

# THE Spiritual Magazine.

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FEBRUARY, 1867.

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## A NEW MEDIUM.

THE following is an account of some interesting things that have lately happened in my family through the mediumship of Miss E. N. This young lady came to reside with me about three months since, and had at that time never heard of Spiritualism. About six weeks back we sat down to a table with a few other friends, some of whom had slight medium power, and were astonished at hearing distinct raps, which answered our questions exactly in the same manner that the tips of the table had done with us previously. Since then her power has been much developed, especially since the publication of a little work by my brother, Mr. A. R. Wallace, entitled *The Scientific Aspect of the Supernatural*. I will now relate some of the more remarkable things that have happened.

Miss E. N. and myself were in a large room in the afternoon, engaged with letters, &c., when we heard raps, and after some questions and answers, I asked (looking at a brown paper parcel on the table containing twenty of my brother's books), "Will these little books do good for the cause of Spiritualism?" *Answer*: "Yes! yes! yes!" After some other questions on the same subject, we went down to dinner, during which time every person in the house was with us below, and when we returned it was dusk; but on entering the room we saw numbers of books laying about, and on bringing a light found the twenty books were spread out, one on every chair and table in the room, and three on the floor. I then said, "Does this mean that these books are to be distributed?" *Answer*: "Yes." We agreed not to touch them, but left the room, shut the door, and walked up and down the passage outside for about five minutes. We then went in again, and found all the books neatly replaced in a parcel wrapped in the brown paper, and with an account book on the top of them.

About half an hour later, I went into the same room to get an eye-glass which I knew I had left on my table. I went in the dark, the room only lighted by the gas in the passage, and to my surprise I found the heavy top of my large writing table (with numerous articles upon it) was perched on two chairs, in a sloping position. The drawers had not opened, nor had a thing moved out of its place. I called my friend, and we, with a great effort, lifted the table up to its place. The next morning, I enquired of my brother in the spirit-world (who purports to be always with me), about the table, and he answered through the alphabet, "If you had left it, we would have put it all right for you;" and upon my asking why they did such an extraordinary thing, he answered, "To shew our power." I said, "I hope, dear brother, you will do something more gentle this evening." *Answer*: "Yes."

After we came up from dinner, in the dusk of the evening, we saw two chairs placed side by side in the middle of the room. They had been brought from the side of the room a distance of twelve or fifteen feet. We sat down upon them, and my friend being violently rocked, we walked up and down the passage for a quarter of an hour, and then went in the adjoining room to dress to go out. When I looked in to see if the chairs were still in the place where I had left them, I saw that a beautiful alabaster figure, standing loose on a pedestal and covered with a bell glass, had been removed from the mantelpiece to my writing table. We were afraid to touch it, so left it there, and went away, but returned in three minutes and found it had been put back again quite safely. We both of us thought the chairs might have been placed there for us to sit and see what was going on. Another time we intend to sit quietly and wait to see these things move through the air. The distance from the fireplace to the table is about ten feet.

I enquired at our morning *séance*, about the little books, and to whom I was to give them. *Answer*: "Use your own judgment." And, again: "One for my sister Frances, look inside." Upon this I opened one of the books, and on the ninth page, middle paragraph, there was a mark in red, as if done by a cretalevis, which was laying on the table. I read this paragraph aloud, immediately, amidst showers of raps. I then said, "How much I should like to have my name written in this little book, and I will keep it as long as I live." It was laying at the time, upon a large account book, open before me; I closed the one within the other, and placed my arm on the cover: in a few seconds I hearh raps, and opened the books, and found my maiden name written in ink, on the fly leaf of the small book. I smiled, and said "Yes, dear brother, you knew me by this name,

but I now bear another name. Will you please write my married name under this?" and shut both books as before.

A person came into the room for a minute, but I did not rise from the table, and after he was gone I looked in the book, and there was my name in full, Christian and surname, written in ink, under the other. The book had never been from under my arm, and was within another thick book. When both these names were written, my friend, Miss N., was sitting all the time opposite to me, and the inkstand and pens between us both.

All these wonderful things, with many others, took place in my house in London, in the first week of December, 1866, all of them in my own room, where no servant or any others of the family came during the day.

These phenomena appear to me rather of a different nature to anything we have heard of or seen at our *séances*. The medium is always supposed to touch or be very close to the articles of furniture moved. My experience seems to prove that after a *séance* where there has been strong medium power, there is sufficient magnetic influence left in the room to give the spirits power to act upon matter (whilst writing this a shower of raps). My friend's power does not seem nearly so strong when we sit with other persons who are anxious to see these wonderful phenomena. Some, though slight mediums themselves, seem to lessen the power rather than strengthen it. On leaving the room empty after a *séance*, there is no counteracting influence at work, and thus the spirits have more power for grand manifestations. We have never had anything so great happen when we were in the room as when we left it for a few minutes.

These wonderful facts I leave to others to investigate who are much more learned than myself. I only feel it is a grand reality.

FRANCES SIMS.

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POSTSCRIPT BY ALFRED R. WALLACE.

ON Friday morning, December 14th, my sister, Mrs. S., had a message, purporting to be from her deceased brother William, to this effect: "Go into the dark at Alfred's this evening, and I will shew that I am with you." On arriving in the evening with Miss N., my sister told me of this message. When our other friends, four in number, had arrived, we sat down as usual, but instead of having raps on the table as on previous occasions, the room and the table shook violently; and, finding we had no other manifestations, I mentioned the message that had been received, and we all adjourned into the next room, and the doors and windows being shut, sat down round a table, (which we had

previously cleared of books, &c.) holding each other's hands. Raps soon began, and we were told to draw back from the table. This we did, but thinking it better to see how we were placed before beginning the *séance*, I rose up to turn on the gas, which was down to a blue point, when just as my hand was reaching it, the medium who was close to me cried out and started, saying that something cold and wet was thrown in her face. This caused her to tremble violently and I took her hand to calm her, and it then struck me, this was done to prevent me lighting the gas. We then sat still, and in a few moments several of the party saw faintly that something was appearing on the table. The medium saw a hand, others what seemed flowers. These became more distinct, and some one put his hand on the table, and said: "There *are* flowers here!" Obtaining a light, we were all thunderstruck to see the table half covered with flowers and fern leaves, all fresh, cold, and damp with dew, as if they had that moment been brought out of the night air. They were the ordinary winter flowers, which are cultivated in hot houses, for table decoration, the stems apparently cut off as if for a bouquet. They consisted of 15 chrysanthemums, 6 variegated anemones, 4 tulips, 5 orange berried solanums, 6 ferns, of two sorts, 1 *Auricula sinensis*, with 9 flowers—37 stalks in all.

All present had been engaged for some time in investigating Spiritualism, and had no motive for deceiving the others, even if that were possible, which all agreed it was not. If flowers had been brought in and concealed by any of the party (who had all been in the warm room at least an hour), they could not possibly have retained the perfect freshness, coldness, and dewy moisture they possessed when we first discovered them. I may mention that the door of the back drawing room (where this happened) into the passage was locked inside, and that the only entrance was by the folding doors into the lighted sitting room, and that the flowers appeared unaccompanied by the slightest sound, while all present were gazing intently at the table, just rendered visible by a very faint diffused light entering through the blinds. As a testimony that all present are firmly convinced that the flowers were not on the table when we sat down, and were not placed there by any of those present, I am authorized to give the names and addresses of the whole party.

Miss NICHOLL, 76½, Westbourne Grove, W.

Mrs. SIMS,

H. T. HUMPHREYS, 1, Clifford's Inn, E.C.

Dr. WILMSHURST, 22, Priory Road, Kilburn, W.

J. MARSHMAN, 11, Gloucester Crescent, N.W.

Mrs. MARSHMAN,

ALFRED R. WALLACE, 9, St. Mark's Crescent, N.W.

## PASSING EVENTS.—THE SPREAD OF SPIRITUALISM.

By BENJAMIN COLEMAN.

NUMEROUS enquiries from readers of the *Spiritual Magazine*, respecting my long silence, assure me that a collection of facts such as I have been accustomed to contribute to its pages is welcome to them. Have you retired from the field? Have you lost faith? Is there nothing new in Spiritualism worth recording? are some of the questions asked of me by my correspondents.

This paper will, to a certain extent, answer these questions, and I have felt (apart from domestic trials which have absorbed my attention) that I have perhaps done enough for the present; that if I, and a few others, who have been fighting the battle of Spiritualism in this country for so many years, at great personal sacrifices, were to rest for a time, it would induce many whose faith is strong but whose action is weak, to arouse themselves, and throwing aside their timidity or diffidence, come to the front and shew the world how many enlightened men and women there really are in England, who know that Spiritualism is a grand and ennobling truth, and that its phenomena are not touched by puerile imitations.

I have been recently assured by one of our leading journalists that Spiritualism finds favour at length with many literary and scientific men in this country; but, unfortunately, we do not see them, we have not yet heard their voices, they are silent when most needed. It is known that almost every journal published in this metropolis has one or more members of its staff who are thoroughgoing believers in Spiritualism, and yet if any public emergency arises they are dumb, and stand by whilst their associates are permitted to wield the pen, to misrepresent the truth, to mislead the public, and to encourage every charlatan in his pretended exposure of spiritual phenomena. How long is this state of things to last, I have asked of one who views with sorrow the position taken by certain members of his craft. "Ah!" he replied, "if you knew as much of the Press as I do, you would know that its tone may be changed in a day, and I think the day is not far distant when Spiritualism will find open advocates in the leading journals of this country." We must therefore, I suppose, stretch our patience; watch and wait, taking consolation in the meantime in the assurance that no *honest* man, whatever his condition of mind may be, saint or sceptic, religious or scientific, who will take the pains to investigate, can withstand the evidence, and who will not at last feel abashed at his previous

ignorance, and at his folly in so long standing out against a truth so cheering and enlightening.

It is thus satisfactory to know, despite all opposition, that Spiritualism is marching on. I know it is, by the number of enquirers who personally seek information from me, and others who communicate their experiences to me. Much that we hear of, however, does not exhibit the best side of Spiritualism, and there is still much that is extremely puzzling even to the initiated; but all is instructive, and most of the facts deserve to be recorded, so that they may be readily classified by the WISE MEN of the *future*—I say future, for it is evident that nothing in elucidation of these mysteries is to be expected from the leading authorities of the present day, who are too deeply committed to the erroneous theories and dogmatic assumptions they have already permitted themselves to promulgate upon this subject. To the new generation, therefore, of thinking men, some of whom we know are now at work,\* we may hopefully look forward for a fair and candid examination of the claims of Spiritualism, so soon as the rule of the *savans*, who have led the public astray, shall be a thing of the past.

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MR. L——, OF NEW YORK.

Although I have received several letters from my friend, Mr. L——, since his departure from England, he has not given me any specific account of his experiences except the one I published in June last, Vol. vii. page 264. He has, however, sent me a letter from Dr. John F. Gray, which I subjoin, and which I think of the highest importance, as in this letter Dr. Gray fully corroborates the wonderful manifestations witnessed by Mr. L——, and recorded by me at various times during the last four or five years. Mr. L——, however, says, "The Doctor is wrong in one remark he makes, which is, that I have permitted our Spiritualistic journals to use my name in connexion with the extracts from my journal. They were in fact re-published in *The Banner of Light* from the *Spiritual Magazine* without my knowledge. I never hesitate to avow my belief and experience; but I do not wish to be dragged before the unappreciative public, and be made a martyr to their stupidity and want of knowledge."

Mr. L—— adds that "Gurney, one of our celebrated photographers has succeeded in taking a spiritual photograph by the magnesium light. As soon as he has completed his experiments

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\* Two Scotch professors have been attentively examining the subject for some time past, and a professor at one of our English universities has determined to write a book in support of the claims of Spiritualism, to which he will attach his name.

I will send you particulars; Miss Kate Fox was the medium; she is well and as good a medium as ever."

With reference to this interesting young lady, Miss Kate Fox, I take this opportunity of saying, that I received a letter from her some few months ago, in which she expressed her willingness to visit England, if I should advise her to do so. But I felt unless she could come to be perfectly independent of the public, it would not be desirable that she should make the visit, and I accordingly dissuaded her from making the visit at that time. Miss Fox is I think, one of the most interesting and reliable of all American mediums, and her presence here would have given great pleasure to myself, and I doubt not to many others. But there were many considerations which obliged me to forego the responsibility, single-handed, of advising her to cross the Atlantic until suitable provision could be made for her reception.

