eccleston-square, an account of which was published in the *Builder*, and thence ran the round of the glad press of England. This, however, Mr. Tolmaque said was only the beginning and the budding of what he would do in a few days. Mr. Anderson, at St. James's Hall, to whom a cheap advertisement is so vital, could not longer restrain himself from assisting the public in their great need, and he too gave a preliminary exposition of his art, before an enthusiastic audience of the first literary and scientific talent in London, who came anxiously to see what he could do for them. It was not much to be sure, but they were very grateful, and he promised to leave no stone unturned for their relief, so that they went away full of hope in the future. It was significant, however, that both Anderson and Tolmaque had on different pretences refused to be present at the Davenport *séances*, or to assist the

committee of twenty-four in finding them out. Such was the state of things when we were obliged by the near approach of the 1st of November to form and express an opinion upon the conflict as it had raged up to that time. It became us to be cautious, because although nearly all who had had opportunities of examining, had come to a conclusion favourable to the genuineness of the phenomena, yet the conjurors expressed such a confident promise that they would at once repeat all the facts by legerdemain, that we determined to wait for the result of their trial before giving a final opinion. We, however, said that if the conjurors could not relieve the situation, we should be obliged to give in to the phenomena, and we indicated a few of the crucial points to which the conjurors should first direct their attention.

What shall we say therefore? Another month has passed away, and the Davenports have now been in England about ten weeks. They have been pronounced authoritatively to be common conjurors, who, after much practice, have learnt some tricks, but which some of the leading papers allege to be *infinitely less clever and inexplicable* than those of Houdin, Frikell, and Anderson. How does this statement consort with the facts of the case? because either the press must have been wrong in saying this, or our conjurors must have been wilfully keeping back their superior knowledge. This latter hypothesis is hardly consistent with the fact that their interest lies very deeply in doing their best, and in exposing the tricks if they can, because the public and the press are in sore dismay at the present position of things, and would give any amount of money, and shouting to be relieved from it. Neither is it consistent with the fact that Mr. Palmer has offered a reward of £100 and all expenses "to any person or persons who can be found capable of producing the same results under the same conditions, by legerdemain." How is it that the gentlemen of the Stock Exchange who patronize Mr. Tolmaque, and have already expended much substance upon him, have not possessed themselves of this £100 reward? Upon their shewing, it would appear to have been an easy thing to do so; for the press and the conjurors talk much of the darkness in which the Davenports work, as greatly favouring their power of deception, and indeed being necessary, as indeed it is, to the phenomena they exhibit. The conjurors had the same darkness willingly conceded to them to work in, and if it renders such great facilities, how comes it that they did not accept the challenge?

Perhaps this idea has more lately occurred to the press, for we notice that recently they do not so frequently call it gross and stupid conjuring, but now say that it is a very clever trick.

which has only been acquired by many years' constant practice. Still that it is only conjuring, and that our conjurors can do it, and indeed are now doing it. Yet no one comes forward for the reward, and the allegation that the conjurors are doing it is simply and absurdly false, whilst the other statement, that the brothers have acquired their tricks by many years' constant practice, is shewn to be untrue by the fact attested at the beginning, as well as through every week of the eleven years' scrutiny of them in America, that "the tricks" were done as cleverly and inexplicably the first week of their being discovered to be mediums, as they are now at this day in London. All the contemporary evidence attests this peculiar fact. There is, therefore, a sad want of continuity in the statements of the press, no less than in the promises and performances of the conjurors, and we beg to draw their very serious attention to these discrepancies on their parts, and to request that they will stand up like truth-loving men, if they can at all represent that character, for this time only, and without any jokes about the "structure" or "preternatural philosophy," which are somewhat beside the point now in question, and apply their minds to these sad flaws in their arguments. If any one of the conjurors were not strong enough of himself to find out the trick, why did not half-a-dozen of the leading conjurors, join together in a company ("limited") to expose the Davenport impostors, and extract this £100 from their disgraceful pockets. There are Professor Taylor, Professor Anderson, Mr. Tolmaque, Mr. Redmond, Mr. Sutton, and Mr. Iawaka, "the great Indian rope performer and Spiritualist," who have been much exercised upon the subject, and have done their best to expose it, but they have one and all hitherto signally failed in making more than one step towards it. They have with occasional failures untied themselves, and in a long time they have tied themselves, and that is the end of them, but they one and all decline sealed knots and proper tying, whilst all the real wonders of the Davenports and which their tying is only one of the means to secure against fraud, are left unattempted even by the conjurors.

What are we to decide then, upon this the very chosen ground of the press and the public, that the conjurors were their *Deus ex machinâ*? It is the only thing they have put forward for our judgment. At first it was said to be very stupid conjuring, and next it was very clever conjuring. We have not hurried the conjurors in point of time—they have had ten weeks within which to perfect their arrangements—they have had the money of the Stock Exchange at their back, and the huzzahs of applauding literature and science to lead them on to victory—they have had Mr. Palmer's promise of £100 as a material trophy for their

success, and they have had above all, their own prestige and the good name of England to maintain and establish. Could stronger incentives, or a fairer field be given to them? And yet they have failed—they have failed utterly. They confess it, and the press records it to their discomfiture. The magnificent hopes which they raised, and the splendid promises they made to their patrons, have ended in some stale feats of tying and untying, which in not the least degree touch the phenomena of the brothers. Not even their friend the Reverend Dobbs has, in ten weeks, come forward to repeat his exposure of Mr. Fay, or to shew the conjurors how they may retrieve their damaged reputations. Alas, too, Mr. William Morris and Mr. Henry Brown, of the Stock Exchange, acknowledge that Mr. Tolmaque has victimized them instead of the Davenports, and with lighter pockets they have become wiser men. The Tolmaque bonds are at a discount on the Stock Exchange, and we have even heard Stock Exchange men pronounce that word as applicable to Tolmaque, which Mr. Pickwick found so expressive of his feelings towards Mr. Jingle when he said, "Sir! you are humbug!"

