

THE Spiritual Magazine.

DECEMBER, 1871.

DR. CARPENTER ON SPIRITUALISM.*

THOUGH painful in some respects, our experience of the world as Spiritualists is instructive and wholesome, and not without amusement. Our judgment stands us in good stead in ordinary affairs, and our senses are as trustworthy as our neighbours', but having been more or less familiar with phenomena commonly described as "supernatural," we find ourselves denounced by Sir William Thomson as victims of "grovelling superstitions," and tabooed by Dr. Carpenter as "no more to be argued with than insane patients." We are aware that neither Sir William Thomson nor Dr. Carpenter mean what they say, but are "swearing at large" in anger at our persistency, hoping by an affectation of contempt to cover the consciousness of their own impotence. It is no doubt highly exasperating that after all the "exposures" and "explosions" we have been subjected to, that we should be still alive, and not only alive, but prospering and multiplying and gaining a firmer hold of the world year by year. As Dr. Carpenter admits—

Under the designation of Spiritualists a great and increasing sect has arisen both in the United States and in our own country, which numbers amongst its members not only a large aggregate that may be considered as representing the average intelligence of our social community, but some of the most cultivated men and women of our time; whilst distinguished representatives of various departments of science have attested the reality of some of the most extraordinary manifestations of the occult power exerted through the chiefs of the sect, though without committing themselves to any hypothesis as to its source.

Dr. Carpenter's article in the *Quarterly* has been widely discussed, and extolled as "a masterly annihilation of imposture," but it is no better than dozens of similar "annihilations," whereby the truth has been magnified; and indeed the very

* *The Quarterly Review*. No. 262, October, 1871. Article I.—"Spiritualism and its recent Converts."

elaboration of the article serves to display its essential poverty. For, be it known, Dr. Carpenter is (what he accuses Spiritualists of being) "the slave of a dominant idea." He assumes credit for the discovery of "Unconscious Cerebration," accompanied with "Unconscious Muscular Action," taking pains to assure his readers that his views thereon were published in 1853—antecedent, therefore, to the Spiritual propaganda—

The doctrine, therefore, was not invented to account for the phenomena in question; but may be legitimately applied to explain them.

Now let it be clearly understood that we neither deny the reality of "Unconscious Cerebration," nor disparage Carpenter's investigations into its conditions and manifestations. As Sir William Hamilton observes—

The infinitely greater part of our spiritual treasures lies always beyond the sphere of our consciousness, hid in the obscure recesses of our mind; so that if we have *ever* known a thing, the question whether we can be said to know it at any particular time is simply whether we can readily reproduce it from the storehouse of our memory.

And yet more will we concede—namely, that probably much that has passed and passes for "Spiritual Manifestations" among the less experienced is "Unconscious Cerebration," but to follow Dr. Carpenter and register the whole phenomena of Spiritualism under that head is, as people say, "to ride a hobby to death." To what lengths a philosopher under the craze of a "dominant idea" may go appears in the following deliverance—

Our position is that the so-called spiritual communications come from *within*, not from *without*, the individuals who suppose themselves to be the recipients of them; that they belong to the class termed "subjective" by physiologists and psychologists; and that the movements by which they are expressed, whether the tilting of tables or the writing of planchettes, are really produced by their own muscular action, exerted independently of their own wills and quite unconsciously to themselves. And of the truth of this position we hope to be able to satisfy every unprejudiced reader, though we entirely despair of convincing such as have already surrendered their common sense to the delusions of a credulous imagination.

Into what depths of absurdity he is prepared to plunge from this his "position" appears with grotesque effect in his account of the famous apparition of Mrs. Guppy on the centre of the table at a *séance* in Lamb's Conduit Street. Thus he explains the circumstances by his doctrine of "Unconscious Cerebration"—

It is obvious that the party of eleven persons who were sitting *in the dark* in Mr. Herne's apartments were in that state of "expectant attention" which is well known to physiologists to be productive of "subjective sensations," as well as of movements; and just as, in a circle of table-turners, when one leads off all the others follow suit, so any one who heard or felt anything (*seeing* being out of the question) which could be fancied to indicate Mrs. Guppy's presence on the table would readily excite the same belief in the minds of the rest; just as Theodore Hook, in his celebrated experiment on popular credulity, persuaded a London crowd not merely that *he*, but that *they*, could see the lion

on the top of Northumberland House wag his tail. How, in a dark *séance*, it was ascertained not merely that Mrs. Guppy was present, but that she was in a state of *déshabille*, and that the ink was still wet in her pen, we are not informed.

What a case of substitution of fancy for fact! By whatever means Mrs. Guppy got upon the table, there she was certainly found in broad light, and was accompanied to her house in Highbury by several of the party whom she had surprised. Dr. Carpenter, after picking holes (to his own satisfaction) in Lord Lindsay's testimony in favour of Mr. Home ventures to inquire, "what need we more?" If we chose to be equally unwise, we might dismiss him with a sneer, as a victim of Unconscious Cerebration; but as there remain sundry valuable lessons to be had out of our sapient critic we restrain our instinctive contempt.

Towards Mr. Crookes he displays much virtuous indignation for having accused men of science of shirking the investigation of Spiritualism. Mr. Crookes ought to have known better—

For ourselves, we can say that we took every opportunity within our reach, for more than a dozen years of witnessing the higher phenomena of Spiritualism; and it was only after a repetition of results which were entirely unsatisfactory, that we, and the scientific friends associated with us, abandoned the pursuit, as involving a waste of time and power that might be profitably employed upon worthier objects of investigation. . . . As far as regards the physical manifestations we were forced to the conclusion, that there was nothing left to investigate, except the knavery of one set of performers and the self-delusion of others.

The regret and surprise we should naturally feel over the fruitless investigations "of more than a dozen years" is largely mitigated when he emphatically assures us that—

What will only take place in a dark *séance*, or when hidden under a table, we do *not* feel called upon to treat as anything else than as a piece either of jugglery or of self-deception.

An investigator who sets out in such a temper is not likely to make much speed. He has prejudged Nature, he has defined what is possible, and every reverent student of creation knows that realities rarely answer to his prepossessions or predictions. He that would ascertain the truth must take truth on its own terms, in the dark, or hidden under a table, or, in a word, anyhow.

Dr. Carpenter is candid enough to relate his experiences under six heads, and as we peruse them it is easy to see how he was bound at the outset to a certain verdict. He was never an inquirer, but only an expectant detective, satisfied that what was not illusion was knavery, and what was not knavery was illusion. Moreover having taken out a patent for Unconscious Cerebration, he is, like the generality of patentees, remarkably indifferent to all considerations that do not tend to the pro-

motion of his invention. His interest in Spiritualism has been purely selfish. He resolved to annex its phenomena as illustrations of Unconscious Cerebration, and whatever cannot be so annexed and stuffed into his patent box is pronounced fallacious and worthless. His description of his quest betrays at every turn the commercial instinct—the bagman in search of private gain. Whenever he comes in sight of anything that does not suit his purpose, he shuts his eyes and wheels round with an alacrity that would do credit to a Romanist with a horror of heresy. Of course, any evidence of imposture or illusion (inevitable where human nature is concerned) is expanded to the uttermost and applied to discredit what cannot otherwise be impugned. Possessed with such a spirit and such a purpose, Dr. Carpenter is obviously untrustworthy as a witness, and the relation of his experiences must be received with hesitation; and indeed wherever it is possible to check him as to matter-of-fact he is found unfair and inaccurate. Take for instance his account of the Davenport Brothers, and mark how he manages to pervert the simple facts of the case, unconsciously, we dare say, but none the less mischievously—

We were requested to join a committee for investigating the supposed "occult powers" possessed by the Davenport Brothers. Being informed that the members of the Committee would be required, like ordinary attendants at the Brothers' performances, to join hands in a "circle," and that the essential parts of the performances, themselves, took place either within a cupboard into which no one was permitted to look, or in a dark room, we replied that we did not consider these performances to be proper subjects of scientific inquiry; for that no scientific man could consent to forego the use of his eyes and his hands, the most valuable of all his instruments for the investigation of objective truth.