The following is Dr. Gray's letter:—

"New York.

"Dear Sir,—Soon after Mr. C. F. L——'s wonderful success in spirit manifestations was established beyond question here, and even beyond cavil, in 1862-3, I proposed to furnish your publication of his anonymous spiritual diary with my name in support of its credibility. Various considerations have prevented this action till the present time, although I have carefully provided for the preservation of my testimony for such a use in the event of a casualty occurring to prevent my writing to you.

"Mr. L—— has retired from business, in opulent circumstances, and he has permitted our Spiritualistic journals to make him responsible for the publication of the stupendous facts and experiences which you have made known in the London *Spiritual Magazine*. He thought it improper for him to make this avowal till his business relations with others were so completely dissolved as that their credit could not be unjustly impaired by this his act of justice to humanity.

"He likewise took care during the whole interval of this reticence, to have good vouchers of his authorship of the diary kept ready for use, in case of his death. I can only reply to your latest request, that I would write out my testimony in this case for publication, that Mr. L——'s statements are each one and all of them fully reliable. His recitals of the *séances* in which I participated are faithfully and most accurately stated, leaving not a shade of doubt in my mind as to the truth and accuracy of his accounts of those at which I was not a witness. I saw with him the philosopher Franklin in a living, tangible, physical form, several times and on as many different occasions; I also witnessed the production of lights, odours, and sounds; and also the for-

mation of flowers, cloth textures, &c., and their disintegration and dispersion.

"These phenomena, including the apparition of Dr. Franklin, have all been shewn to me, and also many others of like significance, when Mr. L—— was not present and not in this country even.

Mr. L—— is a good observer of spirit phenomena, brave, clear and quick-sighted, void of what is called superstition, perhaps even to a faulty extent; in good health of body and mind, and remarkably insusceptible to human magnetism. Moreover, he knows that all forms of spirit communication are subject to interpolation from earth minds, and are of no other or greater weight than the truths they contain confer upon them.

"Miss Fox, the medium, deported herself with patient integrity of conduct, evidently doing all in her power, at all times, to promote a fair trial and just decision of each phenomenon as it occurred.

"Hereafter, I may, if you desire it, write you at some length on the great question, *cui bono*, of these phenomena; but for the present, and for some months to come, shall forbear for your patience' sake as well as for my own. With best regards,

"I am, my dear Mr. Coleman, yours most truly,

"JOHN F. GRAY."

#### A LADY'S EXPERIENCES IN IRELAND.

The lady from whom I have received the following letters, which I give almost *verbatim*, resides in the county of Dublin, and occupies a good position in society. To many, the strange and somewhat repulsive character of the manifestations may be distasteful. But to the student of Swedenborg, whose writings I infer my correspondent has never read, these spiritual evidences will be intelligible, and are analogous to the "Memorable Relations" contained in various parts of his works:—

"Sir,—You will, I trust, excuse the liberty I, a stranger, take in addressing you, and kindly give me your opinion respecting the strange experiences I am passing through. Your candid and fearless advocacy of Spiritualism has encouraged me to hope that you will assist me with your advice and opinion respecting those singular circumstances which have been puzzling me for more than a year.

"About three years ago, I met with Spicer's *Sights and Sounds*, and the facts related there caused me to look with much interest on Spiritualism, which I had before regarded as an American imposture. William Howitt's work on the *Supernatural*



finished my conversion, and thenceforth, as was natural, I eagerly sought for and read every book I could get which bore on the subject, and I am at present possessed of quite a library of spiritual works, including your *Spiritualism in America* and three years of the *Spiritual Magazine*, which includes a great deal written by yourself on the subject. What puzzles me is, that in all I have read, I have met with no experience like my own. When I began to study the matter, I naturally wished to procure some manifestations for myself, but my family were so averse to the whole subject that I could not form a circle, except for a few minutes, during which the usual laughter and joking precluded the possibility of obtaining any satisfactory result. So I induced a young maid-servant to sit with me alone. After an hour and a half the tippings began, and then the table in a short time tipped the moment we sat down, the girl evidently being the medium. I then tried writing, and in a short time her hand moved freely, but never did we succeed in procuring more than scribbling and a few incoherent sentences. My part now comes. One day we were seated at the table, when my hand and arm were violently caught and swayed to and fro, and I was seized with tremors through my whole body, and had to go to bed, feeling quite ill and bewildered. That night I saw human faces and shadowy figures, both with my eyes open and shut. The vibratory movement remained with me for more than a week, but my sensations were so distressing that I fought with all my might against the influence, and by earnest prayer to Almighty God succeeded in battling it off. From that time I have occasionally seen strange sights, but last summer I began to see human figures—sometimes faces, sometimes what portrait-painters call three-fourth figures, often as large as life, and once a young female figure floating over me as I lay in bed, and smiling down on me. After some time I began to see writing which I never could decipher, and one human face, with my eyes shut—this only at night; but by degrees my visions increased till I saw a number of different scenes and persons; then it went on till I saw with my eyes open when in a dark room, then I saw in the light, and by day as well as by night, finally I habitually *saw*, and still *see*, shadowy figures more or less distinct, when either driving or walking in the dusk. I have lately heard a frequent sound as of persons talking in a suppressed voice, but I can never catch the words, but I sometimes hear words as if spoken *in my head*, but they have no meaning. I sometimes seem to pass into a state for a moment when I have a dim confused consciousness of being some one else; stanzas of poetry have been repeated to me, but I never can remember them, and what puzzles me is, I don't seem to get on; I saw as

plainly months ago as I do now, and although I procure writing (by myself and eldest daughter together holding a pen) we can get nothing satisfactory. If you thought it would be any service to the cause, I would write out some curious things I have experienced. I should not have troubled you, but I have no one to apply to ; night and day I am surrounded with beings invisible to all but me, and voices whispering words I can never catch, for the voices, like the figures, are different ; words seem written on the walls, on different objects, but I cannot distinguish them. From your writings I have formed such an opinion of you, that I venture to hope you will forgive this liberty, and perhaps you would kindly ask some of your spirit-friends what is the meaning of it all, for sometimes I begin to fear it is some hallucination of my own brain. I have no sympathy among my family ; the *two or three* I speak of it to think it *all imagination*, and would not *encourage me in my folly* ; and as to the world in general, they would think me "just fit for Bedlam." If you should think my experiences would interest or benefit any one, I will reveal them hereafter. Apologising for this long letter, I say farewell.

"Your very sincere, though unknown well-wisher,

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"Dear Sir,—Accept my grateful thanks for your prompt answer to my letter. You cannot believe what a relief I feel since you have permitted me to open my mind to you. I feel so puzzled respecting those strange experiences, some account of which I gave you in my former letter. They have been going on so long without becoming in any way more intelligible, and what I think more strange than any thing is, that although we procure the 'tippings' freely, and even have had communications by writing, and although I am always surrounded by spirits, they are never professedly among those who communicate. I sometimes begin to think it some projection from my own brain, and that I am getting some disorder—but, whenever that thought takes possession of me, all appearances leave me for a time, but only for a very short time. I am really at loss how to begin ; it is a true *embarras de richesse* ; as I wish to be brief, so as not needlessly to intrude on your valuable time, and I want as much as possible to relate only those things that appear to me to differ from what others have told. To begin then :—I am frequented by different descriptions of 'spirits,' as I will call them for shortness. There is one class that seem from their appearance to have been desperate sinners on this earth ; some with human countenances, but with their faces covered with a veil of fresh blood hanging about an inch from their faces, and their eyes with an indescribable

look of deadness and corruption, the eyeball appearing of the color and consistency of dead coal, and round that a ring of blood: those I have been told were murderers; some are perfectly black, of negro blackness, but their features of European type: the eyes of these last seem lighted up as with internal fire and have a rim like blood; there are others with black spots covering some part of their faces, sometimes like a net-work covering the entire; some on near inspection seem to have another face apparently transparent, which hangs like a mask within an inch or so of the real countenance; others again have the upper part human, and the lower elongates into a beast's snout; sometimes others of these semi-human faces end in a round blunt muzzle full of teeth. All these strange forms circle round me, often accompanied with scenery, sometimes magnificent chambers, splendid public buildings, or streets of a city—or perhaps forest scenes—or the sea-side, and they are always changing, softly gliding into each other, or melting into new forms like dissolving views; but whatever may be the vision, it is always accompanied, in fact *tapestried* (if I may be permitted the word), by a strange-looking thing like a moss, or lichen, and resembling the flower of the hemlock more than anything I have ever seen; the faces are very often framed, as it were, in it, and some of them I have seen, as it were, buried under an enormous weight of it, and looking as if they suffered from pressure. There are many others who have human countenances, and some that I have grown familiar with, recognizing them as I would an earthly friend. But I am never alone; whenever I shut my eyes I see myself surrounded by this shadowy company; and what is strange is, that daylight in no degree interferes with my seeing them as it used to do—on the contrary, it often assists my vision, as does also bright candle-light: all bright surfaces reflect those scenes, and when out in the evening or night, I see shadowy figures walking up towards me, or faces looking from the bushes, or even the sky; the only difference in them is, that sometimes they are distinct and the figures large; at others, they dwindle to the smallest size. I also see objects in the dark, and curious flashes of light in all parts of the room, and often a working of a luminous body from the centre; I see lights emanating from my fingers. And now, what astonishes me is, that there is no explanation—no effort made by any intelligence to explain these mysteries, although those 'spirits' will constantly approach my bed and gaze upon me, and during the day will be close before me when I shut my eyes; and I can even see their shadowy outlines wherever I look—they make no effort to communicate by writing, or through the table. And when I ask at the table, does the

communicating spirit know anything of these manifestations, they invariably deny doing so, nor can we obtain any satisfactory communication from them; in fact, at the end of a year we have progressed nothing: this has greatly disappointed and annoyed me."

"As I have a family of grown-up sons whom I would gladly impress with Christian Spiritualism, and although at first they were interested at seeing the writing procured by my eldest daughter and myself, by means of a *planchette* of my own construction, the meagreness of the phenomena, and the meanness and unreliable character of the communications, disgusted them, and they turned their backs on it. This has the more annoyed me, as, though they are all good, moral and sincere believers in the Bible, I would wish them to be thoroughly convinced that *sin is hell*, and that *retribution is certain*.

"I appear to be latterly undergoing some process with regard to my hearing, as I frequently hear as if persons were speaking either in my ear or at some distance from me. I also hear words, as I have said, as if spoken in my head, but they are always irrelevant and meaningless. I have seen for a moment seven persons now dead, but whom I knew well; the other figures I have spoken of are strangers apparently, but some of them I could not recognize, of course, even if I knew them, in their awful masquerade.

"How shall I apologize for the length of this letter? I can but say again that your own writings, and the manner you seem to be looked up to, encourage me, as did your noble and manly standing forth for the truth, and your unflinching support of the cause you have championed. Woman as I am, I would scorn to disavow my belief, although, being a woman, my place is the background, which I in nowise deplore; but I honour every one who is truthful, courageous and manly, and therefore I selected you for the reception of my confidences.

"Long as my letter has been, I find myself obliged to add these few words. In the first place, I *suffer*, and think it likely I am an undeveloped medium, and that were these faculties within me opened, I might feel differently. I must add that I have been affected with heart complaint these many years; also, that there is an entirely different class of spirits I often see, clothed in robes of light. In addition to all this, I am greatly afraid of *possession*, although I have ever found earnest prayer, including the spirits, and addressing them as sentient beings, has been sufficient to free me from their presence.

"Yours, &c.

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## A CLERGYMAN'S VIEW OF GOOD AND EVIL SPIRITS.

The foregoing narrative may be fitly supplemented by an extract from one of several letters addressed to me by a clergyman of the Church of England, who has seen much of Spiritualism and is a confirmed believer, whilst he remains steadfast to orthodox Christianity.