Even Mr. Hollinshead, of the *Daily News*, has descended from his high position of lamenting over the folly of London, to become a constant visitor at the Davenport *séances*, and at the rooms of the conjurors. He has not found it beneath him to be frequently a member of the committees on both sides of the question, and he has several times published his decision that the conjurors are nowhere in the race, and even that "It is possible that in the tricks performed by the Davenports, and which they have studied from children, they will be able to hold their own against all comers."

Mr. Charles Kenny in the *Standard*, who no longer "*Incredulity Odi*" the "intelligent correspondent," now writes leaders in the paper, and far from finding that his former "shrewd guess at it will hold water, tells us, after witnessing Anderson's performance that "*the original demonstrations remain as inexplicable as ever on the precise grounds taken up by the Professor.*" In a second notice of Mr. Anderson, Mr. Kenny says, "Now this is all very clever, but it is not equal to the performance of Mr. Redmond Astley's, nor does it go any considerable length towards unravelling the mystery surrounding the Davenport Brothers. We must wait till Miss Anderson has had a very great deal more practice before we can look upon her as proving anything whatever about the Davenport *séances.*" In a third article devoted to Mr. Tolmaque, and after noticing Tolmaque's refusal to be bound by Captain Burton, the celebrated African traveller, Mr. Kenny is again quite oblivious of his "shrewd guess" and of his not being

at first "able to give an exact explanation of how it is done, as the *modus operandi* was then only an immature conception in his brain," reiterates that, "If the proof or disproof of a spiritual or any other unnatural agency were to rest only on the rival feats of the conjurors who have stepped forward to emulate the mysteries of tying and untying, it is not clear but that we should have to accept the theory that these American youths are indeed the passive conductors of a force not hitherto studied by our Faradays or Groves. So far as the efforts of these antagonists have gone the Davenport Ghost has certainly not yet been laid, and least of all by the exhibition of Herr Tolmaque. . . . The conjurors must not attempt to challenge anything like a close comparison with the Davenport Brothers, whose performances after the most strenuous and successful efforts of their rivals, must candidly be allowed to remain as inexplicable as ever."

There are several notices to the same effect in the *Telegraph*, whilst Mr. Edwin Arnold, still in the guise of "a correspondent," puts the question between the Davenports and the conjurors as follows:—"It must be the remark of all good observers, that while the performances are attributed by their critics to conjuring, and challenged as conjuring by the conjurors themselves, no spectator has yet offered any other explanation of them except *arcasim*, whilst professional gentlemen like M. Tolmaque and Mr. Anderson have produced nothing but a travestie of the manifestations, for the imitations hitherto publicly described omit just the most puzzling features of this odd American exhibition." He then quotes from the *Pneumatologie* of the Marquis de Mirville, addressed to the Academy of Paris, an account of a visit of P. Houdin to Alexis, the famous clairvoyant, at the end of which Houdin made the following remarkable declaration to the Marquis. "Monsieur, I am a conjuror, and if there be a conjuror in the whole world who can shew such marvels, it would confound me a thousand times more—being one myself—than to admit the mysterious agency to which you have introduced me." Fifteen days afterwards, when the matter had been turned over again and again in Houdin's mind, he wrote a letter to the Marquis of which this is the closing sentence:—"I returned as astonished as a man could be, and quite persuaded that neither chance nor conjuring could have produced effects so bewildering." Mr. Edwin Arnold concludes his letter by saying, "I offer this as a contribution towards fact, since it shews that a greater wizard than any at present existing, the inventor indeed of the simple secret of Mr. Anderson's second-sight, encountered 'manifestations' which he could not explain, and what is almost stranger, had the honesty to confess it."

In the *Morning Star*, Mr. Edmund Yates, as the *Flaneur*,

pronounces that the rope-tying business "was not as neatly done as it is by the Davenports," but he falls back upon the ten confederates whom they always have in the audience, and naively says "if this be so they can easily let loose four of them to throw about the tambourine, and to bang the company (at a half sovereign a-piece) on the head with the guitar." At a later date, the editor compares the Davenports and Mr. Redmond, and after stating what was done by each, and which, so far as Redmond was concerned was merely a repetition of his rope trick, he says, "beyond the rope-tying, the two exhibitions have nothing in common."

As to *The Times*, we may fairly consider that through Mr. Oxenford, and Mr. Sampson, its city editor, it is pledged to support the claims of the Davenports against all comers, and we have no doubt it will do so when the proper times arrive.

The *Morning Post*, through Mr. Dunphy and Mr. Borthwick, definitively pronounces against the conjurors in a series of notices.

We have now gone through the leading members of the daily press, and we find that they have already arrived at a conclusion for us upon the facts which they have accurately observed and described, and we cannot fail to notice that unlike the *Spiritual Magazine*, they were bound by all the proprieties to find for the conjurors, if they could possibly do so, whilst we might not unfairly be expected to have some strong leaning towards at all events the possibility of a spiritual explanation. We are, however, at present only dealing with the question of fact—whether or not the conjurors have succeeded in reproducing the Davenport phenomena? We can have no hesitation in accepting the evidence of the press that they have not even approached such a solution. Beyond this we would say nothing from our own personal observation, having witnessed for ourselves the vain efforts of the conjurors, and having also now had frequent opportunities of observing the Davenport phenomena; we could not have any respect for our own judgment or power of comparison, if we did not state our certainty that not only have the conjurors failed, but that they will fail in all attempts to approach the Davenport manifestations. In all such cases time soon begins to become very essential, and we have felt week to week, that time was beating the conjurors. At the same time was only beating those silly fellows of the press, who, like the *Saturday Review*, were not content to say it was conjuring, but must go on to expose more and more their folly by saying that it was clumsy conjuring. Clumsy conjuring it soon proved not to be, and now we can say that it is as clearly proved not to be conjuring at all. It did not look like it at first, and it looks still less like it at last, and to help this view we properly bring into the account that in eleven years the

have not been found out once—not once—throughout the length and the breadth of America, with all the conjurors and pressmen, and doctors at their heels.

