

THE  
Spiritual Magazine.

---

---

APRIL, 1867.

---

---

SWEDENBORG AND WESLEY IN FETTER LANE.

---

IN an early number we hope to review Mr. White's *Life of Swedenborg*, but in the meanwhile offer our readers an interesting story and discussion from its pages. Up to 1859 the mode of Swedenborg's passage from Materialism to Spiritualism was involved in obscurity. His followers tried to persuade the world that it was accomplished in high dramatic fashion—that the Lord appeared to him in London, introduced him to the angels, and requested him to write to His dictation. It is true there were a few circumstances hard to reconcile with the theatrical transaction, especially an account preserved by Mathesius, Swedish chaplain in London, wherein it was asserted that in 1744, Swedenborg was a madman. In the convenient obscurity, however, the imagination of the people of the New Jerusalem had free play, and Mathesius was hooted as a convicted slanderer who was stricken himself with insanity for his sin. Herr Klemming's discovery and publication of Swedenborg's Diary of 1744 put an end to this mystification. The Diary proved, that his transition from nature to spirit was a gradual and complicated process, and accompanied by such mental aberration as at this day would be held to justify a physician in consigning a patient to Colney Hatch or Hanwell. The Diary was translated from Swedish to English and printed, with sundry expedient omissions in that excellent periodical, *The Dawn*, for 1861-62. Mr. White has drawn largely from the pages of the Diary in his biography. Indeed no one can pretend to appreciate Swedenborg's psychological condition who does not approach it through the Diary. Its perusal tempted Mr. White to examine the relation of Mathesius, and his analysis and criticism of the case affords a fair specimen of the impartial spirit in which he treats whatever concerns his hero.

Let us premise, that in 1744 Swedenborg had taken lodgings in the house of one Brockmer in Fetter Lane, London.

Brockmer was a Moravian, and Swedenborg was in the habit of attending the Moravian Chapel in Fetter Lane. In his Diary he writes—

“By several providential leadings I was brought to the Church of the Moravian Brethren, who regard themselves as the true Lutherans. They tell each other, that they feel the operation of the Holy Spirit, and trust only in the grace of God, and the blood and merits of Christ. They are single-minded in their doings. I shall say more about them another time, for as yet I am not permitted to enter into brotherhood with them. Their church was represented to me three months before, just as I have seen it since, and all the Brethren were dressed as clergymen.”

“Our story” writes Mr. White, “is derived from the Rev. Aron Mathesius,\* who in 1768 came from Sweden to London to officiate in the Swedish Chapel. Hearing much of Swedenborg’s Spiritualism, which he is said to have held in high contempt, through accident or search he came across Brockmer, who was still living in Fetter Lane, and led him off to the house of Mr. Burgman, the Minister of the German Church in the Savoy, and in Burgman’s presence drew from Brockmer’s lips the statement we subjoin.

“Mathesius some years afterwards gave the Rev. John Wesley a copy of Brockmer’s narration, which Wesley printed in his *Arminian Magazine* for January, 1781. We have also in manuscript, in Swedish, the story directly from Mathesius’s own hand. This I have had translated, and from it print. With the exception of two or three extra details it is precisely the same as that given in the *Arminian Magazine*. Wesley introduces it to his readers with this preface—

“ ‘*Arminian Magazine, January, 1781.*

“ ‘*An Account of Baron Swedenborg.*

“ ‘The following account of a very great man, was given me by one of his own countrymen. He is now in London, as is Mr. Brockmer also, and ready to attest every part of it. In the Baron’s writings there are many excellent things: but there are

---

\* “Rev. Aron Mathesius, born in Finland, 1736. His father was the Rev. Nils Mathesius, who had 25 children, of whom Aron was the youngest. After attending school at Ulleaborg, he became student at Upsala, 1754; Phil. Dr. there, 1764. Ordained at Abo, 1767. Came to London, 1768, and assisted Pastor Ferelius, and officiated also some time at the Danish Church. Was appointed Minister of the Swedish Church, and Chaplain to the Embassy, 1773. Resigned this place and returned to Sweden, 1784, where he lived on a private estate till 1805, when he was appointed to the Rectory of Foglas, in Skara. Died 1809. Married 1789, and had two children, one son and one daughter, who are both living.”—*Anteckningar rörande Svenska Kyrkan i London, af G. W. Carlson. Stockholm, 1852, p, 153.*

many likewise which are whimsical to the last degree. And some of these may do hurt even to serious persons, whose imaginations are stronger than their judgments.' ”

*Brockmer's Narrative.*

“ In the year 1743,\* one of the Moravian Brethren, named Seniff, made acquaintance with Mr. Emanuel Swedenborg while they were passengers in a post-yacht from Holland to England. Mr. Swedenborg, who was a God-fearing man, wished to be directed to some house in London, where he might live quietly and economically. Mr. Seniff brought him to me, and I cheerfully took him in.

“ Mr. Swedenborg behaved very properly in my house. Every Sunday he went to the church of the Moravian Brothers in Fetter Lane. He kept solitary, yet came often to me, and in talking expressed much pleasure in hearing the Gospel in London. So he continued for several months approving of what he heard at the chapel.

“ One day he said to me he was glad the Gospel was preached to the poor, but complained of the learned and rich who, he thought, must go to Hell. Under this idea he continued several months. He told me he was writing a small Latin book, which would be gratuitously distributed among the learned men in the Universities of England.

“ After this he did not open the door of his chamber for two days, nor allow the maid-servant to make the bed and dust as usual.

“ One evening when I was in a coffee-house, the maid ran in to call me home, saying that something strange must have happened to Mr. Swedenborg. She had several times knocked at his door without his answering or opening it.

“ Upon this I went home, and knocked at his door, and called him by name. He then jumped out of bed, and I asked him if he would not allow the servant to enter and make his bed. He answered, No, and desired to be left alone, for he had a great work on hand.

“ This was about nine in the evening. Leaving his door and going up stairs, he rushed up after me, making a fearful appearance. His hair stood upright, and he foamed round the mouth. He tried to speak, but could not utter his thoughts, stammering long before he could get out a word.

“ At last he said, that he had something to confide to me privately, namely, that he was Messiah, that he was come to be crucified for the Jews, and that I (since he spoke with difficulty)

---

\* Should be 1744.

should be his spokesman, and go with him to-morrow to the Synagogue, there to preach his words.

"He continued, I know you are an honest man, for I am sure you love the Lord, but I fear you believe me not.

"I now began to be afraid, and considered a long time ere I replied. At last, I said, You are Mr. Swedenborg, a somewhat aged man, and as you tell me, have never taken medicine; wherefore I think some of a right sort would do you good. Dr. Smith is near, he is your friend and mine, let us go to him, and he will give you something fitted for your state. Yet I shall make this bargain with you, if the Angel appears to me and delivers the message you mention, I shall obey the same. If not, you shall go with me to Dr. Smith in the morning.'

"He told me several times the Angel would appear to me,\* whereupon we took leave of each other and went to bed.

"In expectation of the Angel I could not sleep, but lay awake the whole night. My wife and children were at the same time very ill, which increased my anxiety. I rose about 5 o'clock in the morning.

"As soon as Mr. Swedenborg heard me move over-head he jumped out of bed, threw on a gown, and ran in the greatest haste up to me, with his night-cap half on his head, to receive the news about my call.

"I tried by several remarks to prepare his excited mind for my answer. He foamed and cried again and again, But how—how—how? Then I reminded him of our agreement to go to Dr. Smith. At this he asked me straight down, Came not the vision? I answered, No; and now I suppose you will go with me to Dr. Smith; He replied, I will not go to any Doctor.

"He then spoke a long while to himself. At last he said,—I am now associating with two Spirits, one on the right hand and the other on the left. One asks me to follow you, for you are a good fellow; the other says I ought to have nothing to do with you because you are good for nothing.

"I answered, Believe neither of them, but let us thank God, who has given us power to believe in His Word.

"He then went down stairs to his room, but returned immediately, and spoke, but so confusedly that he could not be understood. I began to be frightened, suspecting that he might have a penknife or other instrument to hurt me. In my fear I addressed him seriously; requesting him to walk down stairs, as he had no business in my room.

---

\* "I know you are a good man, but I suspect you will not believe me Therefore the Angel will appear at your bedside early in the morning, then you will believe me."—Version in the *Arminian Magazine*.

"Then Mr. Swedenborg sat down in a chair and wept like a child, and said, Do you believe that I will do you any harm? I also began to weep. It commenced to rain very hard.

"After this I dressed. When I came down I found Mr. Swedenborg also dressed, sitting in an arm-chair with a great stick in his hand and the door open. He called, Come in, come in, and waved the stick. I wanted to get a coach, but Mr. Swedenborg would not accompany me.

"I then went to Dr. Smith, Mr. Swedenborg's intimate friend, and told him what had happened; and asked also that he would receive Mr. Swedenborg into his house. He had however no room for him, but engaged apartments for him with Mr. Michael Caer, wig-maker, in Warner Street, Cold Bath Fields, three or four houses from his own.

"Whilst I was with Dr. Smith, Mr. Swedenborg went to the Swedish Envoy, but was not admitted, it being post-day. Departing thence he pulled off his clothes and rolled himself in very deep mud in a gutter. Then he distributed money from his pockets among the crowd which had gathered.\*

"In this state some of the footmen of the Swedish Envoy chanced to see him, and brought him to me very foul with dirt. I told him that a good quarter had been taken for him near Dr. Smith, and asked him if he was willing to live there. He answered, Yes.

"I sent for a coach, but Mr. Swedenborg would walk, and with the help of two men he reached his new lodging.

"Arrived there, he asked for a tub of water and six towels, and entering one of the inner rooms, locked the door, and spite of all entreaties would not open it. In fear lest he should hurt himself the door was forced, when he was discovered washing his feet, and the towels all wet. He asked for six more.

"I then went home, and left six men as guards over him. Dr. Smith visited him, and administered some medicine, which did him much good.

"I went to the Swedish Envoy, told him what had happened, and required that Mr. Swedenborg's rooms, in my house, might be sealed. The Envoy was infinitely pleased with my kindness to Mr. Swedenborg, thanked me very much for all my trouble; and assured me that the sealing of Mr. Swedenborg's chambers was unnecessary as he had heard well of me, and had in me perfect confidence.

"After this I continued to visit Mr. Swedenborg, who at

---

\* "He then went to a place called Gully Hole, undressed himself, rolled in a very deep mud, and threw the money out of his pockets among the crowd."—*Arminian Magazine*.

last had only one keeper. He many times avowed his gratitude for the trouble I had with him. He would never leave the tenet, however, that he was Messiah.

“ One day when Dr. Smith had given him a laxative, he went out into the fields and ran about so fast that his keeper could not follow him. Mr. Swedenborg sat down on a stile and laughed. When his man came near him, he rose and ran to another stile, and so on.

“ When the dog-days began, he became worse and worse. Afterwards I associated very little with him. Now and then we met in the streets, and I always found he retained his former opinion.”

Mathesius adjoins to his copy this testimony—

“ The above account was word by word delivered to me by Mr. Brockmer, an honest and trustworthy man, in the house and presence of Mr. Burgman, Minister of the German Church, the Savoy, London, while Swedenborg lived.

“ Aron Mathesius.

“ Stora Hallfara, 27th August, 1796.”

“ Plainly,” says Mr. White, “ a straightforward and well-authenticated story, possible somewhat coloured by the influence of Mathesius, and by the inevitable treachery of a twenty-four years’ memory ; but fitting into the incoherences of the Diary with singular credibility, and full of touches characteristic of a timid, prudent and credulous London lodging-house keeper. Thanks are due to Mathesius for his careful preservation of a testimony, which else had died with Brockmer.

“ Robert Hindmarsh, a zealous Swedenborgian, some time in, or after 1783, accompanied by three friends, called on Brockmer, and questioned him very closely about the tale he had told Mathesius, reading it over to him from *The Arminian Magazine,*’ along with another tale (which will be presently cited) to the great alarm and confusion, we apprehend, of poor Brockmer’s mind.\* Hindmarsh professes, that Brockmer told him—

“ To the best of my knowledge and recollection some things in that account are true, others are absolutely false, and the whole is exaggerated and unfairly stated. It is true, that Swedenborg once called himself the Messiah, but not true, that he always persisted in it whenever I met him afterwards. It was true, that his hair stood upright, for as he wore a wig, it

---

\* The visit he described in a periodical of which he was publisher, entitled, *The New Magazine of Knowledge concerning Heaven and Hell, and the Universal World, of Nature, &c.* By a Society of Gentlemen. Vol. II, p. 92. March, 1791. London. The interview with Brockmer is repeated by Hindmarsh in several works, and is a stock quotation of Swedenborgian apologists.

was necessary to keep his hair cut short, in which case any person's hair will stand upright; but it is not true, that he looked frightful or wild, for he was of a most placid and serene disposition. It is true, that he had an impediment in his speech, and spoke with earnestness; but not true, that he foamed at the mouth.'