"Dr. Maitland told you that his chief reason for believing that the spirits who visit us are not departed spirits, is founded on what he finds in the New Testament. My opinion is, that the first two verses of the 12th of Hebrews, belong manifestly to the 11th chapter, and are a continuation of the narrative, and that the cloud of witnesses are the spirits of those men departed in faith, who, Hebrews like themselves, were then compassing about St. Paul, and those to whom he wrote, and anxiously watching their progress or retrogression in that faith which had proved so beneficial to themselves. "Wherefore," he says, "for the reason that we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, so many good men who died in faith, now witnessing our lives, let us lay aside, &c." This is my view, if not Dr. Maitland's when he wrote to you. Has that good man now found he was right? I think not. Let me conclude with one more remark:—we know well that good spirits visit us; but, alas! it is I fear equally clear that evil spirits do so likewise; for "lying spirits" have not been confined to the days of King Ahab, but have always been a great reality. They are permitted by God for his own wise purpose, now as then, when Ahab by the advice of one, went up to Ramoth Gilead. "We wrestle not, &c." But to say that, because evil spirits speak to men now as well as good openly, modern Spiritualism is altogether an evil thing, cannot I think come from the Spirit of Good. I doubt much if the Spirit of Evil is well pleased with "Modern Spiritualism." For all who believe the Scriptures, and most who do not, know that evil spirits have *secret* power. Is then the coming of evil spirits to men openly a proof of their greater power than when they come only secretly? Surely not, for an open enemy is always less dangerous than a secret one. And now, "By their works shall ye *know* them." "By their words are they justified, and by their words condemned." And by learning to condemn these openly, we learn to condemn those who come in secret also. And now, after repeating what I said to you once before, that I believe the phenomena of the present day are on the whole for our good, considering my position, I am impressed to speak certain short words of comfort I personally feel with regard to to my own church. They tell me, that God "has purchased to Himself an Universal Church." And we also pray that the

Holy Church *Universal* may be ruled and governed in the right way. And after being told that God the Son is the Redeemer of the world, in another place "that He hath redeemed me and all mankind," we are taught to pray that as such, He will *not* be angry with us, mankind, *for ever*."

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THE LATE JAMES WILSON, M.D.

My friend Dr. Jas. Wilson, of Malvern, has suddenly passed to the spirit world. Like too many others who have been educated and have practised in the school of medicine, he became at an early age an entire sceptic, and a confirmed disbeliever in a future life; about 12 years ago, however, I had the satisfaction of turning his attention to a consideration of the truths of Spiritualism, and from that period by slow degrees he advanced step by step, until he ultimately realized its consolatory teachings, and became a devout and even an enthusiastic believer. Dr. Wilson was widely known and eminently successful as a hydropathic doctor, and in conjunction with Dr. Gully, he succeeded against all opposition in making the water treatment a recognized remedy in this country for the cure of disease. He skilfully and successfully treated a case, with a member of my family, pronounced by several of the leading medical men of London as hopeless. I take this opportunity of recording that fact and my affectionate gratitude as a tribute to his memory.

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LONDON JOURNALISM.—THE "PALL MALL GAZETTE."

The following very excellent letter was addressed by a friend of mine to the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. The editor, of course, could not comply with my friend's request to be informed how he had arrived at the conclusion that spirit-rapping was a baseless imposture! but he could have published the letter; he, however, for very obvious reasons, did not, and I therefore think it desirable to supply his default.

"To the Editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

"20th December, 1866.

"*Spirit-Rapping and Confession*.

"Sir,—I am much pleased with the moderate and well-considered judgment which, in your paper of yesterday, you pass upon the interesting controversy on the subject of Confession. I am happy to think that most free and independent minds will ratify your decision, and thank you for the ability displayed in it.

"I observe that in speaking of the powers of the clergy, and their claim to divine authority, you say—'If such a claim is

not founded on fact; if it is a superstition and an imposture as baseless as witchcraft or spirit-rapping, it can hardly be too severely denounced.'

"I have been for several years making some investigations of the alleged phenomena of spirit-rapping, and I had intended to continue them. If, however, you have completed the investigation so far as to have proved them to be baseless and an imposture, you will confer a great favour on me, and save much valuable time to me and others, by kindly informing your readers to what extent they may rely upon your having made such an exhaustive analysis of the alleged phenomena, as to justify the conclusion you have expressed.

"Your obt. servt.,

"W."

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#### A LIFE SAVED BY A PRESENTIMENT.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* of Thursday, December 20th, in giving an account of a fatal accident on the Metropolitan Railway—an iron girder having fallen on the last carriage of a Great Western down train, by which three persons were killed and several severely injured—makes the following statement:—"At the time of the accident, there were in the compartment of the carriage in which Mrs. Johnson sat, two gentlemen; all three are now dead. A third gentleman got into the same compartment at Moorgate Street (the station immediately before that at which the accident occurred) and sat down. He states that a presentiment of misfortune came over him, and he rose, and, apologizing to the lady for troubling her to allow him to pass, left the carriage, and went to one in the fore part of the train. This, of course, saved his life."

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#### "MRS. SURRETT'S HOUSE IS HAUNTED."

A Washington correspondent of the *Boston Post* states that the building which belonged to Mrs. Surratt, who was executed as one of the conspirators in the assassination of President Lincoln (and since believed to be entirely innocent), and in which she was apprehended, is now haunted. The story runs as follows:—

"In the course of settlement of her estate, the house in question was offered for sale, and even then the public seemed shy and indifferent to the purchase, and so it came that a property, worth by moderate comparison ten thousand dollars, fell under the hammer at the insignificant sum of 4,600. The new landlord therefore instituted such improvements as completely changed the aspect of the property, and all but transferred its site, and in the course of time came a tenant; but not to remain.

In less than six weeks the lessee had flown from beneath the roof, forfeited his year's rental, and was ready to swear, with chattering teeth, that his nervous system was shattered for a lifetime. Others succeeded to the occupancy of the house he had vacated, in turn to make a shuddering exit. Mrs. Surratt's house is *haunted*. There can be no reasonable doubt upon the subject. She herself persists in treading its halls, and perambulating the premises, in the dead of night, clad in those self-same robes of serge in which she suffered the penalty of the law. In costume she differs from the 'Woman in White' unmistakably, but that the general effect is none the less thrilling and altogether fatal to the composure of the observer, is positively averred by each successive occupant of the mansion."

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#### A ROMISH PRIEST ON POSSESSION.

"Two of the leading clergy of Paris, M. Coquerel, and Mr. Archer Gurney, an Anglican, are preaching against the doctrine of eternal punishment. I was dining the other day in company with a Roman Catholic priest, and he spoke slightly of these gentlemen on account of their holding such opinions. Speaking of a spirit-circle he had lately attended, he said that a lady there, who *pretended* to be a writing medium, suddenly became cataleptic, the pencil was dashed out of her hand, and she exclaimed, 'There is a priest here who could do me good.' I said, 'Then I hope you endeavoured to help her against the spirit which possessed her.' He said, 'Not I; do you think I was going to encourage such nonsense?' 'Don't you think,' I replied, 'that had Jesus been present he would have tried to do her good? Did He not dispossess people of evil spirits?' 'Yes, but these things have now ceased.' 'How do you know?' 'The age of miracles has passed.' 'Indeed! Then what did Christ intend when he said, "Greater works than these shall ye do?"' Whereupon the priest lost his temper, and persisted that eternal punishment was a great act of justice. So I told him of Frederick the Great's proclamation when this controversy was agitated—'This is to give notice to all my faithful people, that any one is at perfect liberty to be d—d himself, if such be his taste; but he is positively forbidden, on pain of my eternal displeasure, to insist that others shall be d—d with him.'"

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#### THE DAVENPORTS IN RUSSIA.

Mr. Robert Cooper, of Eastbourne, writes:—"To-day (January 16) I have received a letter from Ira Davenport, informing me of their 'great and unprecedented success' in St. Petersburg. The prices are very high, and yet at the first



*séance* hundreds of the nobility were unable to gain admission. They have exhibited at the palace before the Emperor and family. 'The Crown Prince and Princess Dagmar thanked us very cordially, and asked us many questions.' The manifestations on this occasion were very powerful and gave great satisfaction. Long and exciting reports have appeared in all the journals. They have also given a private *séance* to the French ambassador. They propose going to Moscow. This is the substance of the letter, on which I thought you might like to make a note for the magazine, as I think it well to keep our friends informed of the doings of the Davenports."

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SPIRITUALISM IN SCOTLAND.

THE GLASGOW ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS has just published a Report, in which is given a clear and very interesting history of the origin and proceedings of the Association, with accounts of some of the spiritual phenomena witnessed in Glasgow.\*

This report (in which the rules and constitution of the Association, and the names, fifteen in number, of their officers, are given) is the best evidence of the sincerity of our Northern friends, and of their determination to disseminate and uphold their convictions, and is in every way worthy of the imitation of other communities. It is the least objectionable form of organization, membership being open to all who acknowledge the reality of the phenomena of modern Spiritualism. The objects of the Association, as expressed in the report, "being to collect facts, to aid enquiries, and by means of lectures, reports of circles, readings, &c., to spread a knowledge of the truths of Spiritualism, with a view of opposing the materialism of the age and of confirming the mind in a belief of a future state.†

These worthy truth-seekers say at the close of their address, "We have a mission in Glasgow to fulfil. Let us bend all our energies towards its accomplishment, and rest not satisfied until we have led all around us to the realization of the fact, that

"There is no death—what seems so is transition;  
This life of mortal breath  
Is but a suburb of the life Elysian,  
Whose portal we call death."

Mr. David Duguid, whose drawings I described in a former paper, has realized the promise made by his spirit teachers, and

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\* To be had of Mr. HAY NISBET, Printer, Glasgow; and Mr. J. BURNS, Camberwell. Price 3d.

† A Library has also been started, to which I have no doubt contributions of all books bearing upon Spiritualism and kindred subjects will be thankfully received, and which may be sent to Mr. JAMES LOGAN, 150, Upper Crown Street, Glasgow.

has now produced a series of oil paintings of more or less excellence, under conditions which preclude the possibility of deception. He takes his seat in a circle of some six or eight persons, and in a few minutes becomes deeply entranced, with his eyes fast closed. Immediately after the usual recognition of his spirit friends, Ruysdael and Jan Steen, he takes up his palettes and brushes, and works away for an hour and a half, sometimes with the gas lowered to the faintest light, and sometimes *entirely in the dark*. Mr. Duguid, it will be recollected, is a working man, who knows nothing of the art of drawing and painting.

These painting manifestations, I am told, are exciting great interest in Glasgow, and having been witnessed by a great number of persons of all grades of society, are tending to make more converts to Spiritualism than anything that has yet occurred in Scotland.

The medium, P. A., whose extraordinary experiences I have recorded, having left Scotland, nothing more has been heard of him; but from several sources I have received corroborative testimony as to the reality of those marvellous manifestations attributed to his mediumship, and from a letter in my possession received by a friend of mine some months ago, written to him by Mr. James Fowler, with whom I am personally acquainted, and who is a highly respectable man, I make the following extract:—"The Glasgow parties mentioned in the *Spiritual Magazine* are intimate friends of mine. I have seen a good deal of the manifestations; but some things have been so fearful, and to my mind infernal, that I have lately refused to go to any more of their *séances*. I have heard the spirits speaking out loud, so that all in the room heard them. They have kindled a spirit fire for us in one corner of the room. They have opened the door for a friend before we knew he was at the door. One of the spirits very frequently speaks to an old lady during the day without any *séance* at all. My male friend has been carried away frequently, I believe, but never when I was present."

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#### THE "DOUBLE," OR APPARITION OF THE LIVING.

In one of my former papers to this Journal, Vol. vi., p. 127, I suggested the probability that as the phenomenon of the DOPPLE-GANGER, or "DOUBLE," was an established fact, many of the manifestations which we have been accustomed to attribute to the spirits of departed persons, may be effected by the spirits or "double" of the living. And whilst this hypothesis would explain many apparent difficulties and suspicion of imposture on the part of mediums, it would establish the Spiritualistic faith of inter-communion between the two worlds; inasmuch, as if our

own double or spirit in the flesh can dis sever itself and assume a tangible form, possessing a force or power over matter, so may the spirit of a departed person do the same, and probably much more.

This theory I find receives acceptance from many, and in a paper read by Mr. Etchels, of Huddersfield, at the meeting of the BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF PROGRESSIVE SPIRITUALISTS\* in July last, some highly interesting facts are stated in support of it. I commend to my readers a perusal of the pamphlet in which this and other valuable statements appear, and ask their attention to the thought which has passed through my mind, as to the bearing which this mysterious power of the "double" of living persons to appear in distant places, has upon the KARDEC school of Spiritualists—the RE-INCARNATIONISTS.

In France the most numerous body of Spiritualists are followers of Allen Kardec, who is, I believe, an earnest and highly intelligent man; and though there are but very few, either in this country or in America, who are disposed to accept his doctrine—namely, that the spirits of departed persons are re-incarnated and live many lives in other bodies—yet there must be cogency in the reasoning which commands so many intelligent followers in France, and therefore I feel bound to treat the doctrine with respect, though I am entirely unable to accept it as an article of my Spiritualistic faith.