With such evidence as is in their favour at this moment, we would infinitely prefer, as a matter of logic and good sense, to find it demonstrated at some future day that it was really conjuring after all, rather than adopt or adhere to that opinion now, with every rag of evidence against its probability. Truly those who can disbelieve on such evidence are the credulous simpletons, and not we, who have only formed our opinion on what appears to us to be as good proof as was ever given for any but the commonest facts in nature. Had the Müller jury better evidence to go upon when they sent that wretch to the gallows to make his particular rope manifestation? If we may hazard a prediction we will say that a considerable number of the British public will yet have to follow his example of confessing under the stringency of the rope trick, what they now deny on no better grounds than did that poor murderer.

Thus we have come to decide the case, that the Davenports and Mr. Fay are, perforce of the facts, genuine and truthful mediums for what are called spiritual manifestations, and that the curiously odd phenomena exhibited through them in public, are a part of the wide range of phenomena, which we record from month to month in our columns. We have come to this conclusion, as we have shewn, from our own observation, backed by the opinions of the daily press, that the conjurors have not disturbed the facts by any of their miserable attempts at imitation. But what are we to say when to these we add the wonderful relations given in the preceding paper by Mr. Coleman, of what he has witnessed, or received from eye-witnesses during the past month. Let the critics keep their eyes upon those facts, and ask the conjurors to imitate any one of them. They are a long way aside if anything they hitherto attempted in public or in private, and are neither to be gainsaid nor explained away. The critics must stand up to them frankly, and give us their explanations about them, which we know they cannot do. They are enough of themselves to settle the question so far as human evidence can settle it. In addition to these, we have the report of the 24, which another month's experience has in every respect confirmed and even largely extended. Besides these witnesses, we are in the position to inform our readers that Captain Burton, than whom a more competent observer can hardly be selected, to take up the case of the truth or falsehood of the Davenport phenomena, has had several *séances* under conditions previously contrived and arranged by him and his friends, in which the brothers have not only been exhausted of the possibility of confederates, but have

had applied to them the most conclusive and repeated tests,—that in addition to being bound by ropes with sealed knots, their hands were secured with tightly applied tape, and the whole further tested by the fixing of crackers between the wrists, which on the least motion would be pulled out and explode, and that in this position Captain Burton and a friend were allowed to place their feet over the feet of the two young men as they sat in chairs in a private drawing room. Under these circumstances the manifestations, such as are now familiar to our readers, proceeded so as to remove all possibility of doubt on the part of the gentlemen present, and who do not believe that any farther test need be applied to insure the reliability of the phenomena.

We have farther had the opportunity of conversing with two friends who within the last few days have been within the cabinet during the public *séances* in Hanover Square, and they both assured us that it was impossible for any sane man to doubt that what occurred to them, was entirely irrespective of any active operation by the Davenports.

In addition to these testimonies we can now also refer to the biography of the Davenports, edited by Dr. Nicholls, and which has come to us too late to be noticed at any length in this number. We place confidence in the facts, extraordinary as they are, from our perfect confidence in the truth of what we have verified for ourselves, and from our not having any preconceived limits of the extraordinary by which we can cast them out. Let this book be carefully studied by inquirers, both as to its facts and the arguments of Dr. Nichols, which we consider to be altogether unanswerable.

Can anything further then be required, or be said, or conceived, which is necessary to strengthen such evidence? If it can, we confess that it is beyond our power to invent it, and we must therefore leave it to the ingenuity of others to find it out.

But, now, having waded through all these facts and circumstances, and opinions pro and con, in the endeavour to arrive at a reasonable and common sense judgment on the question of the Davenports, let us all ask ourselves what all this hubbub of the press has been about? Is the press really sincere, or has it ever been so, in stating a belief that this was a conjuring trick? It would be very credulous in us were we to think so, for can it be conceived that every newspaper in the three kingdoms would bother itself or its readers about what it supposed to be a mere conjuring trick? The mere assertion that it was not done by natural means, on the part of three young men from America, would not have been enough to interest the whole mass of the public, and set everyone gaping at his neighbour about the Davenport Brothers' performances. Oh, no! it was not that! It

was the instinctive fear which each man of them had, that there was really something in the shape of a new force or a spiritual manifestation, so called, which, if it could only be proved to be true, would be very unpleasant of digestion. What made the press exult so savagely in the early declarations of the conjurors, that they could duplicate the Davenport tricks in a few days? What drew together, at St. James's Hall, at the bidding of Professor Anderson, "Mr. George Godwin, Mr. Bayle Bernard, Mr. Henry Mayhew, Dr. Radcliffe, Dr. Wakley, Mr. Edmund Yates, Mr. Hain Friswell, Mr. Campbell Clarke, Mr. Tom Taylor, Mr. John Hollinshead, Dr. Bachhoffner, and other gentlemen." In the words of the *Standard*, "in this assembly were represented almost every profession, almost every class of life. There were authors, journalists, architects, soldiers, sailors, doctors, lawyers, men of science, and most unmistakably 'rowdies,' and all in a state of most demonstrative eagerness." Was it because they all believed that the Davenports were simple conjurors, and could do a clever rope trick? Oh, no! they did not come for that reason. They came because they feared that they were not conjurors, and when Miss Anderson did her little rope trick, they cheered her to the echo, because she helped them thus for a moment to breathe again. "Then, after all, spiritual manifestations are a humbug, as we always said, and Richard is himself again." Richard, however, must fall into the pit once more, for we now tell him that these are spiritual manifestations, very low down in the ladder perhaps, but exquisitely suited to his still lower state, and he will have to eat the leek after all, however little he may like it.