"Hindmarsh feeling how little he was taking by his motion then addressed this wide question to Brockmer—

" 'Supposing it to be true, that Swedenborg did actually see and converse with Angels and Spirits,—Did you ever observe anything in his behaviour, that might not naturally be expected on such an extraordinary occasion?'

"To which he represents Brockmer returning this accommodating answer—

" 'If I believed that to be true, I should not wonder at anything he said or did; but would rather wonder, that the surprise he must have felt on such an occasion, did not betray him into more unguarded expressions than were ever known to escape him; for he did and said nothing, but what I could easily account for in my own mind, if I really believed what he declares in his writings to be true.'

"Whether or not Hindmarsh and his three friends had muddled Brockmer's memory with readings from *The Arminian Magazine* and cross-questioning, it is plain, on his own evidence, that he did nothing substantially to upset Brockmer's testimony as delivered to Mathesius. 'Some things in it were true, some false, and the whole exaggerated,' is evidently a rhetorical flourish of Hindmarsh's; for when he condescends to particulars he is only able to make a few trifling emendations as to manner, and to adduce not anything which can be designated 'absolutely false.' Moreover Hindmarsh failed to extract from Brockmer under what circumstances he confided to Mathesius the story about his lodger. His examination of Brockmer is very unsatisfactory. In the end, even in the details where they slightly differ, we can but come to these questions, Did Brockmer speak the truth to Mathesius, or to Hindmarsh? and, Which are we to believe, Mathesius or Hindmarsh? For us, Hindmarsh does little more than provide reasons for the substantial credibility of Mathesius.

"Mathesius is reputed to have disliked Swedenborg, and Swedenborg Mathesius.\* Hindmarsh on the other hand was an out-and-out Swedenborgian devotee. There was prejudice apparently on the side of both; but another and a more impartial

---

\* When Swedenborg was dying, it was proposed to send for Mathesius to administer the Sacrament, but Swedenborg refused to see him, preferring Ferelius, another Swedish clergyman.

witness we are able to produce in the person of the Rev. Francis Okely, a Moravian preacher, who shortly before Swedenborg's death made his acquaintance, and read his books with mingled approval and dissent. Writing of Mathesius's story as published by Wesley, he remarks:—

“ ‘There is no denying that in the year 1743’ (1744), when Swedenborg was first (as he said) introduced into the Spiritual World, he was for a while insane. He then lived with Mr. Brockmer, as Mr. J. Wesley has published in his *Arminian Magazine* for January, 1781. . . . As I rather suspect J. W.'s narratives, they being always warped to his own inclination, I inquired of Mr. Brockmer concerning it, and have found all the main lines of it truth.’\* ”

“ This, I think, may be considered conclusive in favour of the truthfulness of Mathesius.

“ We now come to a painful passage connected with this affair, in which Wesley must be severely censured for some careless tattle by which he brought down odium alike on Swedenborg and Mathesius, and threw the clear and honest story of Brockmer into confusion and discredit.

“ We have seen that he printed Brockmer's story communicated to him by Mathesius in his *Arminian Magazine* for January, 1781; and so far, good. Sundry Methodists about that time had begun to look into Swedenborg's books, and ask questions concerning his doctrines; and Wesley for their guidance, at Wakefield, in May, 1782, drew up a paper, entitled *Thoughts about Swedenborg*, in which he ridiculed and contra-verted Swedenborgian opinions in a very flippant and silly manner. From press of matter, or some other cause, the article did not make its appearance in *The Arminian Magazine* until the following year, when, in the number for August, 1783, he entertained his readers with his *Thoughts* and the following astounding version of the Brockmer story—

“ ‘Many years ago the Baron came over to England, and lodged at one Mr. Brockmer's; who informed me (and the same information was given me by Mr. Mathesius, a very serious Swedish clergyman, both of whom were alive when I left London, and, I suppose, are so still), that while he was in his house he had a violent fever; in the height of which, being totally delirious, he broke from Mr. Brockmer, ran into the street stark naked, proclaimed himself the Messiah, and rolled himself in the mire. I suppose he dates from this time his admission into the society of Angels. From this time we are

---

\* From the Rev. Francis Okely's *Reflections on Baron Swedenborg's Works*, printed in the New York *New Jerusalem Messenger* of 28th December, 1861.



undoubtedly to date that peculiar species of insanity which attended him, with scarce any intermission, to the day of his death.\*

“ With the true story of Brockmer before us, communicated to Wesley by Mathesius, and printed by Wesley within three years in the same *Arminian Magazine*, we ask, can anything be more discreditable to Wesley’s veracity than this second story? It is superfluous at this day to pay compliments to Wesley for his zeal, ability, and blessed labours; these are universally confessed; but we cannot forget, that he was a sad gossip, and that truth was nearly certain to suffer when it encountered his dislike or self-will. The instance before us is no more than characteristic of his loose and unscrupulous habit of writing and speaking.

“ Hindmarsh says Brockmer told him, ‘that he had never opened his mouth on the subject of Swedenborg to Mr. Wesley;’ adding, ‘Swedenborg was never afflicted with any illness, much less a violent fever, while at my house: nor did he ever break from me in a delirious state, and run into the street stark naked, and proclaim himself the Messiah. Perhaps Mr. Wesley may have heard the report from some other person; and it is well known, that Mr. Wesley is a very credulous man, and easily imposed upon by any idle tale, from whatever quarter it may come.’

“ The narrative of Brockmer preserved by Mathesius ought to be kept entirely apart from Wesley’s, which is to be consigned, without hesitation to the refuge of lies. Although the attentive reader will at once have discerned that the two accounts have little in common, yet they are continually blended together, and Mathesius is even charged with having led Wesley astray! The late Rev. Samuel Noble, a leading Swedenborgian preacher and writer, declares† with a bold ignorance, which were it less bitter might be amusing—

“ It has given much pain to the receivers of the doctrines, communicated in the writings of Swedenborg, that the circulation of the report of his insanity should have been materially promoted by a man so much entitled to respect as the late Rev. Mr. Wesley. It is however, certain, that in the part which that respectable person took in the affair, he was completely imposed upon by the minister of the Swedish Chapel in London, Mr. Mathesius, who

\* *Arminian Magazine*, 1783, page 438.

† In *An Appeal in behalf of the Views of the Eternal World and State, and the Doctrines of Faith and Life, held by the Body of Christians, who believe, that a New Church is signified (in the Revelation, chap. xxi.) by the New Jerusalem: embracing Answers to all principal Objections.* Third edition. London, 1855, page 241. Noble’s *Appeal* among the Swedenborgians is a book which holds the same place that Barclay’s *Apology* does among the Quakers.

was Swedenborg's personal and violent enemy.\* . . . . The origin of the story was evidently no more than this, Swedenborg mentioned freely to Brockmer the commencement of his spiritual intercourse: Brockmer talked of it: and from the idle reports which thus got abroad; Mathesius, nearly forty years afterwards, fabricated the tale with which he imposed on Mr. Wesley. This fact is alone sufficient to fix the brand of imposture on the whole story.'

"Not content with bringing such a gratuitous charge of 'fabrication' and 'imposture' against Mathesius, Mr. Noble next proceeds to assert, that Mathesius himself went mad. With that malice, affecting reluctance, in which the pious are such adepts, he observes—

"We are by no means prone to assume the distribution of Divine judgments; but it really is difficult to avoid thinking, that we behold one here. All must allow it to be a remarkable coincidence, that the man, who first imputed insanity to Swedenborg, and was the chief cause of its being believed by others, should himself have experienced the deplorable visitation, and continued insane through the remainder of his life. . . . All the accounts agree: and thus evident it is, that into the pit, which this unhappy man digged for another, did he fall himself.'

"The 'accounts which agree' are of next to no authority whatever; they are three. The first is the anonymous preface to an *Abrege des Ouvrages d'Emanuel Swedenborg*, published at Stockholm in 1788, in which it is stated, that Mathesius had become insane, and was then living as a madman in Stockholm; the second, is the assertion of Mr. C. B. Wadstrom, a Swede, resident in London, and one of the editors of an early Swedenborgian publication, *The New Jerusalem Magazine*; and the third, and very likely the origin of the other two, is the testimony of Bergstrom, the keeper of a Swedish inn, the King's Arms, in Wellclose Square, London, where Swedenborg once lodged for ten weeks, and was as Bergstrom said, 'very generous to him.' Mr. Provo† visited Bergstrom on the 2nd of May, 1787, when he says he told him, that—

"Mr. Mathesius was an opponent of Swedenborg, and said that he was a lunatic; but it is remarkable, that he went lunatic

---

\* That Mathesius was 'Swedenborg's personal and violent enemy' is merely an inference or colouring of Noble's, and one quite unwarranted. There is no evidence that the two men ever came in contact. Mathesius apparently had no belief in Swedenborg's claims and doctrines, and this incredulity was in all likelihood the extent of his aversion.

† Mr. Peter Provo, a surgeon in London, author of a book entitled *Wisdom's Dictates*. He collected from Bergstrom and others various particulars relating to Swedenborg, which were first published in *The Intellectual Repository*, a Swedenborgian magazine, in 1836.

himself; which happened one day when he was in the Swedish church, and about to preach: *I was there and saw it*: he has been so ever since, and was sent back to Sweden, where he now is: this was about four years ago.'

"It is certainly of little consequence to us at this day whether Mathesius went mad or not; and the fact of his sanity or insanity in 1784 in no wise affects the truth of the narrative he drew out of Brockmer about 1770; yet one cannot see the 'Divine judgments' thus foolishly and vindictively distributed on the trumpety evidence of an anonymous preface, the assertion of a Swedenborgian editor, and the gossip of a publican to whom Swedenborg had been handsome, without at least permitting the facts of Mathesius's life to speak for themselves. Mathesius, neither by the records of the Swedish Church, nor to the knowledge of his relatives was ever insane. After working and preaching for sixteen years in the smoke of the east of London his health failed, and possibly Bergstrom may have seen him faint or fall into a fit in his chapel, and mistake some incoherent words for madness. In consequence of his failing health, he resigned his charge in 1784, and returned to country life, in his native air, in Sweden. Five years subsequently he married; in 1805 he was appointed Rector of Foglas, a living in Bishop Svedberg's diocese of Skara; and died in 1809 at the ripe age of three score and thirteen, leaving behind him a son and daughter, who yet survive. These facts nullify utterly the statement, that 'Mathesius went lunatic and continued insane to the end of his life.' Sweeping aside, then, the scandal of Wesley against Swedenborg on the one hand, and the scandal of the Swedenborgians against Mathesius on the other, let us relate one other story connected with this period.

"It is derived from the preface of a book\* published 1786 by Benedict Chastanier, a French surgeon, resident in London. Alluding to Brockmer's and to Wesley's stories, which, after the manner of the Swedenborgians, he mixes together, he writes—

" 'This fable had its origin in the following circumstance; One day Swedenborg, while in his own house, fell into a swoon, or a kind of extasy, or rapture of soul in the presence of two Jews. They, profiting by his absence of mind, stole his gold watch. Awakening, Swedenborg quickly discovered, that his watch had been taken from under the bolster of his bed, and at once asked the Jews to give it up. 'Do you not know,' said they, 'that in your trance you took your watch, went out into

---

\* *Tableau Analytique et Raisonné de la doctrine Céleste de l'Eglise de la Nouvelle Jerusalem, ou Précis des Œuvres Théologiques d' Emanuel Swedenborg, fidèle Serviteur du Seigneur Jesus Christ. A Londres, se trouve chez l'Auteur, No. 62, Tottenham Court Road, 1786.*

the street, and threw it into the gutter?' Swedenborg contented himself in answering, 'My friends, you know what you say is false.' Being afterwards advised to give the thieves up to justice, he answered, 'It is not worth the trouble. By this action these good Israelites have wronged themselves more than me. The Lord have mercy on them!' An answer right worthy of Swedenborg.'

"Chastanier adduces the name Mr. C. Springer, Swedish Consul in London, and a friend of Swedenborg's, in confirmation of the truth of this odd anecdote. It is too French to be quite credible; and it certainly does not explain away Brockmer any more than does Mr. Noble's more unscrupulous vituperation."

In winding up the recital of this section of Swedenborg's life Mr. White properly observes:—

"Most readers of this chapter of Dreams, Visions, Temptations, and Extasies will be ready to exclaim, 'The man had gone mad!'—an opinion I am careless to contest. Ifreely admit, for it would be sheer perversity to do otherwise, that a production like the Book of Dreams would be held as sufficient warrant for the consignment of any author to a lunatic asylum; but, having made this admission, I do not see that we are a bit wiser, or that we have made the slightest advance towards a comprehension of Swedenborg's case. It is only pert scientific ignorance which imagines, that Swedenborg's life and writings for seven and twenty years subsequent to 1745 are in any way accounted for by asserting, that he was out of his mind in 1744. Not all the jargon gathered from the most learned treatises of the most enlightened 'mad Doctors' will avail to impose such a conclusion on any intellect in which common sense is stronger than scientific credulity.