I have been told by more than one person who knew nothing of the Re-incarnation theory, that they have upon visiting certain localities for the first time in their normal conditions, viewed surrounding objects as if they—the persons, had been familiar with them, the idea being impressed that they had visited the spot on some former occasion, though under what circumstances, since they were certain they had not been there in their natural bodies, they were unable to determine. One case was thus described to me :—

A gentleman had occasion to seek an interview with a lawyer of old standing in the city of London, and whilst waiting in an outer office, he was surprised to find that the quaint old-fashioned arrangements of the place were familiar to him, though he was certain he had never been there before. Upon being ushered into the lawyer's private room, he was confirmed in his first impressions, especially recognizing an old engraving which hung over the fireplace. Stating his difficulty and surprise at the strangeness of his position, he asked leave of the lawyer to take down the framed engraving, on the back of which he said he recollected to have read the written history of the subject, naming it at the same time. The picture was accordingly taken down,

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\* Published by J. BURNS, Wellington-road, Camberwell; Price 6d.

and the visitor was startled at the corroborative evidence afforded him by the fact, that the exact words he had just used were actually written there as he had described them. This gentleman had no theory to offer; he was perplexed with the fact, but to him it was an inexplicable mystery.

Now I believe that similar incidents are mentioned by M. Kardec, and they are received by the Re-incarnationists as proof that the spirit, or living indestructible intelligence, had at some former period occupied another body.

But if we can satisfy ourselves that the "double" of a living person can present itself at places distant from the natural body—and of this fact there is most ample evidence upon record—we have, I think, a much more satisfactory explanation of those instances of revived memory than is offered us by Kardec's theory, which, whether tenable or not, is at least unnecessary.

M. Kardec is, however, an earnest Spiritualist; not less so is my friend Mr. Howitt, who spurns the doctrine of the Re-incarnationists, and whilst denouncing priestcraft—*not priesthood*—upholds the divinity of Christ and the inspiration of the Bible. On the other hand, Andrew Jackson Davis and his numerous followers in America, and the school of *Progressive Spiritualists* in this country, all conscientious and truth-loving men and women, as I believe, not only condemn all sectarianism, but are entirely Anti-Christian in their teachings. At the same time, we know many Spiritualists who are followers of Emanuel Swedenborg, some who are Unitarians, and others who are devout Roman Catholics.

Amidst all this diversity of religious belief, it is certain that Spiritualism belongs to no *one* creed, and that the motto of this Magazine describes its true nature and aim—namely, "that it is based on the cardinal fact of spirit communion and influx; it is the effort to discover all truth relating to man's spiritual nature, capacities, relations, duties, welfare and destiny," &c. Those, therefore, who accept this definition are Spiritualists, to whatever denomination of religionists they may belong. Hence the undesirableness of attempting the organization of a Spiritualistic Church, with any prescribed formula of religious belief. From such a church a large body who believe in "spirit communion" would most probably dissent, and thus the great truth would be lost sight of in the discord of distracting elements.

The time may come, however, when, through the inter-communion of the two worlds, and the opening out of "man's spiritual nature," *all* differences will be reconciled, and a broad CHURCH UNIVERSAL be established, in which the children of God, brought into one fold, may be led from it into the ROYAL ROAD which leads to THE KINGDOM OF OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN.

## SPIRITUAL JOURNALISM IN FRANCE.

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“LA VERITE.”—“REVUE SPIRITUALISTE.”

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THE French Spiritual Journals here named continue to be conducted in the very able and satisfactory manner which has always distinguished them. The *La Verité* of Lyons always contains articles of the very first class, such as concern the fundamental principles of Spiritualism, and which are thoughtfully and forcibly written, with a degree of learning and of candour most praiseworthy. *La Verité*, edited by the amiable and deeply-read M. Eldoux, has lately had a series of excellent papers shewing the extent to which Spiritualism has insinuated itself amongst the Magnetists, and compelled them to make avowals which must greatly have astonished their readers. We purpose shortly to refer more particularly to these articles. The same Journal is now giving a series of articles on Spiritual Healers, and has furnished us with much information on the extraordinary cures of Prince Hohenloe, so much talked of about the time of the visit of the “Holy Allies” to London at the end of the great war. This is information for which we have been some time seeking. Another valuable series of articles in *La Verité* is “A Defence of Spiritualism against its Detractors,” in which the writer most completely condemns these detractors out of their own mouths. Le Marquis de Mirville receives a thorough sifting in these masterly papers. In a recent article the writer quotes from Allan Kardec some very excellent arguments in reply to those who denounce as evil, communicating spirits, which we think our readers will like to hear:—

## IS IT THE DEVIL?

“There are, you say, guardian angels; but when these guardian angels cannot make themselves understood by the mysterious voice of conscience or inspiration, why, we ask, should they not employ a means of action more direct and more material—the action of nature—to strike the senses, since such means exist? Does God then, from whom everything proceeds, and without whose permission nothing can happen, place these means only at the disposition of evil spirits, and refuse them to the good? Why should we conclude that he gives greater facilities to demons to destroy, than he gives to guardian angels to save them!

“Well, then! that which the angels cannot do, according to the Church, the devils do for them. By the help of these said communications, called by the clergy infernal, they attract to

God those who deny Him, and those who were plunged into evil. They present us with the strange spectacle of millions of men who believe in God through the power of the devil, whom the Church has been unable to convert. What numbers of men in the present day who never prayed before, pray fervently, thanks to the instructions of these same demons ! What numbers do we see who were proud, egotistical, and debauched, who are become humble, charitable, and less sensual ; and they tell us that all this is the work of the devils ! If this be true, we must admit that the devils have rendered them a great service, and have aided more effectually than the angels. We must have a very poor opinion of the judgment of the men of this age, to be able to believe that they can accept blindly such ideas. A religion which makes its corner-stone of such a doctrine, which declares that you sap its foundations if you take away its base, its devils, its hell, its eternal damnation, and its pitiless God, is a religion which commits suicide on itself." Grand words on which every one ought to meditate deeply.

"God," they say "who has sent Christ to save man, has he not proved his love for his creatures, and has he left them without protection ? Without doubt, Christ is the divine Messiah sent to teach men the truth, and to shew them the good way ; but since his personal presence count the number of those who have not had it in their power to hear the words of truth ; how many have died, and how many will die without that knowledge—and of those who have heard, how few have put their knowledge into practice ? Wherefore then, shall not God, in his solicitude for the salvation of his children, send them other messengers who shall traverse the whole earth, penetrating into the most humble abodes, entering amongst the great and the little, the incredulous as well as the believing, to teach the truth to those ignorant of it ; to enable those to comprehend it who comprehend it not ; to supply by their teaching the advent of an efficient propagation of the Gospel ; and thus to hasten the advent of the reign of God ? And when these messengers arrive in throngs innumerable, opening their eyes to the light, converting the impious, healing the sick, consoling the afflicted by the example of Jesus, you repel them ; you repudiate the good that they do, and denounce them as demons." Such was the language of the Pharisees regarding Christ, for they also said that he did good by the power of the devil. And what did he answer them ? "You shall know the tree by its fruits ; for a bad tree cannot bring forth good fruit."

Amongst other valuable articles in *La Verité*, are copious specimens of the spiritual contents of the Kabbala. Amongst announcements of the decease of eminent Spiritualists, we are

surprised at that of M. D'Ambel, the editor of *L' Avenir*, whom we always have imagined a man in the prime of life, and his death appears equally to have surprised the editor of *La Verité*.

"REVUE SPIRITUALISTE"—ROCKING STONES.

M. Piérart, in the *Revue Spiritualiste*, marches on undauntedly under immense discouragements, and maintains the warfare for pure Christian Spiritualism with a spirit of fortitude, and an amount of learned research, which deserve the highest admiration, and what is equally essential, encouragement. No spiritual journal, that we are aware of, contains a greater mass of most valuable articles on all topics that concern our own peculiar faith. The eight volumes already completed, are a library of spiritual knowledge in all its departments, and in its soundest form, and ought to be on the shelves of every Spiritualist who values the labours which establish our sternly combatted faith, and who desires to have within reach a fund of information, on which to draw on any occasion when truth demands support.

Amongst topics which have enriched past volumes, M. Piérart has expended extensive research in putting before us the extraordinary powers of Eastern Spiritualists of holding red-hot iron in their hands, of applying it to their tongues with impunity, of sticking daggers through their cheeks, and of the wounds healing again directly, with many other such marvels. In the current number he is continuing this subject by an enquiry into the reality of the ordeals of the middle ages. In the progress of the materialization of the public mind, it has come to be set down as a settled and patent fact, that the ordeals were a piece of priestly or state jugglery; that by some preparation, known to what are called the dark ages, but which is lost in this light and scientific age, the persons undergoing the ordeal were enabled to tread on red-hot ploughshares or plunge their hands and arms into boiling lead or oil, unharmed. The fact, however, is that the decline of the ordeal was in exact proportion to the decline of faith. In the simple ages, when faith was strong, and the scathing east-wind of scepticism was almost unknown, such demonstrations of the power of mind over matter were as common as other examples of what were called miracles. As faith decayed, the spiritual force which disarmed matter of its injurious action was undermined, and the power to triumph over fire or water was gone, exactly as the power to heal the sick, to raise the dead, to cast out devils, had gone also. That such powers existed, and in some forms were frequent, is one of the best attested facts of history. As little is to be doubted the efficacy of the ordeal through the course of many ages, and over the breadth of many countries. So far from trickery, or the defensive

powers of chemical preparations being able to account for the escape of many celebrated persons from injury in the ordeal, M. Piérart shews, from clear historical evidences, that every possible precaution was taken to prevent any such means of impunity.

On preparation for the ordeal, those about to undergo it went through a course of fasting and prayer of three days. Their hands and feet were washed, their nails were cut close, lest any preparation should be concealed under them which would prevent burning. Their hands or feet, whichever were about to be exposed to the ordeal, were then carefully wrapped in a linen or silken bandage, which was sealed with the seal of the prince or noble before whom the ordeal was to take place. Immediately before proceeding to the trial, these bandages were removed and the hands or feet were washed again. Yet, notwithstanding such proceedings, numerous persons of distinction, princesses and even bishops, walked over the red-hot iron untouched by its terrible heat.

Ordeal seems to have been in use in almost every country. In India, amongst the Calmuck Tartars; in Constantinople till a very late period of the lower Roman Empire. George Pachymere, who wrote the life of Michael Paleologus and his son Andronicus, says that he witnessed with astonishment in his youth, accused persons who took hold on red-hot iron without receiving any evil effect from it. We know that the Mosaic law instituted an ordeal in the water of jealousy. David evidently referred to the burning ordeal, when in his Psalms he said:—"Igne me examinasti et non inventa est in me iniquitas." Paul, in the first epistle to the Corinthians, ii, 15, does the same where he says that a man "shall be saved, yet so as by fire."

The custom was in use by the Druids, amongst the ancient Persians, and in every country where the Christian faith prevailed from the fifth to the eleventh century. The form of the ordeal was various. There was the ordeal by fire, namely, by walking over burning ploughshares or other heaps of ignited iron, or by having to take red-hot iron bars in the hand. If the fire took effect the person was held condemned by God; if he or she escaped, it was accepted as a clear proof of innocence. Many such cases are recorded by the earlier historians of Europe; and the prescriptions of such ordeals are found in the codes of laws of the Gauls, the Franks, the Burgundians, the Lombards, the Visigoths; and in the Carolingian Capularies, Mary of Arragon, wife of the Emperor Otho III., having accused a young Count of improper advances, the Emperor put him to death, but the widow of the Count demanded the ordeal or a test of his innocence, and held a blazing bar of iron in her



hands unhurt, whereupon the Emperor had the Empress burnt alive, and recompensed the brave Countess by the gift of four castles. Cunegunde, the wife of Henry II., successor to Otho III., demanded the ordeal in vindication of her innocence, and walked with naked feet over nine burning ploughshares unhurt. Numbers of such cases might be quoted from our old Saxon historians, like that of Emma the wife of King Ethelred.