This brings us to the true cause of the disturbance, namely, that our public leaders of opinion in science and literature are, almost to a man, Materialists, and total disbelievers in any other agency but that which they call Nature. God and his merciful ever-active Providence are to them unknown quantities, which, as they cannot be distilled or put in a crucible, are ignored and declared to be absolutely inadmissible in the world's economy. The Scriptures and their supernatural narrations are old absurdities which no sensible person, they say, any longer believes in, though they are an amusement to women and children. Colenso has at last put them in the right place, quite out of sight of science and literature! And yet! oh, sad to say, if a single rap can be made supernaturally upon a table, or if one of the Davenport tricks is true, or if a single ghost story can be maintained, all the Scriptures are brought back, and God and providence must be brought once more into the world! Truly the issue is a tremendous one, and it entirely accounts for the presence of the men of science, and the authors, journalists, lawyers, and doctors

upon the stage of Professor Anderson. They would go even lower, if it were possible, if thereby they might maintain their conviction that there is no such thing as spirit, and no proof of its being able ever to have acted, or now to act in this world of ours.

Science has culminated at last in this lowest deep, and it is active in putting forward its convictions, and has powerful societies and combinations of its own to support each votary. They will work for one another, too, to help on the grand result of depriving man of God and of religion. Such men as Darwin and Sir George Lyell, Dr. Hooker, Professors Huxley and Tyndall have their proofs at each other's service, and in a remarkable instance which has come before us, we find some of these worthies correcting the proof sheets of what appears to us nothing short of blasphemy. We allude to the work of Mr. Herbert Spencer, now coming out in parts, under the name of "The Principles of Biology." We have no doubt that Mr. Herbert Spencer, this last and greatest of the philosophers, does not believe in the Davenportes, and we will say further, that if he did, he would have put his proof sheets in the fire, instead of sending them to Professor Huxley and Dr. Hooker for approval. This will show our opinion of the *cui bono* and logical stringency of rattling a gentleman's head with a tambourine in the dark, for it would puzzle Mr. Spencer to define to his readers, even with the assistance of Messrs. Huxley and Hooper, the laws of evolution and natural selection by which a spirit-hand could be formed in an instant, and after throwing a musical instrument at his head, as suddenly disappear!

That we may do him and his friends no injustice, we will quote his own words:—

PREFACE.—The aim of this work is to set forth the general truths of Biology, as illustrative of, and as interpreted by, the laws of Evolution. . . . For aid in executing it I owe many thanks to Professor Huxley and Dr. Hooker. They have supplied me with information where my own was deficient; and in looking through the proof-sheets, have pointed out errors of detail into which I have fallen. . . . They must not, however, be held committed to any of the enunciated doctrines that are not among the recognised truths of Biology.

In this volume Mr. Spencer discusses the theory of Creation by Spontaneous Evolution. He observes:—

What interpretation we put on the facts of structure and function in each living body, depends entirely on our conception of the mode in which living bodies in general have originated. . . . We have to choose between two hypotheses—The hypothesis of Special Creation and the hypothesis of Evolution. . . . Those who espouse the hypothesis of special creations, *entangle themselves in theological difficulties*. This assumption that each kind of organism was specially designed, *carries with it the implication that the designer intended everything that results from the design*. . . . if organisms were severally constructed with a view to their respective ends; then the character of the constructor is indicated both by the ends themselves, and the

perfection or imperfection with which the organisms are fitted to them. *Observe the consequences.* We may content ourselves with asking why the earth is largely peopled by creatures which inflict on each other, and on themselves, so much suffering? What must we think of the countless different pain-inflicting appliances and instincts with which animals are endowed? We have unmistakable proof that throughout all past time there has been a perpetual preying of the superior on the inferior,—a ceaseless devouring of the weak by the strong. *How happens it that animals were so designed as to render this bloodshed necessary?* Whoever contends that *each kind of animal was specially designed*, must assert either that there was a *deliberate attention* on the part of the Creator to produce these results, or *that there was ability to prevent them.* Why were not animals constructed in such ways as to avoid these evils? What shall we say on discovering elaborate appliances for securing the *prosperity of organisms incapable of feeling*, at the expense of misery to organisms capable of happiness.

Freeing ourselves from preconceptions, we shall see good reason to think with Mr. Darwin, "*That propinquity of descent—the only known cause of the similarity of organic beings—is the bond, hidden as it is by various degrees of modification, which is partly revealed to us by our classifications.*" Various cases of phenomena compelled us to conclude that each kind of organism is composed of physiological units, having *certain peculiarities which force them to arrange themselves* into the form of the species to which they are peculiar. And, in the chapters on Genesis, Heredity and Variation, we saw reason to believe that *while the polarities of the physiological units determine the structure of the organism as a whole; the organism as a whole, if its structure is changed by incident forces, re-acts on the physiological units, and modifies them towards conformity with its new structure.*

The last few lines contain Mr. Spencer's luminous explanation of the manner in which organic beings are evolved from matter without a Creator, according to Mr. Darwin's theory of the "Origin of Species" by gradual evolution and development. Like another curious fact, which we extract from a Paris paper, pointing in the same direction—

M. Renan, author of "Life of Jesus," on settling the semi-annual account with his publishers on the 1st of July last, found that the sales of his book had exceeded 120,000 copies.