Whoever was present at a Davenport *séance* will perceive at a glance the misrepresentation. The spectators were *not* required to join hands in a circle, nor to sit in the dark. They witnessed the performance as they might witness an experiment in any lecture-room. A committee was appointed by the audience to bind the Brothers as efficiently as they could, to inspect and exhibit the cabinet to all present, and to see the Brothers properly seated therein. Frequently ere the doors of the cabinet were closed the manifestations began, and hands and arms were projected from within. Granting darkness as a condition of certain modes of spiritual action (and any familiar with the powerful and subtle influences of light should not hesitate to do so), nothing, we maintain, could be fairer than the limit the Davenports set to it. They required darkness, but accepted it with every precaution that sceptical ingenuity could suggest. It is true that at a subsequent and independent *séance* they took their visitors into a room that was darkened on occasion—in fact, invited them into a larger cabinet, and required them to join hands as a precaution against

tricks, whilst lights were ready on demand. There was, however, no necessity for Dr. Carpenter advancing to the second *séance*, if dissatisfied with the first. But, to be plain, he neither wished nor could afford to be convinced. His excuses are ever ready and easy when he apprehends the slightest jeopardy to the universal validity of his patent for Unconscious Cerebration. Palpable, too, is the nonsense about scientific men refusing to forego the use of their eyes and hands. How much there is which we recognise for true in Nature and Spirit which is beyond the evidence of either eyes or hands!

Grave as are these misrepresentations as to matter-of-fact, with many they will pass into insignificance by the side of his impudent and indecent attacks on those he is pleased to designate "Recent Converts to Spiritualism." Mr. Serjeant Cox is described with equal elegance and humour as—

The most gullible of the gullible as to whatever appeals to his organ of Wonder.

Mr. C. F. Varley is disposed of as—

Possessing considerable *technical* knowledge of electric telegraphy, but his *scientific* attainments are so cheaply estimated by those who are best qualified to judge of them that he has never been admitted to the Royal Society, although he has more than once been a candidate for that honour.

The conclusive answer to this high-minded sarcasm is, that Mr. Varley is a Fellow of the Royal Society, and that his claim for admission was supported and enforced by some of the most distinguished members of that learned body.

Mr. Huggins, a comparatively young man, whose achievements as an astronomer are regarded with admiration by the whole scientific world, and whose greater glory, it may be safely predicted, is yet to come, is stigmatised as—

A scientific amateur, a specialist, who lacks *general* scientific culture, which alone can preserve from the narrowing and perverting influence of a limited *specialism*.

The late Dr. Hare, of Philadelphia, who tested the phenomena of Spiritualism with an ingenuity that would have done credit to Faraday (had Faraday been sufficiently enlightened), has two of his experiments criticised, and is thus dispatched—

Having exposed the sources of error underlying them, we should not think it needful to cross-examine him further.

Let us concede that two of Hare's experiments were ineffective—selected by Dr. Carpenter for inefficiency—what of the remainder? Why should they be set aside because of two? And may we assume that such is the Carpenterian method of exhaustive scientific inquiry?

With such a nice sense of the value of evidence, it would be superfluous to affect surprise when he dispenses with the weighty

testimony of the cautious, the profound, the sagacious De Morgan as of one—

Who had devoted himself so exclusively to the Science of Reasoning as to be unfitted for that practical appreciation of the value of Evidence on which we depend in the judgments of every-day life.

The phials of Carpenterian venom are however peculiarly—and, we must allow, properly—reserved for the head of Mr. Crookes; for if he is not made an end of, what is to become of Unconscious Cerebration? Let us remember that Mr. Crookes, like Mr. Huggins, is a young man, and that his career from youth has been studded with deeds of scientific distinction. This understood we can appreciate the singular grace with which the elderly Dr. Carpenter accuses him—

Of malus animus to the scientific fraternity—

And, with the feminine malignity of the very superior person, describes him as one—

Who, in his former career, made creditable use of his very limited opportunities.

Amenities such as these had, we imagined, disappeared from literature, but they serve to indicate the dismay with which the publication of Mr. Crookes's reports has affected a portion of the scientific fraternity. Moreover, they confirm an opinion we long ago expressed. In the early days of Spiritualism we were frequently taunted with the remark, "Why no man of scientific eminence testifies in your favour!" Our reply was, that whenever any man of scientific eminence pronounced in favour of Spiritualism, his eminence would instantly be subjected to detraction. We should be told that he had been ridiculously over-rated, and probably that he was afflicted with softening of the brain. Suppose, for instance, that a respectable mediocrity like Dr. Carpenter were so favoured as to encounter "manifestations" that would "double up" his theory beyond redemption, and make him a witness for the truth he had spent his vigour in resisting, would we not have him hit off in some such style as this?—

"Dr. Carpenter! an industrious compiler and plagiary, with information far in excess of his powers of assimilation! A discoverer with claims so nebulous that he can scarcely define them himself! It is no matter of surprise that he should have gone over to your delusion. He had a notion about Unconscious Cerebration, (nothing new in it but the title) whereby he not only accounted for your Spiritualism, but for all the signs and wonders of the Bible likewise! The Apostles, he said, were unscientific witnesses, and merely fancied they saw what they vowed they saw and died for. But it is always the way with that sort of people. They dash from the extreme of rationalism

to that of credulity, and if you think that I am going to believe a whit more in the spirits because Carpenter does, let me tell you that you are very much mistaken."

From Dr. Carpenter's abuse one name of singular eminence has been spared—namely, that of Mr. Alfred R. Wallace, possibly for the creditable reason that his audacity failed him through some sense of the absurdity of imputing illusion or insanity to that serene and severe intelligence. Nor should we care to introduce Mr. Wallace to the present discussion, but it so happens that he supplies a perfectly apposite answer to Dr. Carpenter's attempt to discredit the veracity of Spiritualists on the ground that what they relate is so absurd and incredible, that no amount of testimony can possibly induce a sane man to receive it. For instance, writes Dr. Carpenter—

When we are called on to believe in the "levitation" of the human body, and in the power of incorporeal spirits to move heavy masses of matter without any ostensible agency, to make an accordion play tunes without the working of its bellows or its keys, [*the first time we ever heard of such a manifestation*] and to evolve fruits and flowers, snow and ice, live lobsters and the hands of departed friends, out of the depths of their own consciousness, the question is one to be decided, not by an elaborate discussion, but by direct appeal to *educated common-sense*.

And, citing Mr. Varley's evidence—

We quote the following as an example of the manner in which minds of this limited order are apt to become the dupes of their own imaginings.

"I have, in broad daylight, seen a small table with no one near it but myself, and not even touched by me or any visible person, raised off the floor and carried horizontally ten feet through the air; and I have repeatedly seen a large dining-table lifted bodily off the floor, and when so supported in the air the table has moved in the direction that I mentally requested it to take. In this experiment, not only was the "new force" well developed, but in addition it obeyed my *unspoken mental* request, to convince me that there was present an "intelligence" that could, and did, read my thoughts.

"I have on a few occasions been able to see the *spirits themselves*, sometimes to talk with them. They have frequently foretold things that were about to happen, and in most instances the events have occurred as predicted."

Out of his internal consciousness, or by the exercise of what it pleases him to call *educated common-sense*, Dr. Carpenter knows that Mr. Varley and others who confess to similar experiences are either dupes or knaves. Pressed for a reason for his conclusion, his reply amounts to this that what he *considers* impossible *must be* impossible. But why, a rational man will demand, should even *educated common-sense* be set up as a gauge of what is possible? The assumption that lies behind such arrogance is thus disposed of by Mr. Wallace—

One of the most popular objections to miracles consists of making a supposition and drawing an inference, which looks like a dilemma, but is really none at all.

This argument has been put in several forms. One is, "If a man tells me he came from York by the telegraph-wire, I do not believe him. If fifty men tell me they came from York by telegraph-wires, I do not believe them. If any

number of men tell me the same, I do not believe them. Therefore, Mr. Home did not float in the air, notwithstanding any amount of testimony you may bring to prove it."

Another is, "If a man tells me that he saw the lion on Northumberland House descend into Trafalgar Square and drink water from the fountains, I should not believe him. If fifty men, or any number of men, informed me of the same thing, I should still not believe them."