Another form of the fiery ordeal prevalent in ancient Scandinavia and Germany called the Ketilgang, or Ketiltak, similar to that in use amongst the ancient Persians, as shewn by the Zend Avesta, was by plunging the hand into a vessel of boiling oil or water and bringing up a ring or pebble lying in it. In Semaud's Edda we have a famous example of this when Gudrun, the widow of Sigurd, then married to Attila, triumphantly in the face of the court and army, draws unscathed the green pebbles from the boiling cauldron, while her accusers were frightfully burnt by the same proof. About the year 860, Queen Theutberga, wife of the Emperor Lothaire, vindicated her innocence in the same manner.

Another form of ordeal was the cold water test. In this trial the accused, after a course of prayer, fastings, attendance at mass where God was invoked to declare the truth, and after taking the sacrament, led to the brink of a deep water, bound hand and foot, and having a rope fastened round his body, the end of which was held by those on land, was thrown in. If he swam, he was declared guilty; if he sank, he was immediately pulled out and discharged as innocent. This form was afterwards a frequent one in cases of alleged witchcraft.

An ordeal, however, which has been little noted, was that by the Rocking-Stone. These stones which themselves have excited the curiosity of antiquaries, though their uses have been little understood, are everywhere to be found where the Druidical system once prevailed. They are found in all the countries from the east westward, through which the Druids and the Celtic natives, to whom they belonged, moved towards Europe, and in every part of Europe where they established their dominion. The rolling-rock or stone, consists of a stupendous mass of rock balanced on a small point or pivot, upon a natural rock generally standing high. Some of these oscillating rocks are of many tons weight; the celebrated one at the Land's End, in Cornwall, weighs twenty-two tons. A slight agitation with the hand puts them into vibration, whilst a strong push makes them stand immovable. Such rolling-stones are mentioned by ancient authors as existing at Balbek, where they were greatly venerated, as well as the Betyles or Ærolithes, which were held sacred; and

which Sanconiathon, the Phenician historian, contemporary with Moses, attributed to the god Cœlus or Ouranas—heaven. The Egyptians, Phenicians and Canaanites, all used and vaticinated by these rocking-stones—see Bryant and Stukeley. In the *Poem of the Stones*, attributed to Orpheus, and in the *Myriobiblon* of Photius, in Pliny, Apollonius of Rhodes, and other classic authors we find accounts of them. Such stones are yet found in the Pyrenees, in Belgium, at Sivry; near the summit of Mount Jumont (Jupiter) exists one. At Pont-le-Voy in the arrondissement of Blois remains one, called the Stone of Midnight, because it was said to shew miraculous power at that hour on Christmas Eve. Ireland had anciently its celebrated one, Lia-Fail, and in that island as well as in Scotland and its bordering isles, remain many such. In Sussex there used to be one called Upon-Little, that is, a great stone on a small one, which weighed a million of pounds. The soldiers of Cromwell destroyed a famous one near Balvaird, the city of the Druids, which is described by Roger Sibbald in his *History of Fife and Kinross*. In the Western Isles, in Scotland, these are called Clacha-Brath, or stones of judgment, from their being used as tests of guilt or innocence; or the Gabba-bhiel, or proof of fire. These rocking-stones are found in various parts of England. The Logan Rock, we have already mentioned, at the Land's End; at Golcar, in Yorkshire, are, or were others; those of Stanton Moor, in Derbyshire, called the Rollock Rocks, are well known. In France, numerous rocking stones are found in the department of Mainè-et-Loire, between Montfauçon and St. Germain; at Cros, on the Clermont Road, on Mont Dore, is one measuring twenty-one feet in its longest direction, as well as many others mentioned by the local historians, and adverted to by M. Piérart. In Massachusetts, in the United States of America, and in Mexico, as described by Dupaix in his antiquities of that country, similar ones have been found, some of them of enormous dimensions.

We have long been convinced that the rocking-stones not only played a conspicuous part in the religious ceremonies of the Druids, but that they are deemed oracular, and that Spiritualism could throw a new light upon their uses. This persuasion has been fully confirmed by the researches of M. Piérart, into the remains of Druidical knowledge collected and preserved by the Welsh and the Bretons in France. We have there full proof that the Druids appealed to them, as the Israelites did to the Urim and Thummim, and that they moved under such appeals to the Divinity, not only in cases of ordeal, but in all cases where divine oracular responses were sought for.

The sceptical mind of to-day will satisfy itself on this head,

by simply treating the use of these stones as a piece of priestly jugglery. What so easy as for the officiating Druid to rock one of these stones with his hand, and tell the ignorant multitude that a spirit moved it? But it does not appear that the officiating Druid even touched the stone; he stood aloft before it, and made a solemn invocation to the Deity. All eyes could see him and his every movement; nor does there appear a trace on any of these stones of a fastening for a concealed cord, or anything else by which they could be acted upon secretly. The things which we have so often seen with our own eyes in these days take away all difficulty of belief in a spiritual action in these curious stones, under appeals so solemn and so natural. They are no more wonderful than a dozen different material manifestations of this present age, familiar all over Europe, Asia, and America. That they might be, occasionally, fraudulently employed by priestcraft, is just as likely as the same frauds perpetrated in the miracles of Popery; but in themselves, as part of a fixed and well-extended faith, in a time and amongst a people who relied solemnly on the presence and the sympathy of heavenly power, they have, judged by what *we* have seen and known, all the evidences of a religious machinery based on the actual experience of those who so long used them. The more we examine the various sacred practices of mankind, in any quarter of the earth, the more we are satisfied that the reign of ancient faith, so far from being a reign of empty superstition, was one of powerful realities, and of an alliance with the ministries of the invisible world only just now beginning to re-assert itself against the proud ignorance of a mere material development. We must thank M. Piérart for the addition which he has made to our spiritual knowledge in these very curious and valuable researches.

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OPENING OF THE SPIRITUAL ATHENÆUM.—The opening Meeting of the Spiritual Athenæum took place on Friday evening, January 4. Mr. S. C. Hall, F.S.A., opened the Meeting by an excellent introductory address. A brief paper by Dr. Gully was read; and Mr. D. D. Home Lyon lectured on, and described "Spiritual Drawings," a number of which, by various persons, were laid on the tables. The remainder of the evening was occupied by conversation concerning the prospects and progress of Spiritualism. The meeting was well attended, and highly gratifying to all who took part in it.

## A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF DR. JUSTINUS KERNER.

(Author of "*The Seeress of Prevorst*," &c., &c.)

### PART I.

I know him by that ample brow,  
Of sense and wit a mighty world ;  
That hair which yet defies the snow,  
In ringlets o'er his shoulders curled.  
Those classic traits, that noble mien,  
That mantle, grace in every fold,  
Suggesting that it hides within  
A form robust, of oak-like mould.

(Lines written by Captain Medwin in 1849, underneath  
a portrait of Justinus Kerner, drawn by the daughter-  
in-law of the latter.)

"The most prominent figure in the spiritual circle of Germany is Dr. Justinus Kerner."—*Howitt's History of the Supernatural*.

DR. JUSTINUS KERNER has been so frequently mentioned in the *Spiritual Magazine* as an apostle of the spiritual faith in Germany, and his labours in the investigation of the science of mind are of so important and varied a character, that a sketch of his career cannot fail to be acceptable to our readers. The following pages are condensed from a little work which lately appeared in Germany,\* and although they will not in every instance be found exclusively to refer to "spiritual experience," they have nevertheless an important bearing upon Spiritualism, in so far as they detail the circumstances and describe the culture which led a most distinguished scientific man and poet to become an investigator of Animal-Magnetism, a student of Psychology, and the author of a series of important works on those subjects, works which have become the "hand-books," more or less, of all who at the present day study Pneumatology.

Justinus Kerner was descended from a family of some importance in Carinthia. His father was an *Oberamtmann* (senior magistrate), residing at Ludwigsburg in Würtemberg, and his mother the daughter of another *Amtmann*, of Lauffen-am-Neckar. *Oberamtmann* Kerner was a thoroughly educated government-official, exact in his office, and in his household full of affection for his family, loving intercourse with intellectual people, and highly esteemed both by his Prince and his fellow-citizens. The mother appears to have been of a very gentle and nervous temperament, filled with a deep love of her children, which amounted to a life-long anxiety, and from her,

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\* "*Justinus Kerner und das Kernerhaus zu Weinsberg*," von Aimé Keinhard. Tübingen, 1862.

Kerner probably inherited his poetical temperament. Six children were born to this married pair; four sons and two daughters, all richly endowed with gifts of heart and of mind. Justinus was the youngest child; he was born at Ludwigsburg, on the 18th of September, 1786. His father being somewhat puzzled as to the choice of a name for the child, examined his family pictures, which extended back as far as the Reformation. His glance fell upon the portrait of his ancestor, Justinus Andreas, and after him the infant was called Justinus.

The first impressions which the child received of the external world, were those of splendour and festivity. Ludwigsburg, during the reign of "Duke Karl," as he was called, was filled with a certain stately gaiety, and the house of the worthy and popular *Oberamtmann* appears to have been frequented by persons of social and intellectual distinction; amongst these we find mentioned the father of the poet Schiller.

Upon the sudden death of "Duke Karl," young Justinus composed his first poem. In 1795 a great change occurred in the child's life. *Oberamtmann* Kerner growing weary of the melancholy and monotony which had fallen upon Ludwigsburg after the Duke's death, spite of the entreaties of his friends and fellow-officials that he would remain amongst them, determined to remove from thence to the Abbey of Maulbronn, of which well-endowed domain he had become the bailiff.

This change of residence from the modern Ludwigsberg with its straight, broad regular streets and avenues, its stately castle and busy town-life, to the secluded valley where, surrounded by woods, vineyards and waters, lay within the enclosure of the Abbey walls, the mediæval Cistercian Monastery, with its richly adorned church, its grand cloisters and halls, its prison tower and outbuildings, made naturally a deep impression upon the susceptible nature of the child, and probably moulded it into certain marked forms which we shall recognize in the mature years of the Poet, Antiquarian and Psychologist.

His education was carefully attended to during this period, the Abbey school affording excellent opportunities for the prosecution of his studies; but neither languages, geography nor arithmetic, appear specially to have appealed to his intellect. Nature alone absorbed his attention, and proffered him the food suited to his mental digestion. Working with his father in the garden, an intense desire for knowledge regarding the life of plants and animals awoke within him and became an unappeasable longing. The yards and gardens of the farm were gradually filled with animals, birds, insects and plants, which the young student had collected from the neighbourhood, and the life and growth of which provided him with an inexhaustible field of

study. In many other directions were his keen powers of observation called forth. He is said, whilst placed by his father in a dark corner, as punishment for some boyish misdemeanour, to have discovered the principle of the *Camera Obscura*, with which, in later years, he delighted to experimentalize; and even in his childish sports to have approached the great discovery of the century—locomotion by steam. The phenomena of electricity, with which at this period he became acquainted, called forth, also, his deepest interest.

Together with this yearning after a knowledge of the kingdom of nature, awoke within him the power of poetical perception and expression. Forth from the mysterious twilight of the abbey's halls and cloisters, where he was accustomed frequently to sit with his book for hours dreaming, rather than reading, would present themselves the romantic forms of long-forgotten days, coming forth into the golden light of his imagination, and evoking from the depth of his young poetical soul, the magical language of song. In these early verses, where we hear an ardent desire expressed that their writer might behold with the eyes of the body, as well as with those of the soul, these visions of monks in their black and white garments, we recognize an anticipation of that belief in the reality of ghosts, which in later years became a portion of the creed of Justinus Kerner, the Seer of Weinsberg.

This charming season of self-development was not, however, destined to continue long. In order that he might receive more regular instruction, the young Justinus was removed into the house of a very strict tutor residing in the neighbourhood, where he was educated with the sons of his teacher.

French troops, however, marching from the Rhine to the frontiers of Würtemberg arrived at the town, and young Kerner was suddenly sent for home by his easily alarmed mother.

Within a short period, he was, upon the eve of his removal to a larger town, seized with a severe illness. This illness was attributed to his having out-grown his strength. It produced an extraordinary excitability of the nerves of the stomach which lasted almost an entire year. During this period he made great progress in his knowledge of the ancient languages and of natural history; but, strange to relate, he could not in botany accustom himself to the scientific classification and names of plants. He was in the habit of giving the names of his acquaintance and friends to flowers, and it is related of him, that even upon his examination at the University, he occasionally confused these self-given names with those of the Linnæan system. It was at this time, that studying the metamorphoses of beetles and butterflies, the idea occurred to Kerner that as the chrysalis state

exists between the grub and butterfly condition, a similar "middle-state" must also exist for man after death.