This, then, is what science has brought us to—that if we do not accept the Darwin theory of evolution or self-creation, we fall into the irretrievable theological difficulty of having a God who creates tigers and hawks, down to the last of the infusoriæ, which eats up his neighbour, and Who therefore must be chargeable with this criminal blunder of His creatures. One is tempted to say to such a man as Mr. Spencer what Theodore Hook said of a person who was giving himself airs of great importance, "Pray, sir, are you anybody in particular?" and we wonder what would be Mr. Spencer's answer. Truly, the Davenports do not come too soon, and we need not be very particular in apologising for the lowness of the phenomena, which are necessary to destroy such blasphemous philosophy.

It is from the ideas engendered by such philosophy as this that the denial comes of spiritual possibilities. This is how it comes to pass that we have the absurdity of "antecedent impossibilities" applied to such matters, which means only that

certain persons have reversed the case of Mrs. Wittiterly, whose mind was too large for her body. But, nevertheless, we are glad to observe that a large and constantly increasing public is being formed, who have judged for themselves by the evidence of their senses that Spiritualism is true. In the case of the Davenports, all that the newspapers have done is to reassure the blind and unthinking, who are much better out of such enquiry, that there is nothing in it for them. Neither is there, and it had better be left for the present with those who are capable of investigation and thought. The Davenports are daily enlarging the number of these, and now that we have arrived at the full conclusion that their phenomena are genuine spiritual manifestations, without trick or fraud of any kind, we know that they will hold their ground, and cannot but constantly attract further believers to the subject generally. The time has not come for us in this article to consider the oddity of the manifestations exhibited through the Davenports, but only to decide upon the facts. This is the first branch of the enquiry, and when it is fairly settled we know that we have next to meet the arguments of our friends the parsons, who are even already beginning their office of preaching sermons against the Davenports, admitting facts, and loudly proclaiming that the devil is at the bottom of them. The arguments of the scientific gentlemen and of the parsons are inconsistent with each other, but that is nothing new in their dealing with this subject, the objections to which assume the most opposite shapes, and have thus constantly enabled us to make the one answer the other. We wish that, instead of attacking Spiritualism, the parsons would attack the blasphemous philosophy of scientific scepticism, and help us to show that there is a spiritual world, whose wonders they persistently ignore, because they dread their consequences.

THE years! how they have passed. They are gone as clouds go, on a summer day. They came, they grew, they rolled full-orbed; they waned, they died, and their story is told. Years that wrought upon us, in thought and deed, with the force and power of eternity—years, whose marks we shall carry for ever—we dissolved like the dew, and their work is finished. As they move softly toward the far horizon, how do our hearts follow, with yearning love, the motions of the parting days! We would hold them back, but we cannot, and in the golden sunset the bright days sink. And with them how many that we loved depart! Loved! nay, *love*; for the love remains to shine on the memory of those we have left us, like the lamps that are kept burning in sepulchres.

H. W. Becker.

Notices of Books.

POEMS, BY JOHN LE GAY BRERETON, M.D.*

THIS volume, though published in London, comes to us from a far and, the author dating from Sydney, N.S.W. It is a welcome indication, that even in the land of the diggings the soul cannot be satisfied with nuggets;—that there are necessities of the inward as well as of the outward life, urging it onward in its search for the good, the beautiful, and the true. Dr. Brereton's muse is tender, pensive, and devout; it dwells amid human affections rather than with outward nature. The sins and sorrows of humanity, and its final triumph, through the Divine Spirit working in it and purifying its baser elements, seems to be the key-note of the book, and nowhere is this note struck with more power, or does it bring out a deeper and richer melody than in "The Evangel of Sorrow," a poem of great beauty, and not less beautiful than true.

IS IT TRUE? †

THIS pamphlet is a judicious compilation from some of the best writers on the spiritual facts and philosophy; and will be found useful to put into the hands of inquirers. The author, "a Working Man," prefaces his selections with an earnest appeal in which he endeavours to use the affections as a lever with which to open the heavy doors of apathy and prejudice, "that the light of a better world may enter in." There is no reason why the affections should not thus be addressed as well as the intellect.

Surely human nature in this world of trial has need of all that can minister to its better hopes and purer joys. Spiritualism—a living reality, an impregnable fact—offers well nigh all we can hope or wish for in this respect. It must exert a powerful influence for good on our thoughts and actions—it appeals irresistibly to our deepest affections—it confirms our most cherished hopes—it sweeps away forever those dreadful doubts—it lightens our sorrows and dispels despair—it removes that terrible, vague, cankering fear of the supernatural—it confirms the great principle of our religious belief, and, blessed thought to millions, removes us from the limits of faith to that of sense. Shall we stand cold, indifferent, or spalled spectators before manifestations that offer to us so much comfort and joy? Do our affections urge no response to the tendered intercourse with our hearts' beloved who have "passed into the world of light?" Shall we turn away in fear and trembling from the dear spirit-forms of mother, wife, children, friends,—those who, while in this present life, no barrier, earth or ocean, no personal anger, fear or suffering, could prevent our holding communion with? Shall we

* *Poems* by JOHN LE GAY BRERETON, M.D., Author of *The Travels of Prince Legion*, and other Poems, &c. London: SAMPSON LOW, SON, and MARSTON.