Hence it is inferred that there are certain things so absurd and so incredible, that no amount of testimony could possibly make a sane man believe them.

Now, these illustrations look like arguments, and at first sight it is not easy to see the proper way to answer them; but the fact is that they are utter fallacies, because their whole force depends upon an assumed proposition which has never been proved, and which I challenge any one to prove. The proposition is, that a large number of independent, honest, sane, and sensible witnesses, *can* testify to a plain matter of fact which never occurred at all.

Now, no evidence has ever been adduced to show that this ever has happened or ever could happen. But the assumption is rendered still more monstrous when we consider the circumstances attending such cases as those of the cures at the tomb of the Abbé Paris, and the cases of modern scientific men being converted to a belief in the reality of the phenomena of modern Spiritualism; for we must assume that, being fully warned that the alleged facts are impossible and are therefore delusions, and having the source of the supposed delusion pointed out, and all the prejudices of the age and the whole tone of educated thought being against the reality of such facts, yet numbers of educated men, including physicians and men of science, are convinced of the reality of the facts after the most searching investigation. Yet the assumption that such an amount and quality of independent converging evidence *can* be all false, must be proved to be a fact if the argument is to have the slightest value, otherwise it is merely begging the question. It must be remembered that we have to consider not absurd beliefs or false inferences, but plain matters of fact: and it cannot be proved, and never has been proved, that any large amount of cumulative evidence of disinterested and sensible men was ever obtained for an absolute and entire delusion. To put the matter in a simple form, the asserted fact is either possible, or not possible. If possible, such evidence as we have been considering would prove it; if not possible, such evidence could not exist. The argument is, therefore, an absolute fallacy, since its fundamental assumption cannot be proved. If it is intended merely to enunciate the proposition, that the more strange and unusual a thing is the more and the better evidence we require for it, that we all admit; but I maintain that human testimony increases in value in such an enormous ratio with each additional independent and honest witness, that no fact ought to be rejected when attested by such a body of evidence as exists for many of the events termed miraculous or supernatural, and which occur now daily among us. The burden of proof lies on those who maintain that such evidence can possibly be fallacious; let them point out one case in which such cumulative evidence existed, and which yet proved to be false; let them give not supposition, but proof.*

For ourselves, argument with unbelievers of the Carpenter type grows rather irksome. To be told that our experiences are illusory, or that we have been imposed upon by jugglery, by people whose only warrant for their assertions is their prejudice and their impudence, is an offence which, were not others concerned, we should meet with silence. At a *séance*, whereat a few of the most notable people in England were assembled, a table rose from the floor and remained suspended in the air.

* *An Answer to the Arguments of Hume, Lecky, and Others against Miracles.* By ALFRED R. WALLACE, Author of *The Malay Archipelago*; and *Contributions to the Theory of Natural Selection.* London: 1871.

"Now," said one of the party, "let us make sure of our senses, for we shall be told that what we at present witness we never saw, but only imagined we saw"—a caution received with much laughter. To those who have been favoured with similar evidences of spiritual power, how vapid are the arguments *in vacuo* and how vain the tirades of the sceptical dreamers who boast of their adherence to matter of fact!

With composure might we now take leave of the patentee of Unconscious Cerebration, but there remains a passage in his article which it would be a pity to overlook, on account of its marvellous jumble of assumptions begotten in his own imagination, with prescriptions against such illusions, and, at the same time, an under-strain of good sense. He writes—

The insight we have gained in the course of this inquiry into the gullibility, not merely of the average public, but of many of those who command its respect, either as teachers of religion or as successful scientific investigators, has made us reflect seriously as to what it is in our present system of education which constitutes the chief "predisposing cause" of the Spiritualist epidemic. And after the best comparison we have been able to make between the mental condition of the classes who have *most* severely suffered from it, and that of the classes who have been *least* affected, we have come to the conclusion that part, at least, of this predisposition depends on the *deficiency of early scientific training*. Such training ought to include (1) the acquirement of habits of correct *observation* of the phenomena daily taking place around us; (2) the cultivation of the power of *reasoning* upon these phenomena, so as to arrive at *general principles* by the *inductive* process; (3) the study of the method of testing the validity of such inductions by *experiment*; and (4) the *deductive* application of principles thus acquired to the *prediction* of phenomena which can be verified by observation. We speak with knowledge when we say that a tenth of the time which is devoted, in an ordinary school curriculum, to the study of *abstractions*, will suffice for the culture (if judiciously directed) of the power of *bringing the reasoning faculties to bear on objective realities*, not only without disadvantage to his other studies, but with a manifest improvement in the pupil's power of apprehending the real meaning of abstractions which had previously perplexed him. Now, it is among purely *literary* men, whose minds have seldom been exercised upon anything but abstractions, that we have witnessed most ready surrender to the seductions of Spiritualism; the distinction between objective realities and the creations of their own imaginations being often extremely ill-defined, and the testimony borne by Science to the want of trustworthiness of what they assume to be the evidence of their own senses, being scornfully repudiated. On the other hand, those who have gone through the discipline of such an early scientific training as we have advocated, or have (like Faraday) conscientiously imposed it upon themselves at a later period, are usually the last persons to become "possessed" by the delusions of this pseudo-science; or, if they should have perchance been attracted by them for a time, they speedily come to discern their fallacy.

So far as Spiritualism is concerned, our readers can dispense with any commentary. For thorough and efficient training in natural science we have nothing but commendation, and are fully persuaded that the extensive transfer of study from books to objects is the grand reform imminent in our scholastic system. But let us make no mistake, and suppose that "by the most exquisite catechisms or the most industrious preachings and

drillings," a veracious and judicial mind is to be acquired any more than a religious. We suppose we may take Dr. Carpenter as a fair specimen of the discipline he advocates, and we see how completely it fails to create the higher philosophic spirit. Indeed that spirit comes by Nature, by inheritance, "by the grace of God," for we find it possessed by those whose literary and scientific acquirements are of the most meagre order, and lacking in those whose lives from childhood have been spent in ceaseless intellectual acquisition. Technical accuracy we may ensure by instruction, but the love of truth for its own sake is a gift like that of poetry, or invention, or originality of any sort, which comes—who knows how? We, as Spiritualists, have had ample acquaintance with men of science, and we know how idle it is to identify equity of judgment with any extent of intellectual attainment. Where they consider their reputations or worldly interests at stake, men of science wriggle and prevaricate like ordinary mortals, and, like Sir David Brewster, do not hesitate at measures more decided than equivocation if escape be otherwise cut off. Faraday, when a bookbinder's apprentice, longed to devote himself to science, fancying that *savans* must be saints, but in Sir Humphry Davy's service he was rapidly and painfully undeceived.

In mere information the article in the *Quarterly* is disgracefully deficient. The voluminous literature of Spiritualism is apparently unknown to the author, and a forgotten pamphlet of a crazy parson named Dibdin, who ascribed table-turning to the Devil, and denounced the practice as perilous to the soul, is revived and treated as if it stood for anything. It is useless to excuse such ignorance with such digests of evidence as Mr. Sargent's *Planchette* and Mr. Shorter's *Two Worlds* to refer to. But the writer was much more concerned to puff his own theory and achievements than to exhibit Spiritualism in its natural proportions.

Of course the article winds up with the usual appeal, where-with we are so familiar. Thus it runs as ground out by the Carpenterian organ—

We would fearlessly leave it to the good sense of any right-minded person, whether he would surrender the enduring and inspiring memories impressed on his inner soul by the counsels and example of a wise father, by the affectionate sympathy of a tender and judicious mother, by the cordial unselfishness of a generous-hearted brother, by the self-sacrificing devotion of a loving sister, or by the guileless simplicity of an innocent child, for any communications they could send him by rappings or table-tiltings.