Throughout his illness, young Kerner, although treated according to the prescription of a physician of repute, rejected as much as possible, with an intense repugnance, the pills and mixtures ordered for him and no good results following this treatment, Kerner's mother took him to Heilbronn for the advice of a very celebrated Russian doctor resident there, who prescribed a northern elixir of life, called "*Hopelpobel*," which was infallibly to cure him. The Kerner family attributed the youth's recovery to this wonderful draught, but he himself ascribed it to the celebrated magnetizer Gmelin of Heilbronn, who meeting him one day upon the Wartberg made\* several "passes" over him, after which he speedily recovered. Possibly, the excitability of the nerves of Kerner's stomach, the marked symptom of his ailment, not only rendering him peculiarly susceptible to these magnetic "passes," but in fact requiring magnetic treatment for its cure.

One thing is, however, certain, these "passes" given by this powerful and celebrated magnetizer awoke the magnetic life within young Justinus, and from that time forth he experienced presentiments and prophetic dreams, and out of this magnetic life proceeded his interests in, and love of the "night-side of nature," of Magnetism and Pneumatology. These dreams, which according to his own belief, proceeded from the pit of his stomach, he was henceforth subject to throughout his life, and at times they became a perfect torment to him. It appears that his grandmother upon the father's side had, in advanced age, when she became blind, similar dreams. The first of these prophetic dreams which young Kerner experienced almost immediately after having been magnetized by Gmelin, has been preserved by him in one of his most popular works of fancy—his *Picture Book*. Amongst the figures of future friends beheld by him in this dream, was one which attracted him above all others, and in this figure he in course of years recognized his faithful life's companion, his beloved wife "Rickele." And it is a noteworthy circumstance, that immediately upon his return to Maulbronn, new pupils arrived from the Abbey School of Denkendorf under the guidance of Professor Ehemann of that place—this Professor Ehemann was the father of "Rickele." This was the only time that Kerner saw the father of his future wife, "Rickele" being an orphan when in after years he made her acquaintance.

About this period a great sorrow befell the Kerner family.

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\* Vide *Spiritual Magazine*, December, 1865, p. 545.

The father died, expressing upon his death-bed deep anxiety regarding the future of his youngest son, whose education was as yet incomplete. The mother, whose means appear to have been very narrow after the death of her husband, removed with her youngest children, Wilhelmine and Justinus, to Ludwigsburg, where they took up their abode in a very humble lodging. And now commenced for our future Poet-Physician experience in the school of adversity. It was suggested by one of the elder brothers, George, who had been drawn into the vortex of revolutionary excitement in Paris, and who was imbued with revolutionary ideas, that as it was good for every man to possess "a trade at his finger's ends," it might be as well for Justinus to learn the handicraft of a carpenter; and consequently with a carpenter he was placed, where he soon became very expert in the use of plane and saw, and was employed in the construction of ordinary furniture—especially, also, in the construction of *coffins*.

His brother George instructed him, upon his last visit to his family, in another art—that of playing upon the Jew's-harp, a little instrument over which Justinus obtained a most marvellous power, drawing forth from it, even in his old age, the most ravishing and fairy-like strains.

The family do not, however, appear to have remained satisfied with Justinus's prospects as a carpenter, for in 1802 we find that after he had been confirmed, a family council was held as to his future career, and it was proposed that, as the youth could draw, paint, and make rhymes, he should become a *confectioner*, seeing that thus already he was prepared to design and colour the sweetmeats, and also to write verses and mottoes for them! Kerner, however, thought otherwise; and through an appeal to one of his father's old friends and one of his old tutors, Professor Conz, of Tübingen, he was enabled to escape becoming a confectioner. Finally it was arranged that he should become a merchant; and in order to commence his mercantile life, he was placed in the cloth manufactory at Ludwigsburg.

This cloth factory was one of those fiscal experiments not uncommon in the time of the "Holy Roman Empire," and which, under the pretence of making money for the State, cost it instead a great deal. It was connected with an orphan house, a house-of-correction, and a mad-house.

Kerner already had learned to endure material privation; now he had to endure privation of the mind, heart and soul. His first employment in the factory was to cut out linen bags, and then to sew up the cloth in them. Occasionally, as a variation in his occupation, he had to prepare pattern cards, and to copy letters. Later came the measuring and packing of the



cloth, and the marking the bales with the factory mark, to which, with his power of design, he usually added some ornament. He had also to clean out the indigo tubs, during which operation the blue dust coloured his face and hands, and even penetrated through his clothes.

All these labours had to be performed amidst the degrading and unseemly gossip of the work-people with whom Justinus boarded and took his meals; whilst the screaming, cursing and raging of the insane people confined near his chamber, robbed him of his rest at night.

The remarkable power which Kerner in later years evinced in his treatment of the insane, and the peculiar attraction which he always felt towards the subject of insanity, probably sprang from his innate genius, as we find him, whilst in the factory, visiting through compassion the mad people in their cells, and soothing them in a marvellous manner by his affectionate words, as well as by his performance upon the Jew's-harp; whilst, on the contrary, he always felt a repugnance to intercourse with the criminals, from whom, in course of time, he learned the cloth weaving.

His sole recreation during this weariful period, was his Sunday's country walks, with friends older than himself, and with whom he pursued even more ardently the study of natural history, whether in books or in the open fields; and the pursuit of poetry which he cultivated with intense ardour. He, indeed, at this period composed many volumes of verse, satirical as well as romantic in its character, all of which he destroyed in later years. He even began writing political poems in the vain hope of being condemned like Schubart to a ten years' imprisonment; time to be at leisure to write poetry, though within the walls of a prison, appeared to him a perfectly heavenly life.

At length, after a two years' martyrdom, the time of his release arrived. His friends gave him no encouragement in his aspiration after a scientific career, but turning once more for assistance to his old friend at Tübingen, the excellent professor removed all difficulties out of his path, by offering to receive him into his own house, and procuring for him one of the numerous scholarships of the Tübingen University.

In the autumn of 1804, on foot, and carrying his small possessions of books, and clothes upon his back, our young poet arrived one night at the gates of the little old-fashioned university town of Tübingen.

The moon was shining brightly, and the night was balmy, and feeling weary after his long day's tramp, he sat down to rest without the gates, and fell asleep. He dreamed whilst thus sleeping, a singular prophetic dream, which he has thus recorded

in one of his beautiful romantic tales, entitled "The Homeless Ones" ("Die Heimathlosen").

"Once," he writes "with conscientious anxiety, I imposed upon myself the study of opinions and systems, but in order to awaken my better self, there soon appeared to me, each night for a long period, a stag with stork's feet, which placed itself before me, and commanded me with shameful, scornful expressions, to classify him according to Linnæus. Then I turned over, each time, greatly terrified in my dream, my compendiums and manuscripts, whilst the terrific monster stood before me, but still I could assign him no name. Not until I shook off from me the dust of the schools, and like a child, laid myself down in the lap of nature, did this loathsome apparition leave me."

In this account, Kerner represents the dream as being repeated. It probably symbolized the perplexing studies awaiting him in his university career. When young Kerner awoke out of his strange sleep, he found that the soft night-breeze had wafted towards him, from an open window of the adjacent hospital, a prescription in the handwriting of the head physician, Dr. Uhland, an uncle of the well-known poet, Ludwig Uhland. Until that moment Kerner had been undecided as to which branch of natural science he should devote himself. This prescription was received by him as a sign of guidance, and, full of fresh confidence, he entered the university town, saying to himself, "Thou must become a physician."

#### AT COLLEGE.

With Kerner's arrival at Tübingen commences a fresh chapter in his life. He was then eighteen, and remained four years at Tübingen, studying, besides his own special calling, medicine, in all its branches, various branches of natural science, classical literature, philology, and *belles lettres*.

It might almost be regarded as a singular omen of Kerner's future career of usefulness, that the first patient confided to his exclusive care was an unfortunate poet, Frederick Hölderlin, who, already become thoroughly insane, after his dismissal from the infirmary, had been received by an excellent cabinet-maker, of the name of Zimmer, and lived in an old tower upon the bank of the river Neckar, belonging to Zimmer. In this tower he dwelt above thirty years. This insane poet inhabiting his tower is strongly suggestive of a still more familiar city-tower connected with Kerner's later life, in which a still more celebrated poet frequently dwelt, and upon whom also fell the night of madness—we mean the poet Lenau. It is as though, in some occult manner, this first tower had been in Kerner's life a foreshadowing of the second.

The insanity of Hölderlin was, with but rare exceptions, of an entirely harmless nature; and, although the unhappy man had but few thoroughly clear moments, intercourse was freely carried on by the students with him without danger, and indeed was even interesting. Thus once more in his youth did Kerner meet with an opportunity of familiarising himself with that mysterious malady, upon which he was destined in later life to bestow so much attention, and upon the origin of which he has thrown so much light.

Justinus encountered amongst the Tübingen students—amongst “the sons of the Muses,” as the German students delight to designate themselves—two youths, who, in the present instance, truly deserved the appellation, and with whom he became linked in a life-long friendship; these students were Ludwig Uhland and Gustav Schwab. Soon, other youths associated themselves with the poetical trio, and formed a Round Table of Knights of the Intellect, who ere long dealt for the benefit of German literature mighty strokes against the last remaining monster of the so-called “Pigtail School.” Kerner and Uhland wrote at this time some of their most popular songs and ballads, and their names soon became famous throughout Germany.

In the autumn of 1808, Kerner completed his four years of study, but still remained a few months longer in Tübingen, to compose his *Doctor's Thesis*.

Karl August Varnhagen von Ense has given us an interesting description of Kerner in his student-days. Speaking of some special night when Kerner and he had been reading together Jung Stilling's *Theory of Spiritual Communication*, he says—“This Würtemberg is rightly the home of haunting and ghost-like doings, of the marvels of the soul-life, and of the dream-world. The imagination of the Swabians has an especial sensitiveness. Their nerves are peculiarly excitable in this direction. Kerner in this particular is a true representative of his land, and of his people, only raised into a higher region where scientific perception and poetic fancy have mingled with the national peculiarities.

“In his presence the sensitiveness of others appears to increase through the force of his peculiar nature. . . . But I must tell you many things about Kerner,” he observes in another place, “He does not possess our Northern cultivation and talkativeness, but approaches you sympathetically and opens out his thoughts to you. It is a comfort to me to have some one near to me—we lodge in the same house—who is so agreeable and sympathizing, and I always rejoice when the good, dear fellow enters my room in the evening and sits down to my table to work at his *Thesis*, whilst I busy myself about my own affairs as though no one

were present. Later on, he watches with astonishment how I drink tea instead of a measure of wine which people here like so well, and then we converse freely about all manner of things. He possesses the most lively perception of art, and of all that is comical, and has a sort of passion for bringing all such characteristics to light. . . . He has employed his four years of study most industriously, but without over-exertion, has learnt an immensity, and already has treated the sick with skill. So soon as he has taken his degree of Doctor he will travel. He has been making experiments on various animals with reference to their sense of hearing, in preparation for his *Thesis*. He has living together with him in his room in the most perfect friendship, dogs, cats, fowls, geese, owls, squirrels, toads, lizards, mice, and who can say how many beasts besides, and he has no need to shut his doors except it be to keep the creatures from running off. Whether his books or his clothes are in danger, or a beast snorts in its sleep, or, suddenly aroused, snaps at him, he is perfectly unconcerned. His experiments are subtle and full of thought, and in making them he endeavours to avoid all torture. Unquestionably he stands in a very near relationship to nature, and especially to its "night-side." His eyes have something peculiarly spiritual and pious in their glance—all that is magically magnetic is to be met with in him to an extraordinary degree. He has a something somnambule which accompanies even his merriment and laughter.

"For a long time together he will be sunk in thought and dreams, and then suddenly start forth from his trance-like state, making a joke of the terror of those about him. He can simulate madness until one shudders, and although he may begin this in joke, he is in no jovial mood if he continue his simulated madness any length of time. In poetry, the marvellous of the folks-lore, and the simple, rough strength of the songs of the people, are most in accordance with his nature. Poetry of a higher and more refined character he recognizes, but he does not require it. For the same reason he prefers to speak his rough dialect, will not lay it aside, and even opposes himself to the language of literature. In music he has taken possession of the Jews'-harp, and possesses the art of drawing forth from that insignificant but wonderful little instrument, the tenderest and most heart-touching tunes. Picture to yourself a youth of the simplest and most thoroughly negligent attire, possessed of the most entire indifference towards things which usually trouble people, with a stooping bearing, an irregular gait, a constant inclination to lean upon a chair rather than comfortably to sit upon it—and yet, withal, a slender, well-grown, well looking-youth—and then you will have a complete picture of my Kerner."