"Considering, that Swedenborg was at this time at the crisis of a great physical, intellectual, and spiritual change, I have no surprise to spare for any aberrations of thought, speech or behaviour into which he may have fallen. He was staggering in confusion between old darkness and an excess of new light. As Carlyle says—'Such transitions are ever full of pain: thus the eagle when he moults is sickly; and, to attain his new beak, must harshly dash off the old one upon the rocks.' We ought to remember what an assemblage of delicate conditions are requisite to the perfection of sanity of mind, and how the absence of one, or the slight derangement of a few, seriously affects it. In this respect the question is more easily raised than answered, Whether indeed anybody is sane? We all know how a dyspeptic stomach blackens, and how a bottle of wine glorifies the world, and how the thoughts of the one state

are as folly to the other. The truth perhaps is, that mental, like physical sanity, is merely an ideal perfection at which we all aim, and more or less nearly approach, but never attain; and that in some degree we are all crazed, as we are all diseased; but as we are only numbered among the sick when we are worse than ordinary so only are we reckoned among the mad when our craze exceeds conventional bounds, and becomes offensive or dangerous to our neighbours. I apprehend, that in the very nature of things, the changes Swedenborg underwent were necessarily attended with violent deflections from the centre of sanity. The most self-possessed philosopher passing through a fever may be delirious, but we do not judge him by his sayings and doings in that delirium: nor is Swedenborg to be judged by his Book of Dreams. He is a fool, who comes to conclusions in the dust and din and agony of the process, and has neither the patience nor forethought to wait for the result. If Swedenborg had gone on writing to 1772 in the style of 1744, there would certainly be no need for any of us to trouble our heads about him; but, as we shall endeavour to show, he emerged from the horrible valley of illusions and spectres, through which we have been following him, not only with his old faculties purified and invigorated, but with his inner eyes opened to the men and scenery of the Inner World of Spirit, and with an intellect irradiated with the very Wisdom of Heaven."

Fetter Lane is haunted with religious memories. Mr. White writes:—

"It is disappointing, that Swedenborg says not one word further concerning his visits to the Moravian Chapel there. Possibly they were discontinued after his removal from Brockmer's to Dr. Smith's in Cold Bath Fields. The Chapel in Fetter Lane is an old building. It escaped the Great Fire of 1666, and appears to have undergone no change beyond paint and whitewash since those awful nights when it was lighted up with the flames of the burning city. Whoever desires to form a correct idea of the gaunt ugliness of a Puritan meeting-house of the 17th century could not do better than pay the Chapel in Fetter Lane a visit. It is a place sanctified with not a few precious memories. From its pulpit Richard Baxter 'preached as a dying man to dying men, as though he might never see them more.' In it John Wesley in 1738 formed his first Society, which was joined by so many Moravians that they swamped his influence and overthrew his councils. This, he was not the man to endure. He wrestled with the invaders, he charged them with holding false doctrine, he denounced them as Antinomians, but all in vain. They maintained, 'that Believers are no more bound to obey the works of the law than the subjects of the

King of England are bound to obey the laws of the King of France.' The mass of the Society became estranged from him, and at last he resolved to withdraw. After a serious address on Sunday, 20th July, 1740, in which he told them, their opinions were flat contrary to the Word of God, he took his leave, drawing only some score of members after him.

"After Wesley's departure the Moravians prospered abundantly, teaching the doctrine of Salvation by Faith Alone without qualification, and in the most superficial, mechanical, and forensic sense. It is indeed to be regretted, that in such a school Swedenborg received his early impressions of formal theology; for we often think, that the unconscious caricature and the hardness of many of his subsequent views of the Religion of Protestants are to be attributed to the converse and preaching of the United Brethren in Fetter Lane in those days when his mind was awakening to an interest in Divine things."

---



---

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

---

No. II.

IN continuing these "Notes," my first duty is to correct an error in my last as to the Christian name of Dr. Gray, whose evidence in relation to the wonderful phenomena recorded by Mr. L., of New York, is of so much importance. Fortunately, the same number of the magazine contained, in its first article, an admirable letter from Dr. Gray himself, in which of course his correct Christian name is given—John F. The mistake of "James" in my article might lead some to suppose another Dr. Gray, but this correction will I trust, prevent the erroneous supposition spreading far. I may not leave this allusion to the doctor without remarking how completely his excellent letter confirms, in every particular, my report of his conversation.

One of the most striking general experiences in relation to Spiritualism which I had in the United States, was, that its votaries were far from being as numerous and influential as, from the estimates which had been made public, we in this country had been led to believe. I was indeed surprised to find so small a proportion of the persons I met believers; and of those who were believers, so small a proportion ready openly to acknowledge and maintain their belief. And I was still more surprised to find the reason for the latter circumstance exactly the same there as it is here—a sort of moral proscription, which shall surely involve the loss of caste, (if there be any to lose,) socially

and commercially to every one who dares publicly to proclaim his faith in the tabooed truth. That such should be the case in the conservative old country, was a matter of course; but that it should likewise prevail in young, free-minded America, with its assumed independent individualism, and the asserted wide-spread acceptance of the spiritual manifestations as indubitable verities, was an unlooked-for experience. Even out in the West, in a city of some 15,000 inhabitants, the only man of education who had ventured to devote himself to the practical application of truths which to him were of momentous import and unquestionable value, was deserted, and almost disowned by his friends, though, instead of anything derogatory being really attributable to him, he was universally acknowledged an upright, and honourable, and highly intelligent man—but he was “one of those Spiritualists,” and, moreover, in himself “a healing medium;” and was not that reason sufficient why he should be avoided, not alone by his social compeers, but even by his own relatives? In that city, as in many others throughout the States, I have no doubt there were not a few Nicodemians—secret believers who thought social position of more consequence than that which might be gained by its temporary sacrifice, but the main body of Spiritualists belonged to the lower ranks of the people, who had little or nothing to lose; and judging from the slender support afforded to the only professional mediums in the place, in one of whom the gentleman alluded to placed great faith as a “discerner of spirits” and diagnoser of disease, I should say that the number of the faithful in the locality was by no means great. It certainly was not equal to the average per-centage claimed for the people generally. Only the other day I heard it asserted, by a well-informed legal gentleman, that Judge Edmonds had estimated the number of Spiritualists in the United States at five millions, which would be one-sixth of the entire population. If this estimate be anything like the truth, the people must have an extraordinary gift for concealing their opinions, and some inscrutable controlling motive for so doing, or my experience amongst them must have been too limited in its range to make it any criterion. One cannot help, however, being influenced by his own observations and inquiries, and were even ten per cent. of the people of the States where the subject has been most fully discussed and demonstrated—the Eastern States—shewn to be Spiritualists, I should confess surprise.

Of course, I speak of Spiritualists in the special sense: those, namely, who acknowledge the validity of the modern manifestations, not those who are Spiritualists from abstract speculation, or theological training, or traditional influence, who are often the most bigoted opponents of the modern evidences. And

under this definition, unless my experience is entirely deceptive, ten per cent. or in round numbers, three millions of the whole population North and South, would be an extreme allowance. I cannot otherwise account for the backwardness of those in the commercial and professional classes in acknowledging their faith. In the main, it is only those who are either too high or too low to be influenced by "society," who can afford to openly declare themselves. The middle men must suffer, and true martyr spirits are a minority in every community. It requires some "back-bone" in the new world as in the old, to publicly avow an unpopular creed. To do so innocuously a man has first to make himself in some other respect essential to the community in which he lives, so that *it* cannot afford to do without *him*; and few have the power to accomplish so much. Even exceptional men of this stamp (of whom a notable example is found in Dr. John F. Gray) cannot escape the attempt to injure them, though they can afford to smile at it. But even Dr. Gray, himself, had to pass through the usual ordeal, the backbitings of professional envy, the whisperings of commiserating friendship, the *odium theologicum*, the gratuitous expostulations of ignorant goodness and so forth. One of the most amusing instances I heard of the better class of these interferences was that of a visit paid the doctor by a dignitary of the Episcopal Church, no less a man than a bishop who subsequently took a conspicuous part in the Southern rebellion. This distinguished person introduced his errand to Dr. Gray by expressing the deepest concern and sorrow, that a gentleman of his professional standing and ability should be given up to such extravagant notions as that the dead could intromit with the living, or be even permitted by Providence such a liberty, allowing, for argument's sake, its possibility. The doctor meekly requested his visitor to forbear a commiseration which he was not conscious of deserving, and, meanwhile, inform him of the grounds upon which he, a Christian minister, ventured to impugn a doctrine and a fact upon which his own professed faith was founded. The Bishop was rather taken aback at finding himself thus suddenly thrown on the defensive; but, quickly recovering his attitude of attack, defied the Doctor to prove the assertion he had now made as to the foundations of the Christian faith. With perfect gravity and the quiet superiority of a master, the Doctor carried his pupil through the various instances recorded in the Old Testament of the intromissions of the dead with the living and the living with the dead—the appearances of angels in the form of men, the cases of Baalam, the Witch of Endor and others—down to those of the New Testament, commenting particularly on the appearance of Moses and Elias conversing with Christ and "strengthening"



him for his coming trial. At every instance adduced the Bishop had his opportunity of antagonal exposition, and availed himself of it to explain away the facts in the most approved methods of modern criticism. Slowly but surely, however, the Doctor's deliberate but relentless logic drove him from position after position, until, giving up all the rest, he finally took shelter in the resort, that though the Doctor had proved from the volume whose truth he was bound to acknowledge the fact of spiritual intercourse, he had not to his judgment proved that the spirits were those of departed human beings. The cases of Samuel invoked by the Witch of Endor, and of Moses and Elias ministering to Christ, were too special and peculiar, in the Bishop's idea, to cover the general inference. One step further, therefore, this reverend Father in God had to be led; but being a man of remarkable transparency and candour, he gave up the argument at once, when to these instances was added the one of the Apostle John, in Rev. xix. 10, rebuked by the spirit he was going to worship in these notable words, "*See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus.*" A wiser and not a sadder man, the good Bishop retired, ashamed haply at having been foiled with his own weapons, and convicted of ignorance of the very records which contain the revelation he had been consecrated to teach; but thenceforth he at least could as little impugn the Doctor's judgment in this relation as in the science and art of his special profession, in which his superiority was universally acknowledged.

The example of Dr. Gray appears to me to be one of exceeding beauty and value, worthy of universal imitation. Not needlessly thrusting his opinions upon unwilling ears, yet never evading their frank avowal when occasion demanded it; perfectly cognizant of possible consequences, but with quiet mind accepting them; equally far from bravado as from pusillanimity, seeking no martyrdom, courting no hostility, provoking no honest wrath, giving no colourable pretext to enmity, but with serene reliance simply on the right, maintaining sweetly the integrity of his own soul, and willing to suffer all that ignorance or baseless malevolence, or prejudice, or misapprehension might engender, he held on the even tenour of his way, assured that entire justice would be done him at last, but no less ready to pay the penalty if it should not, content with whatever might befall. Temporarily his practice or professional status might suffer; soon it was regained. Those he served could less afford to do without him than he without them. Thus should it be with all upholders of unpopular truths: thus, at least, in effort on their part. Each in his or her own sphere should endeavour to shew such personal efficiency and worth,

that the opinions they maintain shall not suffer by *their* alliance. It is, perhaps, one of the deepest griefs a sensitive nature can endure, to find his failure in any walk visited upon his cherished faith, and he unable to deny the impeachment. The argument may be fallacious, but the fact remains; and its effect will be healthy or the reverse, according as it is accepted. Happy, alike for the individual and the cause, if, while it conduces to modesty, it stimulates true ambition to make the future redeem the past.

But to leave these reflections and return to my main theme. The transition from the highly cultivated scientific physician, to the sympathetic, psychologic and comparatively unlettered one, is easy—and, by the association of contrast, not unnatural. Dr. J. R. Newton was pursuing his wonderful avocation when from the West I returned to New York. To pay his sanatorium a visit, was with me a matter of duty as well as delight. It was a Saturday afternoon when I called, and the hour for the Healer's retirement to the country for his weekly rest and recuperation was not far off, but my call I believe postponed his departure. The door-keeper first ushered me into the "office" where I was requested to be seated, as Dr. Newton was at present engaged. Another person waited for access as well as myself, and a gentleman sat before a desk in another part of the room, apparently busy with an account-book of considerable dimensions. A notice conspicuously placed above his desk informed applicants for treatment, that they were expected to pay according to their means: the poor only were treated gratuitously. After sitting some time, I became doubtful about the opportunity I might have of seeing the mode of the Doctor's operations, and bethought me of sending up my card, notwithstanding the apparent infraction of rule in this proceeding. The attendant very speedily returned with a cordial invitation for me to go up stairs, and on following him up, I was introduced to the far-famed medium, who had been working energetically with his coat off, the perspiration streaming over his face, and his whole countenance lit-up with remarkable energy and benevolence. The patient he had been treating was an elderly man, who had suffered from paralysis of the legs, and had come to him with crutches. This man was making his way down stairs without artificial aids, but not to the satisfaction of his physician, who rapidly passed me, and following him down stairs, insisted upon his taking the steps with each leg alternately, not as he was doing, leading always with the same foot, and drawing the other after only to the same level. By strong impulsion, and "passes" directed upon each leg, the Doctor succeeded in inspiring him with faith in his own ability, and he took the remainder of the somewhat

long stair handsomely, step by step, as required, though with the gait of one long unused to such exertion.