† *Is it True? Intercommunication between the Living and the (so-called) Dead.* With Frontispiece, "in Memoriam." By a WORKING MAN. London: F. PITMAN, Paternoster-row. Isle of Wight: F. N. BRODERICK, St. Thomas-square, Ryde.

refuse to heed their urgent messages, conveying renewed assurance of unceasing love, affectionate counsel, and words of comfort and of hope? I cannot avoid the conclusion, that the objection to Spiritualism as a subject too startling for investigation is, or should be, a gross libel on human nature. Shall it be said that those who fearlessly and patiently earn their daily bread amidst the horrors of the dreary mine—who breast undismayed the fury of the elements—who risk life hourly in the cause of humanity and of science—who meet death face to face on the battle-field—of those myriad human workers, whose fate it is to endure life as man can, shorn of nearly all its blessings—shrink like cowards from the spirit-presence of those dear relatives and friends of a better world? Are the domains of the future life so uninviting—so terrible—that we dare not raise an inquiring glance nor place our feet upon the deeply mystic circle which draws so close around us on every side? Shall we stand as though bereft of all that constitutes the mass before facts which take that grand, ennobling thought—a happy, spirit-life beyond the grave—out of the dim and often comfortless regions of faith, and render it a tangible and present reality?

One of the most interesting portions of this pamphlet is "A Paper, read May 2nd, 1864, before the Isle of Wight Philosophical and Scientific Society, on the (so-called) Spirit Manifestations, by Joseph Paul, Esq., F.R.G.S." As this Paper is now, we believe, first published, it may be of service to give an abstract of its principal features. The opening paragraph reads as follows:—

The subject which I have the honor to bring before you this evening is one which, I am ashamed to say, I have till lately regarded with an obstinate scepticism, as unphilosophical as it was discourteous towards those friends who kindly attempted to enlighten my ignorance. Instead of saying to myself "Men of the highest intelligence and strictest integrity assure me of the truth of certain facts, I will examine them for myself,—I was rather inclined to say, "The thing is plainly impossible, it is therefore utterly useless to bestow time upon its investigation." The time came, however, when circumstances almost obliged me to be present at what is called a *séance*, during which the phenomena which I am about to describe were exhibited. I attended the meeting with the full hope and intention of convicting the exhibitors of imposture, by discovering the sleight-of-hand by which they deceived their visitors; but, like the "fools who came to scoff, and remained to pray," I was convinced by what I witnessed that, to a certain extent, the statements which had been made to me were correct, and a force existed in nature, and could be called into action—either by means of the living principle generally, or by that of mankind in particular—which was not yet recognised in the current philosophy, and that an opening existed to a new field of discovery.

With this conviction, Mr. Paul substituted, for a Paper he had prepared on the Polarisation of Light, a statement of the facts he had ascertained on the subject which had so forcibly aroused his attention. He confesses that it required a considerable degree of moral courage to enable him to adhere to his resolution. He says:—I might be certain that the measure which I had meted should be measured to me again; that, as I had regarded the votaries of the new science with a comfortable consciousness of superiority, and of compassion for their mental weakness and credulity, so I must, unless I stifled my convictions, be contented to be regarded by some as a dupe, and by others, perchance at least as a hoaxer, if not as an impostor." Like a brave gentleman, however, Mr. Paul did not hesitate to affirm what he

was convinced was true; and as he was addressing a *scientific* society whose business it was to observe and classify facts, he not unreasonably hoped to meet with some candid spirits who were ready to enter without prejudice upon this new branch of science.

After some pertinent preliminary observations he gives a circumstantial account of a visit with his brother and two other gentlemen to "a well-known medium." They sat down to "an old-fashioned circular tea-table about three feet in diameter, . . . with the strictest scrutiny nothing peculiar could be discovered in it." After sitting from ten minutes to a quarter of an hour, the six persons present all felt a pulsation in the table under their fingers, and shortly the table tilted on one side, as though it were about to fall into Mr. Paul's lap. In answer to questions it was signified by raps that a spirit was present, and on Mr. Paul holding the alphabet the name of his maternal grandfather was spelled out.

A number of other questions were asked, some serious, and others jocular. To the former true answers were returned, to the latter answers which were palpably false. Now upon these answers I would observe that they could not have emanated from the medium, who might have been supposed to produce the knocks, since what truth there was in them could not by any possibility have been known to her, as they referred to family affairs, but they were known to be true to my brother and myself; and that those which were false and absurd were in answer to bantering questions, and even suggested by them. . . . Upon the question being asked, "Can the table be lifted from the ground by the spirit?" the answer was , , , * and immediately the table rose from the ground to the height of about a foot, and remained suspended in the air during some seconds. I carefully examined the table above and below, and am ready to affirm most solemnly that nothing touched it below, and that the only contact which existed between it and the women mediums (who, it must be remembered, did not sit upon opposite sides, but upon the same side of the table) was by their fingers being placed above it, while the only mechanical effect of the four visitors' hands which were kept upon the table, must have been to press the table downwards. Supposing the possibility of the mediums' hands being, by some means or other, adhesive, and that they could, through the adherence of their fingers to the table, have raised it on their side, it is a simple matter of computation that the fulcrum and the weight being given, and the distance of the centre of gravity of the weight from the fulcrum, the force they must have exerted to raise the table, as it was raised, must have amounted to several hundred-weights.† In order to afford time for closer and longer scrutiny, the question was asked, "Would the table be held suspended in the air while we counted twenty?" The answer was , , , and again it rose into space, notwithstanding the pressure of our fingers, and at each word of counting, one, two, three, &c., bobbed a little downwards, as if itself counting, till the number twenty was reached, when it was dashed to the ground with such emphasis as startled the experimenters, and must have rather shaken the structure of the table. It was afterwards suggested that a much larger and heavier table—a loo-table—which stood in the corner of the room, should be substituted for the light one with which we had hitherto experimented, and, upon

* These commas represent the knocks given in reply.

$$\dagger \quad P = \frac{W(WF)}{PF}, \quad W = (\text{say}) 30\text{lb.}$$

$$PF = \frac{1}{2} \text{ inch,} \quad WF = 24 \text{ inches,}$$

$$\therefore P = 12 \text{ cwt. 6-7ths.}$$

the trial being made, movements were produced quite as striking as those which I have already described. At last, five knocks were given , , , , which were interpreted by the medium to mean that the alphabet was called for, when the letters GOOD BYE were rapped out. After this unmistakable dismissal of our party, it was in vain for us to attempt to elicit any raps, tips, or risings; the table's strength had departed, and it had become like another table.