In 1808, Kerner obtained his doctor's diploma, and quitted Tübingen to set forth upon his travels. Before, however, leaving the University, in the autumn of 1807, an event of deepest import to our poet-physician occurred. Upon an excursion to the ruins of Achalm, near Reutlingen, with a numerous and merry company, as he was ascending the hill, he observed a young girl who lingered solitarily somewhat behind the rest of the party, and who, by her grave and sorrowful air, attracted his observation and deeply interested him. Stepping up to her, he said, quoting Goëthe's lines:—

How comes it, then, that thou art sad,  
When each thing gay appears?  
Alas! one sees that thy sad eyes  
No strangers are to tears!

The young girl, touched by this heartfelt sympathy of the stranger, walked on with him in a confidential manner, and confided to him that she was an orphan and very unhappily situated. Kerner, himself oppressed with melancholy, thought that as they had both of them been early trained in the school of affliction, they might be able the more completely to console and sympathize with each other, and believed that he now beheld his God-given life's-companion—and such proved to be the case! This was that gentle, highly-gifted and most amiable Fredrica, whom, as "Rickele," Kerner throughout a long and most happy married life, celebrated in his poetry as his household angel.

His betrothal at the age of one-and-twenty with a fortuneless girl, appeared to all Kerner's friends an act of folly, but "Wisdom justifieth her children."

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## NOTES ON SPIRITUALISM AND SPIRITUALISTS IN THE UNITED STATES, IN 1866.

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### No. I.

A MATTER of business having afforded the means of gratifying a long-cherished wish to revisit the United States of America, one morning last summer found me approaching New York by the same entrance which just a quarter of a century previously had afforded me access to that magnificent emporium of commerce.

How great the change! The grand outlines, of course, remained the same, so that I had no difficulty in recognising the well remembered land-marks of Sandy Hook, and the Narrows, and the spacious bay forming the harbour, with Jersey City on the left, and Brooklyn on the right, and Governor's Island, the

battery and other points of the Empire City itself, in the middle, like old friends with new faces and outstretched arms welcoming our approach. One wondered how, amidst all the differences, the old features were so easily recognizable! Instead of the flat, sandy, unproductive shores of twenty-five years ago, every rood of ground was now a smiling garden to the water's edge, embowering with its varied foliage a handsome villa, or splendid mansion, indicative of the immense strides which American industry, ingenuity and general civilization had taken since the era of my previous observations.

Other indications of the same progress one did not need to look for; they were thrust upon our sense, and clamoured for our delighted attention: the gigantic enlargement of the city itself, the increase of its wharves and accommodation for its enormous fleets of steamers and sailing vessels, the marble palaces of trade, whose merchant princes return for taxation incomes putting to shame the revenues of some European states,\* the extensive and gorgeous hotels, the long lines of splendid architecture gracing the sides of the leading avenues, terminating for the present in the grand Central-park,—so-called apparently with an eye to the future, when New York will cover the whole of Manhattan Island, and this Park really be its magnificent centre—these, and the many conspicuous buildings devoted to art and beneficence, and other abounding evidence of opulence and public spirit, crowded upon us. But not of these is it my purpose at present to treat, though as indications of general progress they affected me so powerfully, that I could not refrain from this slight passing allusion to them; my object is to confine attention to topics more immediately within the scope of the *Spiritual Magazine*, and to them, without more preface, I now proceed.

On the occasion of my previous visit, mesmerism was being practised both in public and in private. Dr. Collyer was exhibiting phreno-mesmeric experiments in Boston; and Blind Mary, a girl reputed to be blind from infancy, if not congenitally so, was, as a clairvoyante, one of the marvels of New York. I saw both exhibitions, and gave some account of them in the *Phrenological Almanack* of the following year, edited by the Rev. David Geo. Goyder. I was also privately indoctrinated into the mysteries of mesmerism by a friend in Lowell, Massachusetts.

These circumstances I notice, because mesmerism is the natural avenue to Spiritualism. No one who goes any length in

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\* Mr. Alexander Stewart (or Alick, as they familiarly call him) had just returned his income for the past year, at 4,800,000 dollars.

the study of mesmerism, especially if he go into it with simplicity and open-mindedness, unlimited by prejudice and "dominant ideas," can proceed far before he comes to phenomena of a startling and marvellous character—phenomena which, to say the least, it severely taxes the ingenuity of the mere "cerebrationist" to explain. Even those who commence under the influence of cramping theories, if moderately candid and truth-seeking, and not carried away by their pre-conceptions, but are neutrally open to the observation of phenomena, which they carefully avoid producing themselves, can scarcely go any length without having their theories modified, and their ideas expanded by the facts evolved. The patient soon ceases to be a mere reflex of the operator, transcends his perceptions and intelligence, asserts individual personality and freedom, leaves the body and returns to it, enters into relations with other beings, and presents evidence of their existence, the validity of which the operator, confuted as he has been by superior knowledge, is, at least, in no position to deny. Accordingly, Spiritualism in all its higher phases had been demonstrated to many long before the phenomena occurring at Hydesville, near Rochester, in New York State, known as the "Rochester Knockings," had, by the ingenuity of free-hearted American girls, been co-ordinated therewith and given to the world as evidence of disembodied intelligence, more striking in its character, and, therefore, more capable of reaching the masses of mankind. The mesmeric evidence, from its delicacy, and from the nicety of observation and self-abnegation required of the experimenter, was necessarily confined to a few. The physical manifestations, introduced by the rappings at Hydesville, and since developed to so wonderful an extent, appeal to the many. They present, moreover, a species of demonstration, even more complete and convincing to the logical and scientific mind, especially to those whose study of physiology has landed them in the notion that all the spiritual phenomena of mesmerism are mere products of the nervous system, compounds of active and passive cerebration, effects of pre-conceived and dominant ideas, affections, and volitions, and not the signs of intelligence independent of brain.

I was impatient to see some of the more recent developments of the physical and sensible manifestations, particularly such as had occurred to Mr. L., the friend and correspondent of Mr. Coleman, of whose marvellous experiences I had learned, not only in common with other readers of Mr. Coleman's contributions to the *Spiritual Magazine*, but likewise from Mr. L. himself, whose personal acquaintance I had made the year before, during his passage through Liverpool. I accordingly made haste to see him on getting ashore in New York—the rather that a fellow

passenger was with me whom I was desirous of introducing to something reliable and convincing. Much to our disappointment, Mr. L. was out of town, and the date of his return was uncertain. Other calls were equally unproductive. It was July, with the thermometer nearly 100° in the shade, and all who could fly the city had betaken themselves to the mountains or the seashore. Judge Edmonds had returned from Lake George for only one day, to argue a case in court, and was to leave again the same evening. The only Spiritualist of note whom we passed any time with, was the Rev. Mr. Benning, who entertained us a whole evening by recounting the marvels of his own experience, from his conversion, which was a long-protracted business, only accomplished after a series of the most overwhelming circumstances, to his present condition of unwavering certitude. It may interest the readers of the *Spiritual Magazine*, to learn that this gentleman was one of the members of the celebrated "Miracle Circle," in which Mr. Sothern, according to his own account, played so famous, or, as some persist in believing, so infamous a part; and that he maintains the conviction of Mr. Sothern's mediumship; notwithstanding, it was, in his estimation, of a "low and unreliable character." He related some of the "miracles" which were performed at the circle, and certainly assuming Mr. B.'s accuracy, they were of such a nature as no simulation or possible imposture could account for.

It was not until I returned to New York, after a two months' tour through the Western and Middle States, that I saw any 'manifestations,' in the technical sense; and then the most notable were brought under my attention by the renewed kindness of Mr. Benning. The *séance* was strictly private, the mediums were young lady employées in the establishment where it was held; no fees were received, and, unless they performed a senseless joke at the expense of themselves and their credulous visitors, one could see no motive for deception. Still, the phenomena alleged to be presented were so marvellous, assuming their verity, that extra caution in their acceptance was not only excusable, but absolutely demanded as a primary duty. Among other things averred as common with these mediums were, the carrying away of money and other articles, and giving messages with them, implying the re-incarnation of the spirits, the sudden dissipation of their improvised bodies and other phenomena. But no examples of such occurred at the *séance* at which we were present, and our curiosity was whetted merely by the very minute specifications of our friend. What was claimed to have taken place in our presence was, the oral intercourse of the spirits with us in free air, *i. e.*, without the



intervention of any human organs of speech. Notwithstanding the difficulty of finding adequate motives for imposition, however, I have to confess my inability to accept the illustrations afforded on this occasion without grave misgivings. Nothing was done which a moderate skill in ventriloquism could not have accomplished; and I thought I could distinguish the peculiar use of the glottis practised by ventriloquists when the voices appeared to issue beside two of the mediums. This one occasion, the only one I had for observation, did not afford conclusive evidence for or against. I refer to it now only to express the hope that subsequent experience has confirmed the genuineness of the phenomena. I should *not* like to hear that my good friend Mr. Benning, whose extreme courtesy I have much pleasure in acknowledging, had been made the victim of a shallow and unworthy imposition. It is due to the parties to add that not only Mr. B., but other able and intelligent men believed in the genuineness of the facts in this case; and I am possibly only exhibiting a super-cautiousness and some of my old native scepticism in expressing my doubts of them. Should this article meet the eye of Mr. Benning, I hope he will send a full report of the case to the *Spiritual Magazine*, bringing the history of it down to the date of his writing. When I left New York, an appointment had been made for Mr. Robert Dale Owen to be present at a *séance*. A contribution from so capable and candid an investigator as he, giving the results of his observations of a case which so far surpasses in its pretensions the analagous one of Caspar in his *Footfalls*, would be of extreme interest and value.

The mention of Mr. Owen reminds me of several most interesting interviews I had with him in New York, and of a series of beautiful evidences he laid before me, relating to that most important and uncertain of all the problems of modern Spiritualism—the *identity of the communicating agents*. So much of simulation has been proved against the spirits, that not a few persons find it difficult to believe in the verity of any. The proofs of identity are, for the most part, at present confined to intellectual, moral, and affectional considerations, such as acquaintance with the previous history, peculiarities, objects, and secret life of individuals communicated with, and the style of thought, speech, and affection, and other characteristics of the professed departed friend in communion, all of which must necessarily have weight chiefly with the individuals immediately concerned, but can have little validity beyond their narrow circle; and even with many of them—such have been the questionable assumptions of the disembodied intelligences—such the shocks to opinion and feeling given—it is still a matter of very

timorous belief rather than of assured faith. Any new evidence on this subject, therefore, especially if it be of an approximatively demonstrative kind, must be exceedingly welcome.

Of this character was the series of spirit photographs, which Mr. Owen placed before me, each accompanied by the story of its production, every incident of which possible of verification, Mr. Owen had, with his usual care, personally investigated. I must not anticipate Mr. Owen's own exposition of the facts he is quietly accumulating in this relation, particularly as I could give only a faint reflex of what he can state with precision and authority. I cannot, however, forbear alluding to two connected photographs, which made upon me the deepest impression, and which seem to illustrate more conclusively than others the value of this species of evidence of spirit-identity. The two in question were obtained under the management of Mr. Adams, the well known originator of "The Adams' Express Company," whose name is a guarantee for the caution, intelligence and probity which prevailed in their production.

A nephew of Mr. Adams had recently died at Buffalo from over-study. No likeness being extant of him, as I understood, Mr. A. conceived the idea that one might be obtained by this new development of spiritual interaction with the natural world. Accordingly, he presented himself to one of the photographers who had been most successful in this relation, and stating his object, Mr. Adams, when all was arranged for the experiment, took his stand by a chair, resting one of his hands on its back. But just as the operation was to begin, he felt a sort of an electric shock in his left elbow, and at once had his thoughts diverted from his nephew to the departed statesman, Daniel Webster, with whom in this life he had been exceedingly intimate, and who had purported to come to him at various *séances*, and had established with him this shock as a sign of his presence. Sure enough, the photograph resulting from this experiment, presented Mr. Adams in the attitude described, and over towards the right-hand corner, not the likeness of his nephew, but a dim, yet still clearly defined one of the great statesman!

Again Mr. Adams stood as before, and this time a beautiful and striking likeness of his nephew appeared!