Rhodomontade of that sort anybody may spin by the yard, as by the yard it is spun, and when spun is good for nothing. Whoever put rappings or table-tiltings in competition, or even contrast, with human virtues and affections! Dr. Carpenter

describes a certain spiritual communication as in the style of Chadband, but in the Chadband style he is an apt performer himself. His adjuration reminds us of a fervid old Scotswoman, who, jealous for the eternal welfare of a geologist whose absorption in his favourite pursuit threatened to swamp his interest in the Kirk, cried out, "O Geordie! Geordie! what wull a' your stanes avail ye in the Day o' Jeegement!"

Dr. Carpenter is far too highly educated to threaten with the Day of Judgment, but he is not philosopher enough to refrain from arguments equally irrelevant and equally silly.

NOTE BY DR. WILKINSON.

[Having sent the proof of the preceding article to Dr. Garth Wilkinson, he has favoured us with the following observations, which by reason of their pith, point, and power, we cannot keep to ourselves.—ED.]

"I have read Mr. White's article, which is a very sufficient reply to Dr. Carpenter. It has also the merit of being very gentle in its treatment of the cruel, narrow, false science which enslaves that poor man's faculty. When it is once seen, as Mr. Wallace indicates, that personal testimony is the granite rock on which all records of fact are founded, not only will the consonance of character of the witnesses (*e. g.*, to miracles) be all-important, but the personals of the impugners will be overhauled, to see where, and who they are. Who is Dr. Carpenter? A man, who from his very germ, has no faculty of that Faith to which all things are promised. A man voluntarily given up to all pickings and pollings into death. A man who goes to sea to look through Nature down to Nature's sludge. A man who has no curiosity about the fate after the grave of any dear to him. A man who would cut down all the consolations of bereaved homes, and all the aspirations and inspirations of his fellows, to his own Paralytic Materialism. He is, I know, a good and worthy and exemplary man, so by temperament, and hard-work; but he is naturally at present idiotic upon Spiritual Things.

"Evidence must take stock of him as well as of other facts; and this which I have given is true evidence. He has indicated this line of evidence in his analysis of Messrs. Crookes, Varley, Huggins, and others. It must be applied to himself. His religious capacity reaches no higher than that Jesus Christ is the Son of a Carpenter; his Science is the same, and its topmost Axiom, its 'unconscious cerebration' is, that the Universe is the Son of a Carpenter.

"J. J. GARTH WILKINSON."

THE REPORT ON SPIRITUALISM OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE DIALECTICAL SOCIETY.*

OUR readers are already familiar with the circumstances which led the Dialectical Society to enter upon the investigation which has issued in the publication of this elaborate Report, comprising the Report of the Committee; Reports of the Experimental Sub-Committees, with Minutes of Proceedings; Communications from Members of the Committee, and from Non-Members; Minutes of Evidence taken by the Committee; Notes of *Séances* communicated to the Committee; and Correspondence. In short, it is a complete record of the transactions of the Committee from its appointment to the publication of this Report—the whole making a handsome volume of 412 pages.

In our last number we presented the Report of the Committee, giving its general findings on the whole subject. In this we give the substance of the Reports of the Experimental Sub-Committees.

The Committee was appointed 26th January, 1869, "to investigate the phenomena alleged to be spiritual manifestations, and to report thereon." The Committee originally consisted of twenty-eight members of the society; but two of these gentlemen declined to sit, and subsequently eight other gentlemen were invited and agreed to join. This body of thirty-four, being obviously too large to conduct inquiries by personal experiment, was split up into six Sub-committees, and these were requested to make such investigations as were possible, and send in their Report. This has accordingly been done, and we now give a *resumé* of these Reports:—

REPORT OF SUB-COMMITTEE, No. 1.

"Since their appointment on the 16th of February, 1869, your Sub-committee have held *forty* meetings, for the purpose of experiment and test.

"All of these meetings were held at the private residences of members of the Committee, purposely to preclude the possibility of pre-arranged mechanism or contrivance."

"Every test that the combined intelligence of your Committee could devise has been tried with patience and perseverance. The experiments were conducted under a great variety of conditions, and ingenuity has been exerted in devising plans by

* *Report on Spiritualism of the Committee of the London Dialectical Society, together with the Evidence Oral and Written, and a Selection from the Correspondence.* London: LONGMANS, 1871.

which your Committee might verify their observations, and preclude the possibility of imposture or delusion.

"Your Committee have confined their report to *facts* witnessed by them in their collective capacity, which facts were *palpable to the senses, and their reality capable of demonstrative proof.*

"Of the members of your Sub-committee about *four-fifths* entered upon the investigation wholly sceptical as to the reality of the alleged phenomena, firmly believing them to be the result either of *imposture*, or of *delusion*, or of *involuntary muscular action*. It was only by irresistible evidence, under conditions that precluded the possibility of either of these solutions, and after trial and test many times repeated, that the most sceptical of your Sub-committee were slowly and reluctantly convinced that the phenomena exhibited in the course of their protracted inquiry were veritable facts.

"The result of their long-continued and carefully-conducted experiments, after trial by every detective test they could devise, has been to establish conclusively:—

"First: That under certain bodily or mental conditions of one or more of the persons present, a force is exhibited sufficient to set in motion heavy substances, without the employment of any muscular force, without contact or material connection of any kind between such substances and the body of any person present.

"Second: That this force can cause sounds to proceed, distinctly audible to all present, from solid substances not in contact with, nor having any visible or material connection with, the body of any person present, and which sounds are proved to proceed from such substances by the vibrations which are distinctly felt when they are touched.

"Third: That this force is frequently directed by intelligence.

"At *thirty-four* out of the forty meetings of your Committee some of these phenomena occurred.

"A description of one experiment, and the manner of conducting it, will best show the care and caution with which your Committee have pursued their investigations.

"So long as there was contact, or even the possibility of contact, by the hands or feet, or even by the clothes of any person in the room, with the substance moved or sounded, there could be no perfect assurance that the motions and sounds were not produced by the person so in contact. The following experiment was tried:—

"On an occasion when eleven members of your Sub-committee had been sitting round one of the dining-tables above described for forty minutes, and various motions and sounds had

occurred, they, by way of test, turned the backs of their chairs to the table, at about nine inches from it. They all then knelt upon their chairs, placing their arms upon the backs thereof. In this position, their feet were of course turned away from the table, and by no possibility could be placed under it or touch the floor. The hands of each person were extended over the table at about four inches from the surface. Contact, therefore, with any part of the table could not take place without detection.

"In less than a minute, the table, untouched, moved *four* times; at first about *five* inches to one side, then about *twelve* inches to the opposite side, and then, in like manner, four inches and six inches respectively.

"The hands of all present were next placed on the backs of their chairs, and about a foot from the table, which again moved, as before, *five* times, over spaces varying from four to six inches. Then all the chairs were removed twelve inches from the table, and each person knelt on his chair as before, this time however folding his hands behind his back, his body being thus about eighteen inches from the table, and having the back of the chair between himself and the table. The table again moved four times, in various directions. In the course of this conclusive experiment, and in less than half-an-hour, the table thus moved, without contact or possibility of contact with any person present, thirteen times, the movements being in different directions, and some of them according to the request of various members of your Sub-committee.

"The table was then carefully examined, turned upside down and taken to pieces, but nothing was discovered to account for the phenomena. The experiment was conducted throughout in the full light of gas above the table.

"Altogether, your Sub-committee have witnessed upwards of *fifty* similar motions without contact on *eight* different evenings, in the houses of members of your Sub-committee, the most careful tests being applied on each occasion.

"In all similar experiments the possibility of mechanical or other contrivance was further negated by the fact that the movements were in various directions, now to one side, then to the other; now up the room, now down the room—motions that would have required the co-operation of many hands or feet; and these, from the great size and weight of the tables, could not have been so used without the visible exercise of muscular force. Every hand and foot was plainly to be seen and could not have been moved without instant detection.

"Delusion was out of the question. The motions were in various directions, and were witnessed simultaneously by all

present. They were matters of measurement, and not of opinion or of fancy.

"And they occurred so often, under so many and such various conditions, with such safeguards against error or deception, and with such invariable results, as to satisfy the members of your Sub-committee by whom the experiments were tried, wholly sceptical as most of them were when they entered upon the investigation, *that there is a force capable of moving heavy bodies without material contact, and which force is in some unknown manner dependant upon the presence of human beings.*

"Your Sub-committee have not, collectively, obtained any evidence as to the nature and source of this force, but simply as to the fact of its existence.