On the Doctor's return, he remarked that it was quite necessary to keep the patients up to the mark, and not allow them to waver or gravitate into the old ruts of habit, as many had more or less a tendency to. The man who had just gone down was caught in the nick of time, his progress confirmed, and the cure even advanced a stage by the vital energy thrown upon him and excited in him. Dr. Newton possesses what the American phrenologists term the vital temperament in a very high degree; that is, all the internal organs of digestion, respiration and circulation, which manufacture and distribute vitality, large and remarkably healthy; a capacious brain with a finely developed frontal lobe, especially in the organs of sympathy, benevolence, wonder and the reasoning faculties, supported by a no less vigorous development of the lower affectional organs. He literally overflows with human sympathy and irrepressible vital energy; and his faith both in himself and in the powers which environ and sustain him is consummate and without flaw, not to be affected even by failure, and apparently unsusceptible of increase by any amount of success. His outflux of good nature is a continuous stream, which the imputation of humbug and charlatanism does not disturb. "If it be humbug," says he, "to effect these cures," alluding to some special cases which had been referred to, "I should like to see some more of it. If it be charlatanism to cure what the regular faculty have pronounced incurable, all I say is, that I am happy to be the medium of the work and don't care a fig for the name."

"Some of the cures, it is said, are not lasting," continued the Doctor, "but it is not pretended that persons can be kept from renewing the courses which brought on their diseases; and even if some do not last when that reason cannot be seen to apply, they can be overbalanced by permanent cures which there is no gainsaying." In illustration, he told me the case of a young woman who had been given up by medical men as utterly beyond hope, but who was suddenly cured by his means years ago, and remained an incontestable proof of his position. I made no note of the details of this case and cannot trust myself to specify the ailments from which recovery was made; but they were of an extreme character. As our conversation progressed a young lady, the picture of health, entered the room to do some household operation, and was introduced to me as the patient in question.

About the same time a gentleman, apparently about thirty-five years of age, called in, accompanied by another seemingly about twenty years older. The latter was a tallish man; or

rather, the wreck of a man, though now in process of recovery. He had come to receive farther treatment, and to ascertain whether he might venture to travel some distance into the country. I was interested in watching the process pursued with him. Opening his clothes so as to obtain access to the chest and stomach—the seats of the disease—the Doctor abstracted himself by closing his eyes, brought his face close to the body of the patient, and breathing deeply, and invoking a blessing, spoke to the disease as if it were an intelligent entity, commanding it to be gone. Acting thus with undivided will and unwavering faith, he soon announced, as if he saw, that great progress had been made towards convalescence, and that the patient might safely go to the country; in fact, that it would do him great good to go: and then he gave him some directions which he enjoined him carefully to follow as to diet and regimen, and he might, observing these, throw all care to the winds. This gentleman, the proprietor of one of the New York Journals, had come to Dr. Newton in a terribly dilapidated condition, lungs, liver, and stomach, all used up, and his whole organization “a walking shadow,” with walking power reduced to its feeblest manifestation. These vital organs were now rapidly recovering tone and his general strength had been so much and so speedily restored, that his case was regarded as nothing short of miraculous. I could however, better appreciate the case of the younger gentleman, who, though now in robust health, turned out to have been an old patient of the same physician. Two years before, if I remember his story correctly, he had come to the Doctor a cripple on crutches, with his right leg bent towards the thigh, its tendons shortened and fixed, so that he could not put the foot to the ground. In this state it had been for years, and the calf and thigh were wasted away with running sores. On his very first call, he told me, Dr. Newton straightened his leg and discarded the crutches. The sores then commenced to heal up, the wasted muscles to grow; “and now,” said he, turning up his trousers and showing me his leg, “you see it is as sound and as serviceable as ever it was.” I both saw and felt it. The marks of the old sores were very distinct, but in other respects the leg was free from blemish. It was, moreover, a remarkably well developed and vigorous member; and this young man affirmed that he owed all his restoration from decrepitude and untold suffering to the simple agency of Dr. Newton.

On returning down stairs I met a gentleman from Massachusetts, a plain but intelligent farmer-looking man, who had a few days before brought his daughter on a bed all the way to New York, to try, as a last resource, Dr. Newton's wonderful powers. When the Doctor saw the girl, and the condition to

which she had been reduced, even his stout heart almost faltered. He set to work as usual, however, and within a quarter of an hour he had the damsel sitting up and helping herself—a thing she had not done for many a long day before—and it was now considered that she, who was not expected to live to reach New York, would in a very short time be enabled to return home as an ordinary traveller without assistance. The father's response to my enquiry was, that it was beyond his comprehension. All he could say was, in the strong Eastern hyperbole, "that whereas my daughter was dead, now she liveth."

What now is to be said of the *modus operandi* of these marvellous cures?

The first thing of obvious remark is, that the visible operator is a man of unusual bodily and mental energy. Physiologically, he is a battery of immense vital magnetic power. And the whole congeries of his faculties physical and mental, under his all-commanding faith, is a unit, which acts towards the end in view with unbroken force. Viewing him merely as a mesmeriser, or magnetiser, therefore, he is one of the most powerful, perhaps, that modern times have witnessed.

Mesmeric power, to be efficient in the highest degree, must descend from the mental to the bodily, not the converse. First establish confidence in the mind of the patient, and mental harmony with the operator, and every avenue to the physical or physiological influence of the latter is opened; and, so far as disease can be subdued by healthy magnetism, the best conditions are afforded, assuming perfect health in the operator, for the influence being superlatively potential and sanatory.

Now, Dr. Newton's mental constitution is eminently of the kind which possesses this attractive power over a very large class of persons. It is pervaded by good will; it is, indeed, so ebullient of all the humanities, moral and social, that his very presence inspires hope. His own assurance in the efficacy of the powers invoked and exerted transforms hope into faith; and this condition in the patient, co-operating with all the curative principles and agencies in the universe with which the sufferer is in relation, produces the extraordinary hygienic effects which have attended the ministrations of this man so wonderfully endowed with "the gifts of healing."

It will be observed that these premises comprehend material, organic, mental and spiritual principles both external and internal to the patient. Of these the internal principle of faith is one of the most potent; and if the convictions of the healer enable him to direct that to the end in view as not a mere possibility or probability but an unquestionable certainty, the means he otherwise employs and invokes will be co-ordinated to

the result with the greatest efficiency. How much of these means are real, how much imaginary, can never be calculated. Possibly the imaginary are potential as well as the real! Certainly, there is much evidence to shew that what are called imaginary—aye! even what may truly be so—are, if believed in, more potential than the real in which there is no belief. Does any one see a meaning in this for the apostolic doctrine touching “the things that are not,” bringing “to nought things that are?” However this may be, the operative principle, in such cases, is clearly *belief*. But what is that which touches the susceptibilities and imagination of the patient so as to control belief?

In Dr. Newton's case it is obviously his great mesmeric force which impresses his own suggestions and convictions upon the minds of his patients. From many he gains such implicit credence in his power, that his slightest motion or expression controls their nervous energies in the direction desired. In them his most rapid and so-called miraculous cures are effected. In others much greater exertions are required as well as frequent repetitions, and the cures are more protracted, and only certain in proportion as the growth of faith keeps the individual in relation to the curative means. In others his influence has been great for the moment; they have felt completely cured; but after leaving him their assurance has begun to decline, until finally they have relapsed into the old condition of disease; and these are the cases “which do not last.” In still other cases, though the Doctor's operations and personal manifestations, including his own confidence, may be exactly the same, the effects are entirely different. Instead of exciting faith, he has only stimulated criticism. Every avenue for the reception of his influence is closed; not only so, but a positive force of scepticism is watching and neutralising all his efforts; and he himself, so absorbed in the outflux of his own forces, is insensible to theirs, so that he is unconscious of the effect upon them, and asseverates his assurance of cure just as in the former cases. Of course, not only is the curative result *nil*; the parties go away internally convinced he is a “humbug,” and are not long in giving voice to their convictions.

In the last class of cases the probability is, that independently of being of an originally sceptical turn of mind, and possessing no experience of mesmeric operations, the parties probably discover Dr. Newton's intellectual culture to be inferior to their own. This only intensifies their sceptical and critical disposition, precludes respect so far as it operates, and effectually antagonizes his best efforts to reach their friendship and confidence. Serenely unconscious of any impediment in themselves, they honestly believe him to be a mere pretender, and his imputed powers a

fraud upon the community. In vain are they referred to the undeniable cures effected in other cases; enough for them is the failure in their own. And I doubt not these same parties would report, and with sincerity, that they had gone to him "anxious to be cured," and presenting therefore, in their own estimation, the best opportunity for him to prove his imputed powers if he really possessed them. But the facts of nature remain after their incredulity has had its say. The powers of a Greater than Dr. Newton were limited by the same principle: "And he did not many mighty works there *because of their unbelief*."

Does any reader imagine that by attributing so much potency to faith I am excluding the operation of other powers, and sustaining the hypothesis that these cures are altogether subjective, or subjective at least after the first impression has been made on the believing patient?

If any do, my intent will have been gravely mis-apprehended. The believer in the broader hypothesis can very well afford to do full justice to the purely subjective one. I do not argue as a partizan of any hypothesis; but simply as a seeker for truth, caring nothing where I am landed, so that that inestimable jewel be but found. The suggestions I venture to throw out are, therefore, to be taken as tentative merely, by no means as final. At the same time, always subject to possible modifications from advancing knowledge, I hold immediate opinions with becoming firmness; and do not hesitate to declare my present conviction that the subjective hypothesis, though it reaches a considerable way, is inadequate to explain the facts, and that the theory which maintains the verity of both internal and external forces, the latter comprehending the operation of intelligent spiritual agents, is alone capable of resolving all difficulties and affording for all the phenomena a satisfactory explanation.

But, as already indicated, some of the readers of this *Magazine* will, I fear, imagine that I am ready to admit too much to the supporters of the merely subjective hypothesis, the tendency of their minds being, on the contrary, to refer everything to the action of disembodied spirits. They little know the force of the facts which can be marshalled to the support of that doctrine, if they think so. Have they ever heard of the case of the patient that called on Sir Astley Cooper, who, being engaged at the time on enquiries connected with the temperature of the human system under disease, inserted the bulb of a thermometer beneath the patient's tongue? To Sir Astley's surprise, the man (mistaking the intention of the experiment) exclaimed, on the thermometer being removed, that he felt an improvement already! The wise physician saw the patient's mistaken idea, that *this* was the curative operation he had to undergo, and,

quietly accepting the hint, requested him to return at the same hour another day. The patient obeyed, and with due regularity the simple operation was continued until the malady under which he suffered, without medicine or any other apparent agency but his own erroneous imagination, was completely cured!

On the other hand, the extreme supporters of the imagination or subjective hypothesis are no less oblivious of the equally remarkable cases in which that subtle agency, the patient's own thought, could have no concern. In addition to which, I am not sure that they do entire justice to the surrounding conditions and active agencies under which even what seem their own special cases *must* be worked out. A man's belief in the efficacy of any given means not only combines all his subjective forces to their aid, thereby increasing their intrinsic potency where they have any, and conferring it where they have none, but likewise places him in happy relationship with the external agencies of nature whereby he unconsciously assimilates their curative virtues. Fresh air, sunshine, agreeable odours, all active properties of material things which supply stimulus to the bodily system, have exhilarating effects upon the trusting and hopeful, but refuse their benefits to the victims of doubt and despair. If the means employed imply the agency of spiritual beings, it is obvious that belief in the existence and ability of such "ministering spirits" must correspondingly influence the result. A vast theme for discussion opens before us, but I dare no farther pursue it in this place. Enough that these hints will shew the bias of my thought as to Dr. Newton's operations, and supply answers to the suppositions and criticisms of American friends with whom I was brought into contact in relation to the subject before leaving New York.

It will be seen that I have not hesitated throughout to give to this gentleman the courtesy of the title "Doctor," though I believe he bears no diploma from any constituted body possessing the right to bestow such distinctions. In America there is a peculiar looseness in the attribution and assumption of titles of all kinds; and as he universally receives the cognomen there, it would be mere prudery to deny it here. Besides, he unquestionably holds a patent of physicianship from a higher court than any of human institution; and were the right to the title to be determined by the number and obstinacy of the diseases completely cured, I doubt whether any of the regular faculty could put in a claim at all to be compared with his.