This is followed by an account of a second visit to the Marshalls, in company with a clergyman, and with results similar to the first. Mr. Paul then entered into correspondence with persons interested in the inquiry, among others, with Professor De Morgan, of whom he speaks as "one of the first mathematicians of the day, and the author of several works of high repute on Mathematics and Logic; certainly he is one of the last persons in the kindom to be charged with credulity." He says:—

I described to him what I had seen, and asked whether he had witnessed similar manifestations, and whether he had been able to detect any juggling tricks on the part of the mediums, or thought the movements I described attributable to any known force. I took the liberty of addressing the Professor as an old disciple of his, having many years before attended his mathematical lectures. His reply was as follows:—

"Dear Sir,—I am perfectly satisfied that phenomena such as you describe, are genuine, and this from what I have seen, and heard on evidence which I cannot doubt. What they arise from I cannot tell.

"The physical phenomena which you describe are beyond all explanation, but still there may be physical forces we know nothing of. The mental phenomena are vastly more difficult; there must be, so far as we can see, some unseen intelligence mixed up in the matter. Spirit or no spirit, there is at least a reading of one mind by something out of that mind.—Yours truly,

"A. DE MORGAN."

Mr. Paul adds:—

To complete the description of the experiments which I have witnessed, I may mention that, subsequent to the proceedings which I have described, I have experimented with perfect success at home. On these occasions, all objections on the score of possible imposture on the part of a professional medium have been obviated. Three or four of us were employed in searching for truth, with a full understanding that we were bound in honor not to attempt any trick or hoax upon each other. In my own room, and experimenting with my own table, the same jerks and tippings took place as I had witnessed in King-street, but we have had no rapping. The table has sometimes appeared quite unruly, barring with violence against one of the operators. The signals of the spirits (so called) have been given by jerks made in the direction of the diameter of the table,—in fact, elementary tips, or others in a tangential direction, as though a differential attempt were made at turning the table on its axis. I have never seen a continuous rotary motion; in fact, the table has never been moved under my observation more than three or four degrees of its circumference.

With these facts before him, Mr. Paul arrives at this result:—

"I consider the fact fully established that, by the process I have described, a force is elicited which is perfectly distinct from all forces hitherto discussed by scientific writers. At present the subject is involved in profound mystery, but I have no doubt that the investigations of candid searchers for truth will at length be rewarded by the discovery of some simple principle, which will suffice to account for the varied phenomena which have been recounted."

At the reading of his Paper, Mr. Paul had not advanced farther than this. As regards the element of intelligence manifested in these proceedings, Mr. Paul says:—

I think that, in some mysterious manner, the mind of each person who sits at the table modifies the answers received; and thus it comes to pass that, indubitably, a visitor to a medium will receive information which he is certain is known only to himself, and, not being aware that the answers which are spelt out are but the reflex of his own mind, he comes to the conclusion that they proceed from some supernatural source.

Mr. Paul admits that what he has been able to ascertain on the subject "is very little;" but from the honesty with which that little is recorded, we do not doubt that further investigation would satisfy him that the theory of reflex action of the mind is insufficient to account for many of the facts which this inquiry presents;—he would find that facts are disclosed and thoughts presented which are not in the mind of either the medium or any person present at these *séances*, and therefore, which cannot be thence reflected, but must be referred to an outstanding intelligence.

We commend the clear, candid, personal testimony to the facts of this honest F. R. G. S. to his brother savans, and hope that they will join him in the inquiry into the nature of this alleged new force, of which people, not quite satisfied with the clumsy theory of imposture and conjuring, are beginning to ask. If they do so with the thoroughness which all science requires, we have no doubt they will in the end find that this "new force" is a very old force, being none other than the force inherent in the energies of the human soul and spirit, and manifested to our sensuous perceptions by and through material agencies.

MORNING LECTURES, BY A. J. DAVIS.*

THESE discourses are on miscellaneous topics of general interest, not having no mutual connexion, with the exception of the last one on the "Summer Land," as Mr. Davis terms the second sphere of human existence. In his preface he informs us that the subject matter of the Discourses, and the language in which they are clothed, were drawn from the inspiration given during the moments allotted to their delivery—sometimes, indeed, the speaker had not chosen either his theme, or the line of argument to be pursued until he arose to address the congregation. This fact will amply account for both the defects and excellencies which may be found sprinkled through the following pages."

* *Morning Lectures: Twenty Discourses*, delivered before the Friends of Progress, in the City of New York, in the Winter and Spring of 1863. By ANDREW J. DAVIS, Author of several volumes on the *Harmonical Philosophy*. New York: PLUMB & Co. London: J. BURNS, Camberwell.

No doubt it will do so, but would it not have been better if the author, prior to publication, had given the work that careful revision that would have removed its defects, while retaining its excellencies? Mr. Davis in this volume is more than usually severe against what he regards as the errors of dogmatic theology, on which, indeed, he pronounces as dogmatically as though he were the infallible head of an infallible church. Whether on this subject his views are right, or not, there can be little hesitation in affirming that he is not right in his tone—the scolding, sneering, and sarcasm with which he has thought proper to assail the popular theology. For the rest, he is plain, honest, and outspoken, and we only regret that he has not allowed himself to do greater justice to himself and to his themes. “Whatever is worth doing, is worth doing well,” is a proverb which eminently applies to book making. In a book we have a right to expect something better than the crude form of thought and the redundant verbiage tolerated in free and unpremeditated talk. Books should be the fine gold of thought; newspapers and pamphlets supply the smaller mental coin, useful enough for the petty expenditure of the day, but, let us remember that a sovereign, though small in bulk, is worth two hundred and forty penny pieces. The *Paradise Lost* of Milton, or a play of Shakespeare’s, is of more value than a cartload of the most popular pieces of Lope de Vega.