"There appears to your Committee to be no ground for the popular belief that the presence of sceptics interferes in any manner with the production or action of the force.

"In conclusion, your Committee express their unanimous opinion that the one important physical fact thus proved to exist, *that motion may be produced in solid bodies without material contact, by some hitherto unrecognised force operating within an undefined distance from the human organism, and beyond the range of muscular action,* should be subjected to further scientific examination, with a view to ascertain its true source, nature, and power."

REPORT OF SUB-COMMITTEE, No. 2.

This Committee reports:—

"That the phenomena termed 'rapping,' 'table-rapping,' and 'table-moving' occurred at our first, and at many subsequent meetings.

"That the table-moving referred to was in the nature of heaving, oscillation, or tipping; the table often moving in any direction suggested.

"That, during such movements our hands were sometimes removed from the table altogether without abating the phenomena, and that at all times we were careful not to induce any movements by either muscular action or pressure.

"That 'table-moving' ceased, or nearly ceased, after our first few meetings, apparently in favour of the rapping phenomena.

"That the rappings in question did not always proceed from the table, but sometimes from the floor, the walls, and the ceiling; frequently coming from parts of the room suggested by those present—but not always.

"That the raps had a sound distinctive and distinguishable, appearing to be in rather than on the substance from whence

they proceeded ; sometimes, however, they sounded like detonations in the air.

"That when we occasionally, by way of experiment, made series of raps in rhythmical order upon the table, and asked that the rhythms should be imitated, our requests were complied with by responsive raps exactly imitating the rhythms prescribed.

"That our experience in regard to the phenomena we witnessed appears generally to be corroborative of the statements of many of the witnesses examined by you upon the subject, to the extent that such phenomena have, or appear to have, a basis of intelligence.

"That this intelligence was principally manifested (*a*) by replies more or less pertinent, and sometimes most unexpected in their character, to our spoken and audible questions, (*b*) by original communications made to us as hereinafter mentioned.

"That such replies and communications were made by means of raps given when the alphabet was pointed to, letter by letter, or spoken by one of the party—it having been previously understood that three raps should signify "yes," two "doubtful," and one "no." This arrangement, however, was sometimes altered by way of test, but without disturbing the accuracy of the replies.

"That through the processes detailed in the foregoing clause, we presumably established occasional communication with a number of spirits, or intelligences, announced to be such by themselves, many of whom stated they were connected in various degrees of relationship to certain members of our party for whom they professed a friendly regard.

"That such presumed spirits displayed distinct individualities, each having a manner peculiar to itself, and rapping delicately, emphatically, or deliberately, as the case might be, expressing, as it were, character, mood, and temper.

"That when we attempted to shorten the process of communication detailed in clause No. 16, by anticipating words or phrases which we thought were intended, we frequently found our anticipations emphatically negatived in favour of more appropriate expressions, or of words of a different signification altogether. For illustrations upon this point we refer you to the *séances* reported in clause No. 39.

"That intelligence was further manifested by the occasional dictation to us of special conditions for our then observance, such, for instance, as requesting us to sit in a different order at the table ; requiring one or more to sit away from it ; asking for an increase or diminution of light, or for the appointment of some particular person to ask questions ; directing us to link or unlink

hands; to be more quiet in our conversation; to avoid disputation, &c.

"That on our compliance with such directions the manifestations were invariably intensified.

"That we are convinced of the objective character of the phenomena from finding that persons sceptical as to the existence thereof invariably confirmed our own experiences even when suddenly introduced during the progress of a *séance*. As a case in point, we instance that when one of our sittings was far advanced, and the phenomena of table-moving and rapping were in full operation, we sent for a neighbour to witness them. He came immediately, the manifestations continuing without break or interruption, and presenting to him the same aspect that they did to ourselves, notwithstanding that he at any rate must have been free from any antecedent influence, mesmeric or otherwise.

"That as a further evidence of the objectivity of the phenomena, we report that manifestations have occurred to us spontaneously upon occasions when we had not assembled for the purpose of a *séance*, and were not seated round any table. We instance (1st) that one evening, when some of the members of your sub-committee were assembled at the house of Mr. A——, not, however, with any intention of then investigating the phenomena, the conversation turned upon a *séance* lately held by some of the members of your general Committee, at which Mrs. Marshall had been present, and when raps had proceeded from the pianoforte. While we were discussing the genuineness of these raps, the strings of Mr. A——'s pianoforte suddenly and simultaneously vibrated, although no person was near the instrument. As these sounds were twice or thrice repeated, followed by raps, and were too sonorous to be accounted for by any vibration of the house or room, we immediately examined the instrument internally and externally with great care, but without discovering any cause for the sounds produced; and even after such examination, raps proceeded from the instrument at intervals during the rest of the evening. This was the only occasion when phenomena other than "rapping" or "table-moving" occurred to your Sub-Committee, and we think it right to add that no circumstance of the kind had ever before or since happened in Mr. A——'s house. (2nd.) That upon another occasion, some time after we had concluded a *séance*, and while we were taking refreshment, the rappings returned with great vigour, proceeding simultaneously from various parts of the room. On asking the presumed intelligences their names, they informed us in reply that they were the spirits who had been in communication with us during the evening, and that they were in a happy and merry mood, and did not care to leave us. One

of our party jocularly drank to their health, and asked them to respond, which they did by volleys of raps, indicative, as they informed us, of laughter and good-fellowship. Each ultimately bade us good-night by a succession of raps, so to speak, in perspective, being at the commencement loud and rapid, but gradually diminishing in force and increasing in interval until out of hearing. These raps, we should state, were more like detonations in the air than the result of percussion on any hard substance.

"That we instance, as further evidence of the spontaneity of the phenomena, that frequently emphatic raps occurred by way of assent to, or dissent from, remarks made by your Sub-Committee to each other. Thus, at a sitting during which the raps had been unusually sonorous and fluent, one of the party asked the presumed spirit then in communication to state when he died, but no answer was returned, notwithstanding the question was somewhat persistently repeated. This apparently abrupt termination to the most successful *séance* we had yet had caused us much surprise, and we were conversing upon the subject, when it was remarked that as the presumed intelligences claimed to be spiritual, they probably rejected the application of such a term as "death" to themselves or their state of existence, it being likely that of whatever import death might be to the body, it would, as concerning the spirit, be the continuation of life under a new form. Scarcely had the speaker concluded, when loud raps again sounded from the table, such being given, as we were informed, by way of assent to the remarks just made. Arising out of this, a conversation of great interest took place between ourselves and the presumed intelligences. Death, we were informed, was, so far as the body was concerned, of comparatively trivial import, but as regarded the spirit, it was a birth into new experiences of existence; that spirit-life was in every respect human; that friendly intercourse and companionship were as common and as pleasurable in spirit-life as on earth.

"That the independence or objectivity of the intelligence regulating the phenomena appears to be evidenced by the fact that we have frequently received answers and communications unexpected in their character."

We need not occupy space by quoting the instance given by the Sub-Committee in illustration; but we would particularly direct attention to the narrative, pp. 31—37, as a complete refutation of the hypothesis resuscitated by Dr. Carpenter in the current number of the *Quarterly Review*, that alleged spirit communications, when not the results of fraud, are due to

automatic and reflex cerebral action, expectant attention, and dominant ideas. A single well authenticated case like the one referred to is utterly fatal to all such reasoning. The insuperable difficulty which men like Dr. Carpenter always encounter is, that facts stand obstinately in the way of their theories, and brutally contradict them.

Finally, the Sub-Committee say:—

“Before concluding this our Report, we deem it to be right to state for your information that when we commenced our investigation your Committee consisted of three members only, all of whom were totally unacquainted with the phenomena except by rumour, and that a fourth member was subsequently added who had had a previous acquaintance with the subject, but who did not join our party until the last of our successful meetings in May.”

REPORT OF SUB-COMMITTEE NO. 3.