A. L.

---



## JOHN DARREL, THE EXORCIST.

By WILLIAM HOWITT.

NOTHING is more amusing than the imagined wisdom of a man ignorant where he thinks himself especially enlightened. This amusement meets us, Spiritualists, on all hands in the books and journals of the present day, when they talk on subjects of this nature. It has been assumed as a great and luminous fact, that the science of recent times has effectually exposed and put to flight the superstitions of what are called the Dark Ages. Everything relating to spiritual manifestation, including demoniac possession, witchcraft and apparitions, men of science—and from them men of all sorts—have set down as the deplorable delusions of the past ; and they believe that they have rendered an incalculable benefit to mankind by the demonstration of this weakness of human nature. “The broad day of this nineteenth century ;” “these enlightened times ;” “this noon-tide of science before which spectres and prejudices flee like owls before the dawn ;” “this era of intellect ;” “this proud epoch of the schoolmaster abroad,” are phrases bandied about with a feeling of assurance that we stand immensely above the heads of all our ancestors, and can smile condescendingly at them as the children who were the fathers of the man, but not the man himself.

The complacency with which men of science, of philosophy, of literature regard themselves and their illumination in this respect, is, as I have said, an amusing spectacle to all ; and there are now very large numbers, who are become aware by the outcroppings on the surface of society of a legion of significant facts, that so far from having outlived and dispersed the Dark Ages, as it regards everything relating to the grand science of psychology and the true light of the spiritual side of this world, and the whole body and compass of the next, the so-called Dark Ages were in reality the Light Ages of Spiritual Knowledge ; and of pneumatic and theological knowledge. Take, for instance, such a book as Dr. Cudworth’s “Intellectual System of the Universe.” It may safely be said that it contains more sound learning in all the phases of theologic philosophy than all the books issued on these topics in the present day of imagined light. Before such a book your Strausses, Renans, Ecce Homos, and all the volumes of Newman and Maurice, are as the shallow waters of a meadow flood to the depth and volume of the ocean.

Truly, when we walk into a grand temple of logical and

classical erudition like this, we feel how feeble and superficial are all the pretentious sceptics, sciolists, and doctrinal theorists of the present day. The best of these writers erects his theory on such mere gratuitous assumptions; on treating the Sacred History as a warehouse of spiritual goods, where he may take what he pleases, and leave what he pleases, and thus construct a temple of lame faith, or of still more decrepit infidelity, which shall make the public wonder, and the lazy race of novel readers and periodical readers imagine that they see some profound wisdom—that for such effeminate souls to sit down to Cudworth, must be to confound them as by a sight into the abysses of eternity. With all the torrents of print which are poured forth on the question of the authenticity and the sound and unstrained meaning of the sacred records, and the flashy volumes which ever and anon are received as nine days' wonders of psychologic or theologic genius, there is not one whose writer dare take his stand on the biblical history, as based on the ordinary evidences of history, or on a candid acceptance of the New Testament narrative as an historic narrative, without groundless omissions and as groundless assumptions.

Whilst our theologians tamper thus freely and dishonestly with the truth, and our scientific men, debased by the daily eating of the diet of materialism, actually renounce their origin at the hands of God, and seek to affiliate themselves on an ancestry of monkeys, we talk of the dark days of the past, amid the pitiable imbecilities of the present. We talk of hallucinations and delusions, as if there could possibly be a greater hallucination or delusion than materialism. Men, who have come to think half our nature better than the whole, and the earth of a short life than the infinite world of eternal essences, smile superciliously at us when we tell them that there are continents beyond the little planetary island where they walk, as the monks of Salamanca smiled at the western world when announced to them by Columbus,—those hoary dreamers deeming the only practical man a dreamer of the wildest type. We have even Spiritualists telling us to throw our whole reliance on Comte, Buckle, Mill, and such men, who dare not rely on their own doctrines, for if they follow the positive—if they take facts, and facts only—they must venture to look at the thousands of present facts which demonstrate irresistibly, things and regions which are to them as fables.

Thus it is, that we practical men, the Spiritualists, the only practical men who dare to follow the practical to its ultimates, are daily in our reading, obliged to laugh at the grotesque vauntings, caperings, and chucklings of men who think they are in the light-land of Goshen, when they are really in the lowest

Egypt of night as it regards a number of things, as clearly and extensively proved as the existence of antipodes.

One of these gentlemen so felicitously satisfied that he was walking in the brightest light of this bright nineteenth century, and who cut his jokes on the follies of believing in ghosts, possessions and witchcraft, with a jolly delight in his emancipation from such baneful superstitions, was Dr. Cooke Taylor, whom I very well remember some years ago, about the London press, and who, in 1842, published in two volumes *The Romantic Biography of the Age of Elizabeth*. In the second volume of this work is a chapter on "John Darrel, the Exorcist." Dr. Cooke Taylor is like the majority of the literary men of this "enlightened nineteenth," of course, extremely facetious about St. Dunstan pulling the nose of the devil, St. Catherine boxing his ears, St. Francis making him hold a candle till he burnt his fingers, and St. Bernard rolling him up into a chariot wheel. And having done this, he is satisfied that he has settled the business of ghosts, possessions and witchcraft, as being so many absurdities invented by the like canonical fathers for the amusement of those dark ages.

He attributes all the horrors of burning witches, of course, to this grovelling superstition, instead of placing it to the account of that persecuting spirit which burnt saints as well as witches, and which had much better have let them both alone. If these burners and persecutors had understood either real Christianity or psychology, they would not have dreamed of destroying demoniacs, but of healing them as our Saviour did; nor of taking a poor creature for a witch, because she happened to be an old woman with a crooked back and hooked nose, made irritable by a rabble of rude lads hooting at her wherever she appeared. The horrors of witch trials and witch burnings did not arise from the belief in the existence of witches or demoniacs, but in the same ignorance which now prevails of the true nature of such things, and the true signs of their existence. If Christianity be true, such affections of humanity are real, and the mode of treating them is laid down in the same sacred volume which asserts the fact of such spiritual anomalies.

Let us now try a few of the cases specified by Dr. Taylor in the history of John Darrel, by the light which the careful observers of the present day have derived from a multitude of facts most amply and indisputably attested.

John Darrell graduated at Cambridge in 1583, when twenty years of age, and became a Puritan preacher at Mansfield. There he met with a girl of seventeen, named Catherine Wright, whose friends said she was possessed by a devil. Her symptoms were a swelling of the body, hysterical fits and spectral appear-

ances. The first vision that troubled her was curious. "She went to a well for water, and saw in it the reflection of a child without feet; and being greatly afraid she began to be more and more troubled in her fancy, supposing she saw divers shapes and appearances." The girl had no motive to feign such visions, for she had a severe step-father who used to "beat and bruise her sore for asserting such things," but coming to see that her fits were real, was more lenient towards her. Being brought to Darrel, he declared that she was possessed, but she protested against any such idea; but seems by his assertions to have come to imagine that one Margaret Roper must have bewitched her, and Darrel, who had the real Puritan witch-burning spirit in him, brought Mrs. Roper before a magistrate named Foljamb, who however proved to be a sensible and humane man, and dismissed the alleged witch.

The real ailment of this Catherine Wright appears to have been of an hysterical nature, which had so far affected her nervous system, as to have excited the spirit-life in her to a state of clairvoyance—a dangerous condition in that age. Ten years after, Darrel was called in to a boy named Thomas Darling, of Burton-on-Trent. This boy seems clearly to have been under spiritual influence, then always attributed to the devil, and strange things were spoken through his mouth when under the effect of this influence. Darrel is said to have succeeded in exorcising the devil in this case, and acquired so much fame by it that he was sent for to a still more remarkable case in Lancashire. This case I shall select, as exhibiting unquestionable evidences of those spiritual phenomena which have become so common in the present age, and which present diagnoses so regular and so frequent of occurrence that they are as well known to all Spiritualists as the most ordinary functions of our existence, and might be as well known to all physiologists if they would only take the trouble to look for them and at them. We will take the account from Dr. Cooke Taylor and his great authority Dr. Harsnett, a contemporary, and like Dr. Taylor a believer in the whole being trick and fraud. Through their own language any one at all informed on these subjects can be at no loss to see the genuineness of the case:—

"Mr. Starkie, of Cleworth, in the Parish of Leigh, in Lancashire, was married to a lady who was an heiress in her own right. Some of her relations were Papists, which afforded reasonable ground for believing that her children were bewitched to death in order to prevent her estates falling to Protestant heirs. Mrs. Starkie having adopted this view of the case, made a conveyance of the lands to her husband; after which she had a son and daughter, both of whom prospered well till they came to be ten

or twelve years of age. They were then both attacked by epileptic fits, which were immediately attributed to demoniacal possession. Mr. Starkie after having spent £200 on medicine and physicians, at length applied to a wizard and papist named Hartley, who having used certain papist charms and herbs, by degrees the children were at quiet, and so continued a year and half.

“George Moore, a friend of Darrel’s, who likewise describes himself as ‘a minister and preacher of the word of God,’ avers that he had investigated all the circumstances of the case, and we shall, for the most part, follow his narrative. Hartley’s presence was necessary whenever the children were attacked, and Mr. Starkie gave him a pension of forty shillings annually, on condition that he should remain in the neighbourhood. The wizard soon after demanded a larger sum, which was refused. In revenge he made Mr. Starkie suffer grievous torments, but afterwards cured him by making him efface a circle, the compass of a yard and a half, with many curves and partitions which Hartley had drawn on the ground. This charm was a cunningly devised trick to put Mr. Starkie more into the wizard’s power. In a few weeks after Hartley sent his devils into the bodies of Mr. Starkie, his sister, both his children, two young ladies, his wards, and two of the maid-servants, and he soon after added to his list of victims a lady who came on a visit. His manner was, when he meant them a mischief, to kiss them, if he could, and therewith breathe the devil into their bodies.

“The lady-visitor, Mrs. Margaret Byrom, on her return home to Salford, applied to Hartley for relief, and he went to see her every day.

“Hartley for his proceedings in these cases was arrested, condemned and hanged, and was said to have confessed his guilt. But his execution did not cure the children, they continued to have very rare and strange fits.” John Starkie, one of them, on these occasions displayed an extraordinary knowledge, for he being but of age, or thereabouts, did in his trance declare the strange sins of this land, committed in all estates and degrees of people, and denounced the fearful judgments of God due unto them. He then exhorted his parents and the people there present to repent, that they might avoid all these grievous plagues, and wished that the whole land might do the like. After this he made a most excellent prayer, first for the whole church, then for the Queen’s Majesty, for the subduing of her enemies, for the continuance of her life and peaceable government, for the upholding of the gospel, and for all the true ministers of Christ, for those that have authority, and for all the people of God. In this exhortation and prayer he continued about two

hours, performing the same so excellently, both for the matter and manner of handling and uttering the same, as they that heard it did admire it, and thought that a good preacher could hardly have done the like. This being done, he sung a good piece of the fourth Psalm in a most sweet and heavenly tone as ever might be heard."

These things require no comment. They bear the proofs of their genuineness. Every one in the least acquainted with spiritual phenomena, at once perceives their accordance with the knowledge of to-day, and especially with the whole of Master John's excellent sermon and prayer being ascribed to the devil. Mr. Starkie was not likely to pay an annuity to keep up a farce which could only bring on him disgrace and annoyance, nor were the children likely to act parts that had no pleasure in them. There is no doubt that both he and his children and his friends were "grievously tormented" by powers unseen, but too palpably felt, and as to John, the eldest son, his trance-preaching, praying and singing, were exactly such as have been witnessed with wonder a thousand times both in Europe and America, of late years, by tens of thousands of people. But what follows is the luxury of the whole narrative. Imagine a girl of fourteen in a trance, giving us such an exquisite picture of the female vanities of the Elizabethan era.

"Margaret Hardman, one of Mr. Starkie's wards, was possessed by a spirit of a very different character. She, in her fourteenth year of age, being in a trance of three hours long, and possessed at that time, as it seemed, with a spirit of pride, did most lively express, both by words and gestures, the proud women of our time, who cannot content themselves with any sober or modest apparel, but are very ready to follow every new and disguised fashion, and yet never think themselves fine enough. Thereupon she said 'Come on, my lad,'—for so she called the spirit that stood before her in that likeness, to teach all the tricks of pride—'come on, and set my partlet (ruff) on the one side, as I do on the other.' And as she was a setting of it, she said unto him, thus: 'My lad, I will have a fine smock of silk, it shall be finer than thine. I will have a petticoat of silk, not of red, but of the best silk that is, it shall be garded a foot high, it shall be laid on with gold lace, it shall have a French body, not of whalebone, for that is not stiff enough, but of horn, for that will hold it out. My lad, I will have a French fardingale, it shall be finer than thine. I will have it low before, and high behind, and broad on either side, that I may lay my arms upon it. My lad, thy gown is of crimson satin, but mine shall be of black velvet, finer than thine. I will have my sleeves set out with wire, for sticks will break, and are not stiff enough. I

will have my cap of black velvet, with a feather to it, with flowers of gold, and my hair shall be set with pearls. I will have my partlet set with a rebater, and starched with blue starch, and finished with a row or two of pins.'