MAN AND HIS RELATIONS.*

THIS is one of those valuable books in which a philosophic mind gathers up the results of its observations, experiments, and reflections during the greater part of an active lifetime on some given theme; and so fitting them into their proper places and proportions as to present at once a comprehensive philosophy and a work of art.

Man and His Relations deserves to be classed with the works of rare merit, which, like Dr. Wilkinson’s *The Human Body and its Connexion with Man*; and Grindon’s *Life: Nature, Varieties, and Phenomena*; rise above the mere material and sensuous view of man’s nature, and, realising in all significance and issues, the fact that he is essentially a spiritual being, work from this central truth, and thus bring out true and deeper views on all that relates to his physical nature.

* *Man and his Relations: Illustrating the Influence of the Mind on the Relations of the Faculties to the Organs, and to the Elements, Objects and Phenomena of the External World.* By S. B. BRITTAN, M.D. New York: Towne. London Agent: BURNS, Progressive Library, Camberwell.

well-being, as well as to his character, duties, and destiny as the heir of an immortal life; for it is only as we grasp the radical elements and forces of humanity, and comprehend the conditions of their perfect harmony, that we can successfully repair any breach that may be made in their integrity, so far as this may be under the controul of human power. Life, in the estimation of our author, is a spiritual and natural revelation of the Divine procedure. The outward processes of Nature demonstrate the existence of inward forces; specific forms are the material records of essential laws; the human body is a living revelation of the indwelling soul, and each corporeal organ of a corresponding hidden faculty in the mind; so that the whole organic instrument thus represents that complete assemblage of faculties and affections which constitute the human spirit.

The phenomena that illustrate the laws and relations of the human mind are carefully classified: each of the thirty-five chapters of which the work is composed, treating of some one of its phases, so arranged that it is naturally developed in orderly succession from those preceding, and growing in interest and importance as the author's philosophy becomes more clearly and fully unfolded; some of the later chapters including such topics as "The Clairvoyant Vision;" "The Law of Prophecy;" "Philosophy of Inspiration;" "Rationale of Worship;" and "Natural evidences of Immortality." These questions are treated in a spirit worthy of their high quality;—with boldness and freedom, but with all due reverence and becoming modesty. Were we attempting a critical estimate of the work in all its parts, we should have to point out here and there views we think erroneous, but as a whole we deem it one of the noblest works in elucidation of spiritual philosophy and the true nature of the constitution of man and its relations, with which we are acquainted. It would be idle to attempt to convey an idea of its character, by presenting isolated passages, which could at most serve but to illustrate the particular subject of the chapter from which it was taken, but we may, in passing, remark that those of our readers who are interested in the questions treated of in the valuable papers that have recently appeared in this Magazine, on *Spiritual Spheres and Atmospheres*, and on *Mysteries of Nature and of Spirit*, will find in some of the chapters of this work much that will further inform and stimulate their mental faculties on the subtle, but important topics therein discussed. In concluding a notice which, had space permitted, it would have been a pleasure to have extended to a length commensurate with our sense of the value of the work under consideration, we may state that its conclusions are not only derived from evidently wide research, deep reflection, and careful induction from facts, some of which are none the less certain for not having hitherto received the attention they

merit, but that many of the facts are presented first hand from the author's personal knowledge and experience. Whatever may be thought of his philosophy, it can scarcely be denied that the body of facts he has here presented in its illustration have considerable significance and value; and to those, especially, who are interested in those views of man and immortality which this Magazine is established to promote, it will be found a repository of both facts and reasonings which they will do well to study; they are eminently calculated to strengthen those cheering and consolatory views which it is our privilege to hold. As a minor, though by no means unimportant feature of this work, we would mention the marked care and accuracy with which it is written, as the lack of this has been a serious drawback to many books that have been written to illustrate the spiritual faculties and laws appertaining to humanity.

SPIRITUAL POETRY FOR THE YOUNG.*

THE well-printed little book of 36 pages, of which the full title-page is given below, is a nice string of pearls of thought for young people. The thoughts strung together are great enough to fill the soul of a philosopher, and simple enough for the capacity of even little children; many of whom we have no doubt will find them easy to learn and pleasant to remember. Whether Miss Sedgwick avows herself a Spiritualist or not, we are ignorant; but many spiritual mediums are in their own experience familiar with the mode of composition of these hymns for children, as thus stated by herself in the Preface.—“In publishing these *Pearls of Thought*, for the use of schools, and the benefit of young children, the Authoress does so, because *she believes they have been suggested to her for that purpose; she disclaims all plan or intention of her own* of doing anything so original as that of reducing her ideas to words of one syllable. The ‘Hymn for the Lord’s Day,’ the first that was written, flowed freely and harmoniously from her pen, in the form it is now seen, *without any effort of her own*; others followed, and then it was advised these fragments should be gathered up, and a book should be made of them.” We are glad to perceive that this candid avowal does not prevent the book being “had at the Sunday School Institute and all Booksellers,” and that it has reached, as it well deserves, a sale of ten thousand copies.

* *Pearls of Thought strung in Rhyme; or, Hymns and Songs in Words of One Syllable.* By Miss SEDGWICK. Tenth thousand. London: WILLIAM MACINTOSH, 24, Paternoster-row; may be had at the Sunday School Institute, 41, Ludgate-hill, and all Booksellers. 1864.