Sub-Committee No. 3 enters into an elaborate calculation to show that the force requisite to tilt such a table as they employed in their experiments would be at least $43\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., and that the greatest amount of “involuntary pressure” would not exceed from 4 lbs. to 5 lbs. Yet the table moved in all directions, going over a large room “with great ease and smooth regularity, as well as a kind of rushing speed.” It is added, “Besides the evidence thus afforded by the presence of this not generally recognised force, we believe we have had in these experiments evidence of an intelligence directing it, as in moving by request in a particular direction, tilting a certain number of times as required, and by tilts or raps spelling out words and sentences addressed to those present.” The members also expressed their “unanimous conviction” that the phenomena witnessed in their investigations “raise some most important questions on science and philosophy, and deserve the fullest examination by capable and independent thinkers.”

REPORT OF SUB-COMMITTEE NO. 5.

This Sub-Committee held four sittings, but only a few feeble raps and slight movements of the table occurred. Owing to Mr. Home's illness the meetings were discontinued. The Sub-Committee remark that “During the inquiry Mr. Home afforded every facility for examination, and appeared to be anxious to further the object the Committee had in view. . . . Mr. Home explained at the opening of the inquiry that the phenomena produced through his agency were of uncertain manifestation, and that he had no power whatever to produce them at will.”

SUB-COMMITTEES NOS. 4 AND 6.

Simply report that nothing occurred in their presence worth recording.

These Reports are followed by Communications from Dr. James Edmunds, Mr. Henry Jeffrey, Mr. Grattan Geary, and Mr. Henry G. Atkinson, members of the Committee, expressing their dissent from the Committee's Report; or supplementing it by opinions and theories of their own. The statements they contain, so far as they relate to the actions of the Committee, or of the Sub-Committees, are replied to in Editorial Notes, and are also strongly commented on in a memorandum by Mr. Serjeant Cox. The argument offered by Dr. Edmunds as to the incredibility of the alleged facts of Spiritualism, is most ably refuted in the extract from a Paper read before the Dialectical Society by Alfred R. Wallace, F.R.S., and which Paper we regret is not given *in extenso*. There is nothing put forward by the dissentients which in the least invalidates the facts and conclusions set forth in the Report of the Committee, and by the Sub-Committees.

CURIOSITIES OF LITERATURE.

By BENJAMIN COLEMAN.

THERE has rarely if ever been a subject of controversy in modern times which has excited so much opposition as Spiritualism, and that, too, from men of the most diverse tone of thought. As soon as one opponent is silenced or converted another and yet another enters the field, unwarned by the fate of his immediate predecessors, and, boldly throwing down the gauntlet, taunts the Spiritualist with his "degrading delusion," and challenges him to prove his case.

Some recent experiments made by Mr. Crookes, F.R.S., and attested by Mr. Serjeant Cox, and Dr. Huggins, a Vice-President of the Royal Society, which established the existence of what they call a new force—together with the recently published Report of the Committee of the Dialectical Society, have brought forth comments from Quarterly Reviewers and leading journalists, which, taken as a whole, may be fitly called "CURIOSITIES OF LITERATURE." Men, who, like myself, bear witness to the truth of Spiritualism, meet our adversaries' high-

sounding theories with plain unvarnished facts, without stopping to consider whether they disturb settled convictions of what is, or what is not, possible; and we say, with perfect truth, that we have seen tables, and many other articles move without human contact or mechanical arrangement of any kind; and that we have also seen tables raised from the floor, and suspended for a considerable time, under similar conditions.

I have seen such things frequently, and once I saw a table rise as high as the ceiling, out of the reach of all present. Many of the most intelligent men and women of my acquaintance have witnessed similar facts. I have also heard musical instruments—a piano, guitar, and accordion—played upon by intelligent, though invisible, agency. It is without the pale of possibility that we could have been mistaken as to these facts; it was not in the dark, and we did not shut our eyes and take anything for granted. These curious things *were all done in the broad light of day*, and generally in the drawing-rooms of one friend or another. Under a slight change of conditions, namely, the temporary exclusion of the light, we have had, after being seated with the windows, doors, and fire-place securely closed, many strange things brought into the room and laid upon the table. I have had, for instance, brought to me quantities of fresh natural flowers, which I had specially asked for but a moment before; a live rabbit, a bird, and many other things. Hundreds of honest intelligent witnesses assert that they, too, have seen the same things done by what we are told is "Psychic" force, which, however, is only another name for Spiritualism, by which name I have been accustomed to call it. I believe Spirit is the agency; and shall adhere to that belief until I can find a more rational solution.

Dr. Carpenter, however, in the last number of the *Quarterly Review*, says he knows all about it. He reasoned it out 18 years ago to his own entire satisfaction, and notwithstanding that thousands have deserted his standard, including, as he very candidly admits, "Not only a large aggregate that may be considered as representing the average intelligence of our social community, but some of the most cultivated men and women of our time, while distinguished representatives of various departments of science have attested the reality of some of the most extraordinary manifestations of the occult power"—he yet remains unmoved, firm in his original convictions.

And what are they? This learned Fellow of the Royal Society covers the whole range of "manifestations of the occult power" by attributing them to juggler's tricks, dominant ideas, unconscious cerebration, involuntary muscular action, and subjectivity, or mental delusion:—theories long since exploded by

the facts so many distinguished representatives of various departments of science have repeatedly witnessed and publicly attested. But it appears this is our "great delusion." This is a proof of our having become victims to an epidemic, from which our teacher has been fortunately preserved. "Seeing is not believing," he says in such cases, and therefore, though so many of us would be ready to make oath that, as I have said, we have seen a table move without human agency, and seen it rise from the floor and float,—it is altogether a mistake! To suppose such things possible is to prove our "predisposition to a belief in occult agencies," and want of scientific culture, which prevents our "appreciating the force of scientific reasoning," and proves our "deficiency in practical good sense which renders us liable to become the slaves of *dominant ideas*."

After reading such an extraordinary exposure of our mental infirmities, I felt dazed for a moment, and somewhat alarmed, I asked myself what would now become of my facts? But reflecting awhile, I recovered the shock, and returned to my old errors, and I hope I shall be excused by this learned gentleman when I say, that if high-class studies lead to no wiser conclusions, I am thankful that my education never entitled me to a seat in the councils of the Royal Society.

Three of our weekly journals, the *Saturday Review*, *Examiner* and *Observer*, have also come out with leading articles on this "Great Delusion." The *Saturday Review*, October 21, among other "curiosities," says "Miss Anna Blackwell says she saw a spirit. She might give us her reasons for not attributing it to an attack of indigestion. . . . It is comparatively a slight evil that a knot of curious persons should talk inconceivable nonsense, torture evidence out of all shape and proclaim imaginary discoveries. But any body who has seen something of the working of Spiritualism here and in America knows that sensitive and excitable persons are running a risk of a most serious kind. We are inclined to speak of their proceedings with disgust rather than ridicule. . . . The Dialectical Committee's report will lead to discrediting a little further one of the most unequivocally degrading superstitions that have ever found currency amongst reasonable beings."

This is nearly word for word the language used in denouncing Spiritualism by the late Dr. John Elliotson, who afterwards recanted and became a firm believer in Spiritualism.

The *Examiner*, October 21, says, "Why the Dialectical Society should have consented so far to make itself ridiculous as to appoint such a committee at all it is not easy to determine. We all know beforehand what such professional mediums as

Mrs. Marshall, Mrs. Guppy, Miss Houghton, and Mr. Daniel Home have to tell us.*

"To see Mr. Home lifted into the air is one thing. To be told by A. B. that he had seen such a 'levitation,' or to be told by C. D. that he knows as a matter of fact that E. F. (*which is a totally different proposition*) has seen such a thing, is quite another.

"Let the spirits move not a little table, but the Wellington monument. If they can move one, they can move the other. Let Mrs. Guppy call down a shower of jonquils in Trafalgar Square. Let Mr. Home float from the Clock Tower to the York Column.†

"Why are none of these things done? Why are none of these even attempted? How is it that the very poorest Hindoo juggler can beat the Spiritualists at their own tricks? Why are the spirits so partial to dark rooms? Why does the presence of Professor Tyndall at a *séance* throw all into confusion? Why do so many Spiritualists live at Norwood? All these are most interesting questions."