"With that she snatched the partlet from her neck, and threw it at him, saying, 'Take it then, for I cannot make it as fine as thine. I pray thee come and help me to set it? My lad, I will have a busk of whalebone, it shall be tied with two silk points, and I will have a drawn wrought stomacher, embossed with gold, and a girdle of gold finer than thine. I will have a scarf of red silk, with a gold lace about the edge. I will have a fan with a silver steale' (handle) 'and glass set in it. My lad, thou must bring me a pair of gloves of the finest leather that may be, with two gold laces about the thumbs, and a fringe on the top, with flowers and red silk underneath, that I may draw them through a gold ring, or else I will have none of them.

"'My lad, I will have my basin and ewer of silver, and my towel of silk finer than thine. I will have my gelding, and saddle and furniture fit; my footstool also fine and brave, or else I will not ride. I will have my cloak and savegarde laid with lace, fine and brave, and finer than thine.' And presently after this, she said, 'I defy thee, Satan! and thy pride; for this is thy illusion and device: I will none of it.' And then reverting, (becoming conscious), said—'Jesu bless me!' but remembered nothing that she had either said or done."

The last touch, her remembering nothing when out of her trance, is the seal of the genuineness of the whole. It is the almost uniform condition of such clairvoyant trances, as every one acquainted with them knows. Dr. Harsnett asserts that he had found these and other cases to be counterfeits. If he were not a counterfeit himself he must be grossly ignorant of the fixed laws of such phenomena. The very facts which he relates must have been sufficient to open the eyes of any one not extremely dense or stupefied by prejudice. Here is one such:—"Miss Margaret's demon was as great an adept in millinery as Master John's in divinity. Ellen Holland's was better still," says Dr. Cooke Taylor. "She called for the hour-glass, and declared she must now have a fit; and should not come out of it for the space of four hours. She then called for a distaff and spindle, and bade them turn the glass, for she would spin for an hour and a half of that time. And though she was but a child, and, as it were, beginning to learn to spin, yet she did spin at that time so finely, and with such expedition as was thought impossible for a very skilful woman to do the like."

The fact of the dexterity and ability of persons during these

trances, so superior to anything they were capable of in their normal condition, seems to have made as little impression on the sceptics of that age as of this. One would think that so curious and constantly recurring a phenomenon would immediately have arrested the attention, and excited the enquiry of every man of sense, not to say of science; but the superstition of scepticism, the pride of knowingness is the most stolid of all superstitions.

Four of the devils who possessed these children, we are told, were admirable dancers, one whistled melodiously, and two, who possessed the youngest girls, talked Latin. Here again, how comes it, that men who thought themselves capable of observation, did not wonder how young girls could talk Latin? Mr. Starkie, however, determined to try what power there was in exorcism. Darrel was sent for, and assisted by two other ministers, More and Dickson, after several hours of prayer, the fits of the children began to abate—a voice from one of them crying, “I must go! I must go! I cannot stay! The place is too hot to hold me!” and the expulsion was effected. It is stated that for several weeks, there were zealous efforts on the part of the demons to get back again; and that they succeeded for a time with one of them, but finally the cure in all was complete.

Darrel was afterwards sent for to a case at Nottingham, and became preacher at the principal church there, St. Mary's, whose vicar, Mr. Aldridge, had sent for him, and partook of his belief. Darrel was subsequently imprisoned on pretence of being an impostor, but he persisted in the reality of the cases he had witnessed, and published several works in vindication of his faith and proceedings. “It is hard,” says Dr. Cooke Taylor, “to discover where enthusiasm ends and imposture begins—or rather, both are so closely intertwined in most great fanatics, that it would not be fair to accuse Darrel of being wholly an unbeliever in his own exploits.” Certainly, very hard indeed, and after what we have seen ourselves, would be very stupid. It is still harder to discover how education can so completely besot men in general, that they no longer can tell the difference betwixt what is possible and impossible to human beings in a normal condition. When people can sing, preach, talk languages that they never learned, and perform actions that are actually impossible to them in their ordinary state, the most incredible of all things is, that men of education, and especially scientific men, do not at once see that there is something in these cases which in the interest of science and of truth generally deserves looking curiously into. To go on witnessing such things, wondering at them, half believing them, and then relapsing into the usual imbecility of talking of imposture, fanaticism, hallucination, superstition and the like, is a condition



of mind so disgraceful, that we know of nothing more pitiable, and it is to be hoped for the sake of the reputation of Englishmen for practical common sense, that some discovery in physical or natural philosophy will be made of so startling a nature, and so impinging on the spiritual, that it shall reveal to the most stereotyped intellect that it is working here, on this material planet, surrounded by the infinite universe, with all its entities and mysteries, and working with them and through them. Splendid as are the modern truths of science, they never can reach their full glory till they link themselves on to that infinite and immaterial world, where they shall develop themselves for ever and for ever, furnishing to the noblest and mightiest faculties of the human soul the food and action of an eternal felicity. How strange! that it never seems to present itself to men of science and men of social progress, that the discoveries and advances made here, however magnificent in themselves, can have but a limited value to any individual of our race, because our stay here is so extremely limited? but that the same intellectual powers exercised in a permanent arena, the same grand results produced in such an imperishable field, are of a value like that field itself, incalculably more glorious, because they cannot pass away.

Often as we have occasion to notice the effects of the modern philosophy of negation, our astonishment at them never diminishes. To see men capable of measuring, weighing, and calculating to an atom and to a hair the most distant bodies and movements of the material heavens, analyzing the substances and forces of the material world, or opening up to us by microscopic art the otherwise invisible life around us, incapable of catching a glimpse of the spiritual, or of entertaining a love for it, shews how mighty is that delusion which dominates over those who are the great deriders of delusions. Who with powers to scale the heavens, at a touch of the Circæan wand of a materialistic education, have the heaven of heavens shut from their intellects, and are sent, like those porcine herds of the enchantress, to root with unrunng noses in the earth beneath them. Of all the illusions and delusions, the witchcrafts and hallucinations, obfuscations and humiliations of the human intellect, this is the most stupendous; and in future times, when this eclipse of faith from the passing sphere and body of hell, is gone by, the re-illuminated world will point to these, not as the Dark, but as the Darkest of Ages.

## A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF DR. JUSTINUS KERNER.

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

### PART II.

---

#### IN THE BLACK FOREST AND IN THE WELZHEIM FOREST.

IN the Spring of 1809, Kerner having taken his degree as Doctor of Medicine, set forth upon his journey through Germany, where in Hamburg, Berlin, Dresden, and Vienna, he became personally acquainted with his celebrated compatriots Amalia Schoppe, Adelbert von Chamisso, De la Motte Fouq, Frederik Schlegel, and Beethoven. In Vienna, he spent the winters engaged in the prosecution of his medical studies, and in the course of the following year, after a short abode in Dürrmenz—which he found afforded him too narrow a scope for practice—he settled down at Wildbad, in the midst of the Black Forest. At Wildbad he remained a year, and there commenced his career, both as a physician and a literary man. It was at Wildbad, that he completed his first work entitled *Shadows of Travel, by the Shadow-player, Zachs*, a series of fantastic, poetical and humorous sketches, which embodied his experience of travel, and became very popular, although calling down upon itself much abuse from the critics; and where he wrote "*The Homeless Ones*," an exquisite poetical tale overflowing with beauty in many forms, and in which the artistically contrasted dramatis personæ—each one a typical figure, distinctive through its individual development of the magnetic or somnambulic life—stand forth, as if traced out in brilliant sunset light, against the sombre and melancholy background of the Black Forest, with its swart pine trees, rushing waters, and profound sylvan solitudes. In Lambert, the physician whom he describes in this tale, as pursuing his investigations into the laws of nature, irrespective of all preconceived scientific prejudices, and who in the solitude of his forest-home, has solved some of the occult mysteries of the soul's life,—we evidently recognize a picturesque sketch of the author's own experiences. Indeed, this singular little prose poem may be regarded as a figurative prophecy of Kerner's future career. At the same period Kerner contributed many poems to the yearly *Almanachs*, at that time in their first popularity in Germany, and also wrote a valuable work both medical and topographical, with reference to the bath at Wildbad, entitled *Wildbad, in the Kingdom of Würtemberg*—a

work which passed through various editions, and drew for the first time attention both at home and abroad to the remarkable medicinal properties of the bath, which since then has become a fashionable resort.

By the time that this work was in the press its author had quitted Wildbad, and taken up his abode in Welzheim, where a more considerable practice presented itself, and where he was soon destined to find a new field of usefulness.

It was in Welzheim that Kerner had the unspeakable happiness of bringing home "Rickele" as his wife, and with her his good life's angel entered beneath his roof. Within the same year was born to them a little daughter who was called, after Varnhagen's sister, Rosa Maria, and whose birth was gracefully celebrated in verse by Uhland.

The Forest of Welzheim, a remarkable district, both with reference to its physical condition and to its inhabitants, was, at the beginning of this century, almost entirely cut off from the rest of the world. Nevertheless this remote district offered numerous objects of interest to Kerner's poetical and observing mind, and even congenial acquaintance—amongst these may be mentioned two clergymen of archæological and literary tastes and reputation, a rural poet, a poor linen-weaver, Johannes Lämmerer, a small selection of whose verses Kerner prepared for the press, and to whom he addressed a sonnet, comparing him to Hans Sachs; and blind Melchior Lang, who was endowed with the natural gift of healing—the first example of this peculiar occult power which had come under our poet-physician's observation.

To Kerner's sympathetic mind, which seized upon the poetical under whatsoever form it presented itself, the cultivation of flax—a marked feature of the district—suggested not only several poems, but excited his benevolent interest, and he materially assisted in spreading the consumption of Welzheim flax, thereby greatly promoting the comfort of the poor peasants.

In his capacity of physician, our clear-sighted Justinus discovered a field in Welzheim, of curious scientific research, one which occupied him subsequently, almost unceasingly, during a series of years. It was an extraordinary local sickness amongst the ill-fed country people, occasioned through poisoning by sour and corrupt sausages. This disease, until Kerner drew attention to it, had never been scientifically investigated. Through his unwearied researches it was, however, ere long displayed in the whole of its extent and fearful power. He first made his discoveries on this subject known to the world through the *Tübingen Gazette of Natural Science*, and called upon the

physicians of the neighbouring districts to institute similar observations.

Upon Kerner's appointment, three years subsequently, as district physician of the neighbouring town of Gaildorf, where again this peculiar disease presented itself, he was through his official position enabled to bring the consideration of it before the Medical College; and not only was his report approved of by the Government, but it attracted the attention of King William of Würtemberg, who provided him with grants of money, thereby enabling him to prosecute upon a much wider scale his experiments connected with the "sausage poison." The results of these protracted investigations, which were pursued by Kerner during the earlier years of his abode at Weinsberg, where subsequently upon his removal to that town he again encountered the disease, were published in 1820 under the title of *New Observations regarding the frequent Deadly Poisonings in Würtemberg through the Consumption of Smoked Sausages*. In this book Kerner refers to seventy-six cases of the poisoning which had come under his own observation. He also added a careful report of the cretinism which he had met with in various valleys of the Gaildorf district, regarding which he reflects how, in the middle ages, the Kings of France possessed the gift of healing *gôitre* through "laying on of hands" and pronouncing the well-known words, "*Le Roi te touche Dieu te guérisset!*" and by a bold and poetical adaptation of this fact, he calls upon the sovereigns of our own time to remember that within them dwells the power to deliver their subjects from both physical and spiritual misery, by making use of the formula changed to *Le Roi te délivre, Dieu te guérisset!* at the same time freeing them from all remaining bonds of existing serfdom, in order that through free labour they may attain to external well-being and to external self-respect.

But to return to the year 1817, which was marked in the life of our poet-physician by a singular concatenation of domestic events, more or less distressing. About the middle of June, Kerner set out in a carriage from Gailsdorf, with his daughter Maria, who was four years old, to visit his mother who resided at Ilsfeld, with her daughter Wilhelmina, and her son-in-law, who was pastor of that place. Unfortunately, whilst descending a very steep road, near the little town of Löwenstein, Kerner walking beside the carriage, in which his little daughter sat, the usually sure-footed horse stumbled, and fell with the carriage down the precipice. The little girl's arm was broken, and in this condition her deeply-distressed father was obliged, walking for two hours through the woods, to carry her in his arms to Ilsfeld, where he found his mother suffering from illness.