A very pleasing picture in itself was this latter one, without reference to the great problem it helps to solve. An interesting youth is represented sitting in the attitude of intently studying a book which lies before him—a most characteristic position, since his death had arisen from severe mental application.\*

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\* Copies of this photograph, and of several others, may be purchased of our publisher, price 1s. each.

Now, as evidence of the verity of spirit-photographs, the latter must be recognized as far more valuable than the former. By processes familiar to photographers, a likeness of Webster could easily have been impressed on the paper and subsequently developed, as counterfeit spirit-photographs are sometimes produced; though, even in that case, the peculiarity of "the shock" would remain to be explained. But in the case of an individual in private life, of whom no picture was in existence, such a hypothesis altogether fails; and hence the value of an instance of this kind so well-authenticated as the one now mentioned. Since persons of much worldly experience are apt to find reasons for the facts in suppositions not absolutely excluded by the very circumstances of the case, it is extremely important to obtain facts in relation to this subject not susceptible of explanation on any hypothesis of deception. Independently of this consideration applying to the latter experiment, I was given to understand that the character of the operator was such as morally to exclude any kind of imposition in either case. But as this could operate only where he was known, the value of the second case rises in proportion to the impossibility of imputation being cast upon him, even where his character is wholly unknown. I have no doubt that in due time Mr. Owen will submit the whole of the evidence he has collected on this interesting subject to the public, with his customary completeness and perspicuity, when the bearing of the whole facts upon the question of spirit-identity will doubtless be exhaustively discussed.

Had I remained another week in New York, I should probably have witnessed some still more convincing evidence of the human character of the communicating agents. Mr. L. had arranged for a *séance* with Miss Kate Fox for my benefit, but my passage having been taken by the Saturday's steamer of the week prior to Miss Kate's return from the country, I had, with much regret, to forego the opportunity of seeing the wonderful phenomena which have of late been developed in her and Mr. L.'s presence. I had, however, the extreme gratification of spending an evening with the distinguished physician, Dr. James Gray, who is intimately acquainted with the marvels of the case, and of hearing from him a complete and emphatic confirmation of the most remarkable facts recorded in Mr. L.'s communications to Mr. Coleman. The doctor also stated that he had himself seen the embodiment of Dr. Franklin at the *séances*, and was as certain of its objective reality, as he was of the bodily presence of any person ever presented before him. No one of ordinary intelligence, and knowledge of human nature, could hear Dr. Gray recite his experiences without being convinced of the verity of the circumstances described. A more

cool, capable, and systematic observer, a more able and logical thinker, a more transparently truthful and unexaggerating speaker I have never met. It was a very high privilege to be admitted to his sanctum, and listen to his exposition of facts and principles; and the evening which I spent with him and other friends—a select party of six in all—remains as one of the most profitable and delightful memories I have connected with my recent visit to the United States.

It has been the doctor's wont for years to sit with a small select circle of earnest, thoughtful friends, every Thursday evening, not for the production of external phenomena, but for serious thought and contemplation, and such philosophical exposition of any leading ideas agreed to be considered as might be elicited. On the occasion of my visit, the records of past meetings were produced, and some strikingly original and suggestive passages were read. From the specimens which were given us, I could not but esteem these records of very high philosophical value, and some day, I hope, they will be collated and given to the public.

By way of contrast, I am reminded of the opposite phase of American Spiritualism. And when one surveys the immense quantity of trash which is published as veritable communications from the spiritual and celestial spheres, the ignorance, incompetence and inflation of so many of its professors, and the preposterous pretensions which are promulgated in its name, one cannot but acknowledge that Spiritualism must indeed rest upon a wide foundation of indubitable and adamant facts to sustain so great a load of garbage, and not sink into oblivion overwhelmed by derision and contempt. But, as of old, the weak and despised things of this world are made to confound the mighty, and even the poorest exhibitions have some redeeming traits, which only the one-sided or arrogant will overlook. I had some thoughts of presenting a few specimens of recent oracular utterances illustrative of this exuberant form of *Western Spiritualism*; but upon the whole, have decided that it is better to leave them to their own limited sphere of influence, and let them die of their sheer absurdity. Those who are curious in such matters will easily find them for themselves. The pages of the *Spiritual Magazine* can be filled with more profitable materials.

Into the same category I think I must also place the little experience I had with professional mediums, who sit for any purpose required by visitors able to pay the preliminary "five dollars." No doubt some of these are perfectly genuine mediums, but the temptations to pretence and deception are too great, I fear, for the virtue of a large number; and the necessity to "do

something for their bread" has, there is just as little doubt, brought in a plentiful supply of "knaves," to meet the demands of the easily cozened "fools" who seek consultations with them on the same grounds, and for the same reasons, as the simpletons of this country go to fortune-tellers. One of them, who shall be nameless, could only get into relation with the attendant spirits of his customers by the latter writing down the names of their spirit-friends and signing their own names on long slips of paper, which, apparently to preclude his knowledge of the names written, were folded several times. But I found on examination that the paper was of such a quality as to shew the writing easily through several folds; and having narrowly watched his processes, I am satisfied that his "communications" are in the main cunningly devised generalities based upon a knowledge of the names, and when anything really specific is stated it is founded on some incidental hint derived from the manners and conversation of his visitors. What supports this conviction is, that when the writing was so light that it could not without rank exposure be seen through the folds of the paper, "the influence was too weak," and only the most inconsequential communication could be given. I fear that hundreds of real mediums have in the United States gravitated, by insensible degrees, into cheats of this kind, from finding a large proportion of those who consult them so gullible, that an improvised message of their own suits them just as well as one from the upper spheres. They profess to "call spirits from the vasty deep," and when they won't "come when called," "What," to their easy consciences, say these poor creatures, "is a poor fellow to do?" Only make the best substitute he can; and as he can generally manage to send his friends away with the grateful assurance that their dear departed are not lost, but only "gone before," he "lays the flattering unction to his soul" that his little "pious fraud" has done them no harm, and their money will do him a great deal of good: whereanent though there may be different opinions to be put into the balance, one can readily see which will kick the beam with the majority of human creatures when bodily starvation appears on the one side, and "only" moral starvation on the other.

As connected with, and throwing possibly some light on, the topic of Ritualism, which is at present occupying so much of public attention in this country, I must refer to a very interesting interview which I had in company with Mr. Orvis, with a peculiar medium named Gordon then residing at New York, though not belonging to that city. This gentleman, who appeared to be about thirty years of age, presented a form of womanly delicacy and sensitiveness, a finely-balanced head, but no great mental

culture. He had been a martyr to Spiritualism, persecuted out of his parental home, in consequence of his open relationship to the upper forms of life, which are so obnoxious to the carnal mind. It was not until after much endurance from ignorance and brutality that he defied and finally left paternal control. He was joined by two other persons, one of whom, a well-educated professional gentleman—a dental surgeon—remains his companion still. The third broke from them, or was cast off by his own specialities of nature; whereby hangs a tale, which it does not become me to tell. While the three were together, they were called “The Trinity Circle.” A long series of most remarkable communications was received through Mr. Gordon while he was entranced, and in various other ways, purporting to come from Biblical worthies and others, relating to religious and philosophical questions, and carefully committed to writing by the very intelligent and competent gentleman already mentioned, whose name I omitted to catch or retain; but of whose relative and in many points contrasted *physique* and mentality I have a very distinct remembrance. The records of their *séances* cover many thousand pages of MS., and fill a box which was shewn to us under seal, the seals not to be broken, nor the contents given to the world until ordered by the venerated intelligences who purported to communicate them.

It is a curious circumstance connected with Mr. Gordon’s mediumship that, while in the trance state, he is made to arrange the furniture of the room in which he is, into symbolic forms. Tables, books, pictures, flowers, statues, all things available are utilized, and everything is arranged to embody ideas, mostly religious and sacerdotal. Peculiar dresses were ordered for the several parties, and the dresses varied according to the service required. Although not a Roman Catholic, Mr. Gordon was made to enter a place of worship belonging to that communion in Philadelphia, and go through the sacrifice of the mass, which was done so perfectly, that one of the priests, who came in during the service, thought it was some stranger dignitary of the church who officiated. Mr. Gordon and his friend could not help being deeply impressed by these things. They had been brought to see the extreme beauty and impressiveness of much of the Roman Catholic Ritual, and at one time were near joining that section of the Universal Church, but were saved from it by the exercise of independent reason, and the concurring influence of their spirit guides, whose care it has been at once to vindicate the validity of rites, forms, symbols, as having a true basis in nature, and to protect the freedom of the individual conscience. They informed us that this experience had enabled them to appreciate with great nicety and deep sympathy the

condition of mind to which many Protestants, including some Spiritualists, had been brought, who had joined the Popish Church. Their records (already noticed) refer to new developments of religious ideas, in which the Ritualistic and the Rationalistic elements are harmoniously combined, intended for the guidance of future generations.

It was a remarkable feature in their experience that, when they discarded Ritualistic observances, they got no manifestations. When they observed them, on the contrary, they were rewarded with the most extraordinary and convincing evidences of spiritual intercourse, and the guidance of superior intelligences.

While we were there, in the midst of our highly interesting conversation, Mr. Gordon was influenced to retire to an adjacent room. After the lapse of about ten minutes or more he returned in the trance state, and motioned to his friend to take us into that room. We accordingly followed his friend in, and there beheld an improvised altar, formed on a table in the centre of the room. The box of MSS., the Bible, an image of the virgin and child, and sundry other articles were arranged in the most artistic and expressive manner imaginable, symbolizing various truths. I made no record of the disposition of these things at the time, or of the ideas they represented. I remember only that the general effect was impressive, and presented a very striking illustration of the use of symbols. From the bright, self-centred intelligence of Mr. Gordon's friend, the scribe of the Trinity Circle, I infer that the world will ere long hear more of this phase of Spiritualism.

I may not close this reference to Mr. Gordon's experience without a word of comment on a recent Essay on Ritualism which appeared in the *Manchester Examiner and Times*, by Professor Goldwin Smith. In this essay the professor finds that "Ritualism and Spirit-rapping belong to the same intellectual state." He adds, "Both are spiritual anodynes, taken to appease the restlessness of those who have parted with tradition and cannot wait for truth." And he continues, "If any one should think it impossible that clergymen should become the organs of anything as irrational as spirit-rapping, he little knows what the education of the mass of the clergy is."

I am truly sorry to have my respect for Professor Goldwin Smith, whom I have regarded with admiration as one of the most liberal of thinkers and most candid of propheciers, diminished even by a shade; but it is surely impossible for any one having a tolerable knowledge of the subject fully to appreciate the condition of mind out of which such sentences as these proceeded without losing a certain portion of veneration for the writer—which, in the present case, I frankly acknowledge to

feel as a personal bereavement. Either he wilfully degrades Spiritualism into "Spirit-rapping," against his better knowledge, in which case arrogance and contempt must have dominated his judgment; or he does so in ignorance of the infinitesimal relation which the phenomena selected for characterizing so great a subject bears to the whole. In either case he forfeits the right to the judicial character he assumes, and only degrades himself. He is doubtless correct in finding "the same intellectual state" among Spiritualists as he finds in the Ritualists. It would be very singular if in so numerous and widely diversified a body he did not. But that he could present this fact as a characteristic of the general mass only shews how limited his knowledge in this relation must be. Besides, had he really appreciated the relation which "Spirit-rapping," to give him his own term, bears to the pretensions of the Ritualists, he would have seen that no fact capable of being adduced more conclusively shears these pretensions of their extravagance and priestly exclusiveness. That so capable a reasoner as Professor Goldwin Smith should make so absurd an application of Spiritualism, simply illustrates what blunders may be committed by even a fine and comprehensive mind when it speaks from defective knowledge. The Ritualistic manifestations through the mediumship of Mr. Gordon are merely one phase of Spiritualism, and a phase which completely shatters the pretensions of the English Ritualists, and suggests, for at least part of them, their probable and by no means infallible origin: but it no more, but far less, comprehends the whole of Spiritualism than Ritualism does Christianity. Spiritualism is as broad as human nature, and comprehends within it all forms of theological and philosophical opinions and beliefs, except only its own negation.

A. L.

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## SPIRITUALISM IN TURKEY.

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IN a letter recently published in the *Banner of Light*, Miss Hardinge tells us that during her visit to Europe, a gentleman, long a resident in Turkey, showed her a thick book of spirit-communications obtained through circles held in that country.