Possibly they may be so considered by the uninformed multitude for whom they are written, but to my humble thinking they are very stupid, and, worse, intentionally misleading.

Other specimens in the same style are to be found in the *Daily News*, *Globe*, and *Echo*. The *Observer* of October 21, commences a leading article with these words—"At spiritual *séances* a large placard is usually stuck upon the wall, 'Beloved, try the Spirits.' Upon this admirable suggestion the Dialectical Society has acted. . . . Yet not a single instance is upon record in which the spirits have enabled their chosen mediums to work miracles, or to foretel the future. . . . Locked up in a dark room with a few credulous and silly people, an expert medium can every now and then succeed in performing some clumsy conjuring trick of which the sorriest itinerant Hindoo juggler would be ashamed. . . . Who have seen Mr. Home's body elongated several inches, if not feet? Lord Lindsay, Lord Dunraven, and many others. And who have been seated when Mrs. Guppy has come bodily through the ceiling and alighted on the table? Nine competent witnesses whose names were published. Somehow or another, those wonderful manifestations refuse to take place under ordinary conditions. The admission of light, the presence of a sceptic, of a scientific man, or even of a professional conjuror, scares the spirits off.

* The latter three named persons never were professional mediums.—Ed.

† The *Quarterly Reviewer* would not be taken in by a "dominant idea" like that. "Seeing is not believing," you know, Mr. Examiner.

An Indian juggler could sit down in the middle of Trafalgar Square, and then slowly and steadily rise in the air to a height of five or six feet, still sitting, and as slowly come down again. M. Houdin used to bring 100 cauliflowers out of a crushed opera-hat. Nothing that Mrs. Guppy has ever yet done in the way of 'spirit flowers,' none of Mr. Home's 'levitations,' come anywhere near these simple performances."

Why do respectable journals admit such puerilities and perversions of truth by writers who are either ignorant in the subject, or who wilfully seek to mislead their readers?

With all the respect I can command, I take the liberty of asking the learned professor of the *Quarterly*, the following questions:—

1.—What is the nature of that special gift which enables him to decide so authoritatively upon the errors, deficiencies, hallucinations, want of scientific reasoning, and practical good sense, of thousands "of the most cultivated men and women of our time?"

2.—Are our five senses ever to be trusted; and if so, under what circumstances and conditions?

3.—Were he and some four or five of his chosen friends, professors of some one or other of the "ologies"—to see a table raised by an invisible force to the ceiling of the room, as I and four or five of my common-place friends have done—would he admit the fact? or would he content himself by saying, as Sir David Brewster did, that "the table *appeared* to rise, and he did not pretend to explain it;" or would he say it was "subjective;" "imagination;" or "a dominant idea?"

4.—Will he give the name of any juggler or expert who can perform on an accordion, as he asserts "is a common trick," with one hand?

5.—Does he really know the conditions of a dark *séance* which he has so imperfectly described?

6.—Will he be candid enough to retract *as he has promised to do*, upon being assured that "the two lobsters" brought by "Psychic" force at a *séance* I attended *were* cooked not "for supper" as he suggests, but for *breakfast*? Or would that make all the difference and enable him to escape the humiliation of confessing his error?

SPIRIT-SEEING IN CORNWALL.

AN APPARITION.

In Lanlivery Church, Cornwall, is a monument to the memory of the wife of Admiral Cotes, who related to the Rev. James Walker, vicar of that parish, the following facts, recorded in his memorandum-book. While commanding a squadron in the East Indies, he saw the form of his wife plainly standing at his bedside. She remained for some time, and disappeared slowly, waving her hand. The Admiral and some of his friends noted this circumstance in writing and the time of the vision, and upon his arrival in England he discovered that she had died at the same hour of the night when her spirit appeared to him in the East Indies. This vision is similar to that mentioned in the first volume of *Lord Brougham's Autobiography*, but, unlike Lord B., Admiral C. was convinced that the vision was real, and not illusive. The figure did not attempt to speak to the Admiral.

THE BOTATHEN GHOST.

This legend is related at length by Mr. Hawker, in his *Footprints in far Cornwall*. The son of a Mr. Bligh, of Botathen, asserted that in a certain spot, and always in one and the same place on the moor in the vicinity, he encountered every day a woman with a pale and troubled face, clothed in a long loose garment of frieze, with one hand stretched forth, and the other pressed against her side, named Dorothy Dinglet, who had died a few years before. Her hair seemed so soft and light, as if melting, and her eyes were fixed, and never blinking. The figure seemed to swim along the top of the grass, and her hand seemed to point at something away out of sight. Mr. B. did not seem to relish the mentioning of the subject, but the boy repeated the story to a Mr. Rudall, a clergyman. Subsequently, Rudall and the boy saw the figure, as they alleged, "gliding" towards them, "like a sail upon a stream." A spaniel dog yelled and barked, dismayed. This occurred early in January, 1665, by daylight. On the 10th, Mr. R. had an audience with the then Bishop of Exeter, for a license to exorcise the spirit, according to Canon 72, A.D. 1604. He gave the license, stating, "Let it be secret, Mr. R." On the 12th January, according to his statement, Mr. Rudall encountered the ghost, and questioned her, when it appeared that Mr. Bligh, Sen., was the subject of her conversation chiefly, and the cause of her appearance. She predicted that "a fearful pestilence would lay waste the land," before the

next Yuletide. On the 13th January, Mr. Rudall stated, "I did dismiss that troubled ghost until she withdrew gliding towards the west," and never afterwards was seen. "What pleasures and improvements do such deny themselves," he observed, "who scorn and avoid all opportunity of intercourse with souls separate, and the spirits, glad and sorrowful, which inhabit the unseen world."

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES IN THE LIFE OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL was one of those rare natures, who, born under whatever system, outgrow the system from their innate nobility, and even to a lost system give a temporary life. The Catholics may quote St. Vincentius as a proof of the excellence of their religious system, of the sanctifying nature of Holy Mother Church; but he is in reality one of those who, having reached up to the height of genuine Christianity, reflect on the human system in which they are born, and to which they are moulded, the light and warmth that come from above. The St. Vincents, the Howards, the Foxes, the Wesleys, the Peabodys, belong to no sect or party; they belong to the general assembly of the saints, who follow Christ in the broad and right-onward path of supremest principle, of self-sacrifice, and prosecution of human good.

St. Vincent de Paul lived in the reign of Louis XIII. of France, when Cardinal Richelieu, in reality, was the ruler of France, and dragged that naturally well-disposed monarch through a world of national crime, of invasive wars, and of aggression of the most audacious kind, on the rights of nations and individuals, and laid the odium of them upon him. He lived also in the minority of Louis XIV., when another equally ambitious and mischievous churchman, Cardinal Mazarin, shaped the young and naturally clever monarch into one of the most pestilent and bigoted tyrants that ever afflicted his country and the world.

What a history would be that of the Roman cardinals! This class of men, which was utterly unknown to the Catholic Church for 800 years; who were not raised to the office of electing the popes till A.D. 1059, when it was done by the advice of the terrible Hildebrand, afterwards Gregory VII. These men, who were not invested with the red hat till 1224, nor formed into a regular conclave till the year following, who

were not held superior to bishops till 1300, nor received their title of eminence till 1630,—who are, indeed, a growth of the later and most corrupt times of the Church,—what terrible scourges have they been to humanity! Wherever in the history of Europe, since their creation, you find great schemes of criminal ambition, of aggression and despotism, there you are pretty sure to find a cardinal minister at the head and at the bottom of it too. The Wolseys, Richelieus, Mazarins, Ximenes, De Retz's, stand out as the very antipodes of the apostles of peace. There is no ambition so boundless, no schemes so unprincipled, no policy so treacherous and deceitful, no administration so cruel, no spirit so haughty, so offensive and so ruthless, as that of priests. Satan seems to have anointed them with the subtlest oil of the deepest Tartarus, as his especial saints and rulers on earth, as the most perfect and inimitable antitheses of the saints and servants of Christ. Of all men they are the excitors of wars and inflictors of tyrannies. But still more was this the case in their collective than in their individual characters; for they are they who have elected the popes to suit their own purposes, and directed their counsels, if they did not, as in the case of a few self-willed pontiffs, rule them absolutely. By a gross usurpation of the rights of the people for the election of their popes and bishops, which remained intact till the eleventh century, these men elect the popes, and the popes, in return, create them; so that by a daring juggle of the most impudent and notorious kind, the rule of pope and cardinals is maintained in defiance of history, common sense, and the Church's own testimony—a hoax, a farce and an insult to Catholicism. Neither pope nor cardinals have the slightest validity of title to their posts, dignities, and authority, by the ancient, and, by their own confession, unchangeable canons of the Roman hierarchy.