The terrible news of the accident so painfully affected Kerner's wife, that she prematurely brought into the world, on the 14th of June, their son Theobald, who was of so delicate a constitution that it was long a question with his parents whether they should ever rear him. Within a few days of this event Kerner's mother departed this life. With truth might the poet Uhland, writing to his friend at once to congratulate him upon the birth of a son, and to condole with him upon the loss of his mother, observe—“Such is the progressive life! whilst you extend one hand in joy to the newly-born generation, you must in grief withdraw your other hand from the grasp of the departing one!”

Possibly the painful experience of these events following each other with such strange rapidity, gave rise in Kerner's susceptible mind, to a melancholy foreboding which frequently tortured him throughout the remainder of his life, and which expressed itself in an observation not unfrequently falling from his lips, “that misfortunes rarely come alone.”

---

AT WEINSBERG.

In January, 1819, Justinus Kerner settled in Weinsberg, as district physician appointed by the Government; and with this event commences a new and important chapter in his life. Fully three years elapsed before Kerner became reconciled to his change of abode, and tenderly did he regret the densely-wooded districts which he had lately quitted. Weinsberg, at the time when Kerner settled there, was scarcely more than a village of vine-growers, and was much less accessible than at present. William Howitt visiting Weinsberg in 1840 says, “The situation of Weinsberg is very charming. It is in the middle of a wide open and well-cultivated plain, with a clear rapid stream running through it. All around, at the distance of a mile or two, rise up the woody and winding hills so peculiar to this part of Southern Germany, the sides of which are all covered with vineyards. Here and there open out, between the hills, vales running far away, in which you discern the white walls of villages. Weinsberg is a compact little town and one of the neatest in the neighbourhood. Just by it stands a high and conical hill clad on all sides with vines; and on its summit the ruins of the old castle of Weinsberg, still popularly called ‘*Die Weiber-Treue*,’ or *Woman's Fidelity*, from this circumstance. When the Emperor Conrad in 1140 besieged the castle into which the people had fled, and summoned them to surrender, he would give no promise of quarter to the men; but he pledged himself to allow the women to go out, carrying with them what they liked best. These terms were accepted, and to the astonishment of the Emperor, he beheld the

women coming forth in a train, carrying each her husband, her brother, or near relative. This incident has furnished the subject of one of Bürger's most spirited ballads, and was made popular with the English readers by Addison in the *Spectator*. But the castle and town of Weinsberg acquired a most fearful notoriety in the celebrated Peasants' War, in 1525. Weinsberg which had thus its full share of horrors, is as smart and quiet as if it had never known an outrage. Nature has covered the old towers with her healing boughs and blossoms; man has clothed the whole hill with vines; and all the country between it and the picturesque old Heilbronn is one great garden and vineyard."

It was at the foot of the hill of the "Weiber-Treue" that, in 1822, Kerner built himself a house upon a piece of ground, formerly a portion of the town moat, and which was presented to him by the corporation. Here Kerner was destined to spend the remainder of his life, the forty most important years of his useful career. Shortly after the Kerners' entrance into this happy home, their third and last child was born. Soon after Kerner was settled in his house, he began, during his leisure time, to occupy himself in searching out the past history of the town. Amongst the town archives he found certain unpublished documents and memoranda connected with the "Peasants' War," and published from these a little book written in the old style, entitled *The Storming of the Town of Weinsberg in Würtemberg by the pure Christian Troops in 1525, and its consequences to the Town.*

The historical incident connected with the Weiber-Treue, also called forth his sympathies, and finding upon his arrival that the ruins of this interesting castle lay half buried in dust and rubbish, and were apparently hastening towards a speedy dissolution, Kerner brought all the force of his influence and of his poetical enthusiasm into play, to excite a general interest in its preservation. He was so fortunate as to meet, in the chief magistrate of Weinsberg, with a fellow-labourer in this work of love. A Weinsberg "Ladies' Society"—the Queen of Würtemberg herself at its head—was speedily organized, by means of which throughout Germany funds were raised for the preservation and embellishment of this interesting historical monument; and the same year, it being purchased by King William and presented by him to the Society of Weinsberg Ladies, the ancient walls were soon repaired, the towers rendered accessible, and the whole interior converted into one of the most charming of pleasure gardens. Upon this occasion Kerner for about the first and last time in his life, exhibited germs of a mercantile genius; for he caused small pieces of stone from the old castle to be set in simple rings of gold which were disposed of by many hundreds throughout Germany as "Weiber-Treue rings."

Kerner had a huge Æolian harp suspended in one of the towers of the castle, which throughout a space of thirty years was wont to send down into the valley below, its wild spiritual streams of plaintive music.

It was in 1826 that Kerner published the first of his remarkable series of works connected with the inner-life of man. It is entitled *The History of Two Somnambulists, together with certain other Notable Things from the Realms of Magical Cure and Psychology*. This book is in fact the diary kept by Kerner, with reference to two very remarkable patients of his; one, a young girl of a very pious disposition, the daughter of a vine-grower in Weinsberg, the other a young woman born at Stuttgart, and living in service in Weinsberg. Both exhibited the most marvellous phenomena, and were treated magnetically by Dr. Kerner—both were ultimately restored to health. At some future time we may probably present the readers of the *Spiritual Magazine* with a more detailed account of this interesting little volume.

Truly, as Varnhagen von Ense observed, "this Würtemberg is rightly the home of haunting and ghost-like doing, of the marvellous, of the soul-life and the dream-world." No sooner had Kerner commenced his operations as a magnetizer, than Weinsberg and the districts around teemed with patients seeking his assistance, and somnambulatory symptoms, possession and hauntings were everywhere discovered. There lay unsealed before Kerner, so to speak, the magical volume of the soul of man, and his eyes, touched by the hand of Divine wisdom, were made clear to read and to decipher to the world its mystical hieroglyphics. Kerner's house was soon filled with patients who came to benefit by his magnetic treatment.

The most remarkable of these was the singularly endowed Frederika Hauffe, to whom such frequent reference has been made in this magazine (*vide* June number of *Spiritual Magazine* for 1862, &c.), and who was brought from Prevorst to Weinsberg on the 25th of November, 1826, to be under Dr. Kerner's medical care, but who ultimately was received by her physician beneath his own roof, where she remained for some considerable time. The chronicle which Kerner kept of her treatment and experiences—one of the most remarkable books ever penned—was published in 1829, after the death of Madame Hauffe, and was entitled *The Seeress of Prevorst; or, Openings-up into the Inner Life of Man, and Mergings of a Spirit-World into the World of Matter*. In the years 1832, 38, and 46 it passed through three enlarged editions. This work is known to the English reader through the admirable translation—so far as it goes, for unfortunately it is somewhat abridged—of Mrs. Crowe.

Margaret Fuller Ossoli has remarked, "He would be dull who could see no meaning or beauty in the forester's daughter of Prevorst. She lived but nine and twenty years, yet in that time had traversed a larger portion of the field of thought than all her race before in their many and long lives."

Kerner, regarding it to be his duty to permit the Seeress of Prevorst to be visited by all such persons as were earnestly inclined to investigate her peculiar psychological condition, his home was soon thronged by numbers of visitors. Amongst these may be named David Strauss, the author of the *Life of Jesus*, at that time orthodox in his religious views, and Professor Eschenmayer of Tübingen, who became Kerner's fellow-labourer in a minute investigation of the phenomena exhibiting themselves in Madame Hauffe, and the philosophic-mystico nature of whose mind exercised a marked influence over Kerner himself, who originally appears to have been inclined to regard the seeress's unfoldings of the spirit-world rather in a poetical than in a dogmatic light.

In 1831, Kerner established a periodical under the title of *Leaves from Prevorst; or, Original Literary Fruits for Lovers of the Inner Life*. The chief co-workers were Eschenmayer, Friederik von Mayer of Frankfort, Gotthelf, Heinrich von Schubert, Guido Görres, and Frank von Baader. Twelve volumes of this periodical appeared before 1839.

As an appendix to the eighth volume, he published in 1835, from the original French document, *The Vision of France and her Future, as seen in 1816 by Thomas Ignauz Martin, Peasant of Gallardon*.

Various unquestionable cases of demoniac possession having come under the observation of Kerner, he composed a singular and learned little volume, entitled *History of Modern Cases of Possession, together with Observations made in the Realm of Kako-demoniac, Magnetic Appearances*, published in 1834, by Braun, of Karlsruhe. An abridged translation of the most typical case of possession contained in this remarkable and valuable little volume, *The History of the Maid of Orlach*, appeared in the July number of the *Spiritual Magazine* for 1865. This volume was followed in 1836 by a *Letter to the Superior Medical Counsellor, Schelling, concerning the Appearance of Possession, Demoniacal, Magnetic Suffering and its Cure through Magnetic Treatment as known to the Ancients*.

In the same year, 1856, appeared the book, of all others from Kerner's pen, which provoked the strongest opposition. It is entitled, *An Appearance from the Night-Realms of Nature; proved Legally by a Series of Witnesses, and communicated to Searchers into Nature for their careful consideration*. It is the



account of an apparition of an evil and noisy spirit in the prison at Weinsberg. This spirit was beheld and recognized there, not alone by a peasant-woman, imprisoned for searching for buried treasure—to which misdemeanor, according to her account, she in the first instance had been instigated by the communications of this very spirit,—but by Kerner himself and a considerable number of most trustworthy witnesses.

Kerner's attitude with reference to the attacks made upon him, especially connected with the last mentioned work, was chiefly passive. His reply being the continued publication of fresh works upon these unpopular subjects; possibly, however, this in truth may appear an *active* rather than *passive* attitude. Occasionally he would retaliate, it must be confessed, when the abuse of the critics assumed too decidedly personal a character, by sending forth the keen arrows of his wit against his critics, and thereby turning the laughter of the public against his assailants.

It was about this period that a work was published known by Kerner's friends to have chiefly proceeded from his pen, although bearing upon its title page the name of Prince Alexander von Hohenlohe Waldenburg-Schillingfürst, celebrated for his miraculous cures of the sick, performed through prayer. Kerner, by means of his writings upon the subject of possession, had been brought into correspondence with this remarkable personage, who requested him to write a series of Lent sermons for him upon the Seven Deadly Sins. These sermons were in 1836 published under the title, *The Image of God in Man defaced through Sin*. With the exception of the sermon upon Anger, and certain additions to the other sermons, they were virtually the composition of Kerner, though bearing the name of the Prince, and are noteworthy, not alone for their practical rendering of truth, but as being acceptable to the Roman Catholic world, although the product of a mind educated in Protestantism.

During this thirty years of special literary activity, various new editions of Kerner's poems were occasionally making their appearance, and our poet-physician was brought into agreeable intercourse, both personal and by letter, with his contemporary poets, at the same time that his psychological writings attracted around him persons of all classes from the lowest to the highest in the land, and the friendly house at the foot of the Weibertreue stood as freely open to visitors as though it had been an inn. To the hospitality exercised in this happy home, we shall refer in the conclusion of this biographical sketch. We will now in brief sum up Kerner's literary labours, touching slightly upon the domestic incidents of the autumn of this great and good man's life.

The year 1840 brought with it a deep grief for Kerner. In it died his beloved brother Karl, who resided at Stuttgart. The most affectionate intercourse had for many years subsisted between the brothers, who were bound together by the tenderest ties of sympathy. The deep religious bias of General Karl Kerner's mind had led him to associate himself with his brother in his researches into the inner life of humanity, as revealed by the experiences of the Seeress of Prevorst, with not only equal, but, it might be said, with even greater enthusiasm than that displayed by Dr. Kerner himself. When Justinus was depressed by the false judgments passed upon his works by the world, it was Karl who encouraged him to persevere in his labours, by his mild sympathetic words, or by his soldierly courage. The correspondence between Kerner and his brother is perhaps the most extensive of any carried on by him. During twenty years scarcely a day passed in which the brothers did not make an interchange of their thoughts. Shortly after the decease of this beloved brother, Kerner became painfully conscious of a marked decrease in his powers of vision. After a careful examination of his eyes, his friend Schelling announced the sad intelligence that in both eyes he had discovered symptoms of the commencement of the grey cataract; the first signs, indeed, of that blindness, which, although it never became complete, nevertheless cast the shadow of night over the last years of the poet-physician's life. Kerner himself attributed this affliction to the many tears which he had shed in the long sleepless nights of anxiety preceding and following the death of his brother Karl. Whilst prosecuting his investigations into the nature of the sausage poisons already referred to, Kerner had observed that both poisons produced in himself a drying up of the glands of his eyes. May not this poison, therefore, possibly have laid the seeds of the malady, developed into activity at this later period, through Kerner's excessive and continuous weeping?

The prospect of future blindness in no way destroyed Kerner's mental activity or moral courage. He pursued his scientific and poetical studies with his wonted ardour, and was assisted in his medical practice by his son Theobald, who resided at Weinsberg from 1842, until Kerner, seven years later, was pensioned by the King of Würtemberg, and gave up his practice.

In 1839, *Leaves from Prevorst* being completed, Kerner established another periodical of a larger size, entitled *Magikon, or Archives for Observations concerning the Realms of the Spirit-World and of Magnetic Life*. This periodical was continued until 1853.

The charming autobiography of the poet's early years, entitled *Picture Book of my Childhood, or Memoirs of the Years, from 1786 to 1840*, having been dictated to his daughter-in-law, made its appearance in 1849.

In 1851, although Kerner's increasing blindness and age induced him to give up his medical practice as district physician, he still exhibited his unwearied literary powers by publishing a new poetical volume, principally consisting of political and occasional pieces, and called *The Last Nosegay*. With reference to this volume, the author observes, "All my poems have originated in the occurrences of my own life, or in the lives of my friends, whose existence I have never been able to dis sever from my own. Joy and still more sorrow have given rise to them." To these words of the poet we may add that, although suggested by individual life, the universal spirit of poetry has made them her own, and may be discovered dwelling within each, as within a shrine.

We now have to chronicle the two last of Kerner's publications, both connected with psychology. In 1853, the subject of "table-turning" being much discussed in Germany, he published *Somnambulist Tables; or, the History and Explanation of that Phenomenon*. In this pamphlet Kerner ascribes the "turning of tables" to the operation of an hitherto unrecognized fluid, neither magnetic, electric, nor galvanic—although kindred to them—but which by the Seeress of Prevorst was considered to proceed from the "spirit of the nerves."

Three years later appeared Kerner's last literary production, one of his most charmingly written works, *Franz Anton Mesmer, the Discoverer of Animal Magnetism, with Recollections of Him, &c.* This little book was suggested to its author by a visit which he paid during the summer of 1855 to his friend the Baron Joseph von Lassberg, known to the public as the editor of the *Nibelungen Lied*, &c., and as a collector of mediæval manuscripts. Kerner visited him at his romantic residence, the old castle of Meersburg, upon Lake Constance (*vide* October, November, and December numbers of *Spiritual Magazine* for 1865) In the course of this visit Kerner became acquainted with relatives of Mesmer residing in the neighbourhood, who had inherited his property, a portrait of the discoverer of Animal Magnetism, and various of his manuscripts. Kerner also visited with deep interest the birth-place and grave of Mesmer, on the shores of the lake.

Between the publication of these two last works a heavy blow had fallen upon Kerner, the heaviest which it was possible for him to endure—the loss of his tenderly-beloved wife. Rickele, after a short illness, departed this life on the 16th of April, 1854,

and with her, vanished her husband's last tie to earth. His mental activity still remained as a solace to him during the remaining eight years of his earthly existence, but his yearning heart led him constantly to contemplate the approaching change into life eternal.

After Rickele's departure, the poet was tended with the most affectionate care by his children and grandchildren. His son Theobald, when obliged to remove to Stuttgart and Cannstadt, visited him from those places, usually each week, and during the last three years of his life wrote daily to him. Kerner's two daughters in marrying had never moved far from him, but settled at Heilbronn which is only three English miles from Weinsberg. The eldest daughter, after her husband's death in 1847, returned to Weinsberg, where she and her children became unwearying scribes and readers to the blind poet.

Kerner's last years were rendered care-free through the thoughtfulness of two sovereigns, who had highly appreciated his usefulness to the world. In 1848, Ludwig, of Bavaria, had bestowed upon him a small pension of four hundred florins, which was continued to him after King Ludwig's abdication by his son, the late King Max; whilst in 1858 he received another small pension of five hundred florins from the King of Würtemberg. His pension as district-physician was three hundred florins. In the year 1848, King Frederick William IV., of Prussia, expressed his admiration of Kerner's genius by sending him the gold medal of art and science, and together with his pension from the King of Würtemberg, he received the crown order, and was made by the late King of Bavaria one of the first knights of the newly instituted Maximilian Order of Science and Art.

Kerner was also member of various learned societies and honorary member of various poetical societies (Sänger-Vereine). With the close of the year 1858 he celebrated his fifty years' jubilee as Doctor of Medicine, receiving from the Faculty of Tübingen University an honorary diploma, in which he is styled "*The Consolation of the Sick—The Scourge of Demons—The Joy of the Muses—The Ornament of Home.*"

---

A CONVENTION OF DELEGATES from Circles, for investigation into the phenomena of Spiritualism and for Spirit-communion, was held at Huddersfield on the 23rd ult. Delegates attended from Liverpool, York, Keighley, Bradford, Halifax, Dewsbury, &c.; in all, delegates from sixty-four circles were present. Mr. Edwin Harrison Green, who had just returned from America, gave an interesting account of his experience during four months spent among the Spiritualists of the United States. Arrangements were made for a Convention of Spiritualists, to be held in London during the Whitsun week.

## APPARITION OF THE LIVING.

FOR many years I have been a suffering invalid. I have a most valued attendant and friend in the person of Miss G——, who has been with me nearly twenty-two years. A few years ago she went to the wedding of her eldest brother, who then resided more than one hundred miles from the place I was living at. A younger sister of Miss G——'s remained with me during her absence. On the day appointed for Miss G——'s return, I felt extremely uneasy and restless all the afternoon. The appointed time passed and Miss G—— did not return. Her sister was quite easy about her, saying that doubtless she had missed the train, and might come by the night train. I did not believe this could be, but would not retire to rest. At twelve I rose from my couch, and went to the window to look through the Venetian blinds at the moonlit street; everything was seen as clearly as at noonday, and I saw Miss G—— come quickly up to the door, put her foot on the first step, and then look up with a radiant smile. The moon shone bright on her face, and I said to her sister, who was standing beside me, "There she is, M——, run down and let her in." M—— replied, "I do not see her." I said, a little impatiently, "Oh, do run down, she is waiting at the door." M—— went down, and the lady in whose house I lived, being anxious about me, had not retired to rest, then joined M—— in the passage, both going to the door together—no one was there. Both stepped out into the moonlit street—no one was to be seen from one end to the other. Then they came to me and tried to persuade me I had been mistaken; but I had distinctly seen her, looking radiant in the moonlight. At first I concluded an accident had occurred, and that she had been killed. I went to bed. During the almost sleepless hours of the night, I considered that had she been killed; she loved me too well to look so bright in her *last* moments, and this somewhat consoled me. At half-past one next day, Sunday, she was in my arms, expressing her fears that I had been much alarmed. She had found that the train she left L—— by the day before, stopped at L—— *two* hours, and as she had cousins there she went to see them, begging her cousin to mind the train, and they started for the station, as they considered, in good time; but her cousin's watch was some minutes slow, and when they arrived they had the mortification of seeing the train just beyond the platform, rapidly moving away. She said she was very miserable all the afternoon, but was persuaded not to come by the night train, which would arrive in London at a time no cabs could be had, and her friends would be so uneasy; so at twelve she determined to go to bed, wishing devoutly she could just let me know she

was safe—she had not thought of a telegram—and determining that nothing should make her lose the earliest train in the morning. I have never been able to account for this vision, but by considering that it was produced by the strong sympathy existing between us, and her great affection for me.—F. H. H.

---

### A MUSLIM MASON'S CALL TO REPAIR A CHURCH.

---

IN Lady Duff Gordon's charmingly written volume of *Letters from Egypt*, we meet with the following singular circumstance. She says, writing from the Nile, November 30th, 1862—"On Sunday, we halted at Bibek, where I caught sight of a Coptic church, and sallied forth to see if they would let me in. The road lay past the house of the head-man of the village, and there, 'in the gate,' sat a patriarch, surrounded by his servants and cattle. \* \* \* Girgis was a Copt, though chosen head of the Muslim village. We went to the church, which looked like nine beehives in a box. Inside, the nine domes, resting on square pillars, were very handsome. Girgis was putting it into thorough repair at his own expense. \* \* \* \* \* To the right of this sanctum (the Holy of Holies) is the tomb of a Muslim saint, enclosed under the adjoining dome. Here we went in. Girgis kissed the tomb on one side, while Omar, (Lady Gordon's servant,) *salamed* it on the other,—a pleasant sight. \* \* \* The priest asked me to drink coffee at his house close by, and then 'I sate in the gate.' \* \* presently we were joined by the mason who is repairing the Church:—a fine burly rough-haired old Muslim,—*who told how the Sheykh saint buried in the church at Bibek had appeared to him three nights running, at Cairo, and ordered him to leave his work and go to Bibek and mend his church; how he came, and offered to do so without pay, if the Copts would find the materials.* He spoke with evident pride, as one who had received a divine command, and the Copts all confirmed the story, and every one was highly gratified by the miracle. I asked Omar if he thought it was all true, and he had no doubt of it; the mason he knew to be a man in full work, and Girgis added that for years he had tried to get a man to come for that purpose without success. It is not often that a dead saint contrives to be equally agreeable to Christians and Muslims, and he was a 'true believer' working away in the sanctuary where they would scarcely allow an English fellow-Christian to enter!"

In the letter which follows, Lady Gordon says, "I wrote home a curious story of a miracle. I find I was wrong about the saint being a Muslim, and so is Murray; he is no less than *Mur Girgis*, our own *St. George himself*. Why he selected a *Muslim mason*, I suppose he knew best."

## Correspondence.

### PROGRESS OF SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALISM.

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

SIR,—From the liberal manner which you and the American Spiritualists have criticised my paper upon the "Atmosphere of Intelligence, Pleasure, and Pain," in your notice of the *Report of the Second Convention of "Progressive Spiritualists;"* I feel induced to revert to the topics so interesting to all investigators of the substantiality of thought and of inspiration. While writing upon the infinitesimal divisions of matter, as shewn by *The Spectrum Analysis*, my thoughts reverted to what had been, time after time, communicated to our circle, namely, that all bodies in space throw off a portion of their essence, light-giving bodies and light-reflecting bodies into *space*, where they commingle, and from whence they are ever ready, under God's law, to be sent in answer to the prayer of man; and I thought if this be true, is it not possible that the thrown-off particles of our earth may be mixed up in this? And if this new and beautiful spectrum test, by which we ascertain the elementary constitution of sidereal bodies, is so delicate, how can their effluence pass through the vapour in our atmosphere without affecting the lines on the spectrum? I wrote down my thought; I crossed it out again. I thought of our scientific investigators, and of how they would call the knowledge of ignorant "*spirits*" to task. Since then I have seen the November number of the *Intellectual Observer*. Imagine my surprise when the first article my eye fell upon was on the thrown-off vapour in the atmosphere causing dark lines in the spectrum; and that "Mr. Janson has proved, by satisfactory experiment, that large portions of the dark lines of the star spectrum *are terrestrial*, and are due to the vapour of water." "He found that the dark lines became feeble in proportion to the height above the level of the sea; while, on the contrary, when the light of firewood, which afforded a continuous spectrum, was made to pass through *several miles of air*, in contact with the Lake of Geneva, and therefore saturated with its *watery vapour*, all the dark lines of the solar spectrum were produced, and the higher the *dew point* the more distinct the dark lines of the spectrum became." Again, I have before me the December number of the same journal, and in an article, headed "Development and History of Infusorial Animal Life,"

by Jabez Hogg, F.R.S., F.R.M.S., &c., I find this paragraph:—  
 “So that it is painfully apparent that the atmosphere in which we live and move and have our being, is something more than a mixture of gases, as apparently determined by chemical analysis.” Through the whole of the article will be found, well argued, the two contending ideas of spontaneous generation of life, and the life-principle and development. But what I would call especial attention to, is the wonderful extent to which the atmosphere is filled with life-germs. I again ask the kind co-operation of all spiritual circles desirous of prosecuting this scientific department of Spiritualism. God is no respecter of persons; but we should ever remember that He opens to those who knock, gives to those who ask, and when we see that our spirit guides can give us the truth, subject to an Almighty Ruler, we shall be much in fault not to take advantage of their teachings. The atmosphere must be an ocean containing many things which have never yet been “dreamt of in our philosophy.” Many circles will feel, as we have felt at times, a want of reliance upon the mysterious power by which the real truth-seeker is at all times surrounded. Take courage, my spiritual brethren, Spiritualism if studied with high and holy desires, will lead us to true science, will be a light by which our feet will not stumble, as do those who are led in the path of Materialism. Let us go through matter and divide and subdivide, dissolve and redissolve again and again into still finer and more rarified conditions, until we feel satisfied that solid as the world may seem, fiery and bright though sun and star shine upon us, yet sun and star, and far-distant nebulæ, are alike composed of particles infinitesimally smaller and finer than our most powerful instruments can detect, and through which we shall look in vain to see the food which is taken into this organism of the millions upon millions of life-germs that are ever around and about us; nay, which are ever being breathed into our very selves, and which are even beyond the clairvoyant powers of the highest developed medium the world has yet been blest with. Let us go forward as men knowing that truth alone can live,—that truth is alone from God, and that He is both light and love.

Huddersfield, Feb., 1867.

THOS. ETCHELLS.