And what a rule of 700 years have these Red Men had. What an ocean of wealth—usurped from Italy and other countries—they have weltered in. What broad lands, what magnificent palaces, what luxurious tables they have enjoyed. What indomitable power have they exercised over the multitude by the abundance of their sorceries, by the necromancy of arts, music, statuary, infinite ceremonies, dogmas, miracles, relics, legends, exercised amid mental darkness. With what horrors and bloodshed have they steeped unhappy Italy. What armed heels of barbarians have they brought over the people's lands. By what forests of foreign bayonets have they perpetuated their rule. In what trains of gilded coaches, with gold caparisoned black horses, with their numerous troops of menials, in richest liveries of scarlet and gold, have they daily traversed the streets

and parks of Rome, the people, as this gorgeous pageantry swept by, uncovering and bowing, and often falling on their knees beneath the eyes of these autocrats of both worlds. All this while crowds of the innocent and the patriotic, lying hid from the face of day in the deep dungeons of their castles and their Inquisition, crying to God day and night for His deliverance. And it came! The Italians burst in at the Porta Pia, and dispelled the whole of this intolerable phantasmagoria of those who professed themselves the servants of Him whose cradle was a manger, and who had nowhere to lay His head. Well may the Romans rejoice without ceasing at the sudden and marvellous evanishment of this nightmare of 700 years. Well may Döllinger and the Catholics of Germany renounce all connection with this hateful apparition from Tartarus. Well may the kings of the earth, who so long worshipped the Scarlet Woman, stand afar off, and refuse to know her any more. Again, I say, what a history might be written of the cardinals, and of all that they have inflicted on humanity!

But Vincent de Paul was a very different creature from these scarlet funguses. Many of them the rotten roots in the old forests of Papal enchantment. Though moulded by education into the Catholic system, he possessed a nature which had been baptized with the fountain of the Divine, and was made invulnerable to its poison. He only worked in it, or as a bee works in busy cells of the deadly aconite, for human good. He established a missionary society to visit the neglected parts of the country districts; in 1617 he established the Society of Benevolent Matrons for visiting, comforting, and instructing the poor, and for taking charge of destitute children. The Society of Sisters of Mercy in 1634, for nursing the sick, both in hospitals and private houses, both in peace and war. In 1636 he founded also a mission for the army, and other missions which gradually extended over France, to North Africa, Ireland, the Hebrides, Italy, Madagascar, Poland, Corsica, &c.

These institutions, and especially those of the Benevolent Matrons and Sisters of Mercy, have grown into world-wide importance, and of late years have engrafted themselves on Protestantism. He introduced the system of visiting and instructing prisoners in the public jails, and it is rather curious that it required above 200 years to produce English followers in these philanthropic tracks, in Mrs. Fry and Florence Nightingale. He next founded a Home for orphan and foundling children, which he committed to the care of the Society of Benevolent Matrons. Having been himself captured on a voyage by pirates, and carried into Tunis, and sold as a slave, he instituted a society for the relief and purchase of Christian slaves in Algiers

and Tunis, and exerted himself through the French Government for the amelioration of the condition of slaves through the French Consul.

He was placed at the head of the great mission house of St. Lazarus, in Paris, with all its property; and of the Magdalen Society for the reclaiming and reforming of fallen women, founded in 1618, by the Marchioness of Maignelia. Through his friendship with Count Gondy, General of the Galleys, in 1632, he accomplished a mission to labour amongst the galley slaves, which became of immense importance.

By his mission for the army, he became aware of the dreadful horrors and terrible human sufferings produced by Richelieu's war with the Spaniards of the Netherlands in Lorraine, during the Thirty Years' War. In fact, that unhappy country was continually overrun by the different armies of the German Protestant League, and its allies, the Swedes and Saxons, of the Austrians, Spaniards and French. From 1633 to 1640, Lorraine was a perfect hell of misery. The cities of St. Michel, Toul, Corbie, Metz, Nancy, Verdun, Bar-le-duc, &c., were as much ravaged and cursed by the French and Spaniards, as they were by the Prussians and Germans in 1870. Richelieu cared as little for all this misery as Bismarck and King William in our time. But Vincent de Paul did promptly and boldly what none of these human butchers cared to do. He went to Richelieu and protested against the continuance of such barbarities, and demanded peace. He told him of the thousands and tens of thousands in the different towns lying in the streets uncared for, of thousands turned out of the cities and lying before the gates sick and starving, wasted by fever, plundered by demons in shape of men, torn at night by wolves; mothers devouring their children, children their mothers, and one another. Though Richelieu moved not, for your true war-hounds are not furnished with bowels of compassion but of ravening, and have all the comfortable insensibility of grindstones, St. Vincent de Paul sent out priests and ministers of a new Society of Benevolent Men. He devoted the utmost that he could of the revenues of the different philanthropic societies under his control to these purposes, and wondered how, like the widow's cruise, these resources held out so wonderfully.

In the long intestine wars of France of that time, that of the Fronde and of the Princes, the same horrors and miseries of the people prevailed, and whilst those who produced them continued indifferent to them, Vincent de Paul was ever at work endeavouring to abate them. In the War of the Princes, the Princes of Condé, Conti, and the Duke of Longueville rose against the domineering rule of Cardinal Mazarin, who in-

fluenced to mischief the Queen Regent in the minority of Louis XIV. as Richelieu had influenced Louis XIII., and these princes, joined by the Duke of Orleans and the Spaniards, with Turenne as general, for a time were victorious over Mazarin, but in the end, through feuds amongst themselves, they allowed the insolent cardinal to triumph. Between them, both Paris and the country, especially Picardy and Champagne, suffered incredible miseries. This war did not end till the Pyrenean Peace of 1659, and as is generally the case, the princes and generals, the creators of the calamities, took little or no thought of the amelioration of them. But St. Vincent was a real Christian, and not one of the fungus tribe who merely call themselves so. He hated war and held it to be the direct work of the devil, and always followed like an angel of mercy on its hideous track. He sent out his missionaries to note the extent of the inhuman evils inflicted on society. The discovery was terrible.

Before they reached the district towards which they were directing their course, they found the highways and hedges encumbered by hundreds of sick and wounded in the most frightful condition of misery. The store of food which they had brought with them was immediately consumed, and they hastened to the next town to purchase more. But there the condition of things was infinitely worse. The horrors of the war had driven the country people into the towns, where they remained in famine and despair. Their lands were ruined by contending armies; their farms and cottages reduced to heaps of ashes, and they had neither tools nor seed wherewith to recommence the work of cultivation. These are the perpetual fruits of war, and yet the clever people of this insane planet continue to find in these bitter fruits of death and hell, profit and glory; and entertain the ridiculous idea, that those who propagate such gory woe, are all the time model men and Christians of an admirable type!

The missionaries sent the tale of consternation to St. Vincent. Paris had long been as much ravaged by the fiends of war, and the funds of the Society of Benevolent Matrons, of the Hospital of St. Lazarus, and other philanthropic institutions, had been constantly and ruinously drawn upon; but the good man did not despair. The Archbishop of Paris was applied to for the asserction of his influence. The cry was sent forth from all the city pulpits for help, and by printed appeals, and Vincent soon was able to send off sixteen missionaries, with money and food, and a number of Sisters of Charity. Mighty was the labour which lay before them. In the countries of Guise, of Tierache, Soissons, and St. Quentin, in Picardy, and other places, the famine and disease were terrible. The people who were alive had only kept

themselves so by eating bread made of barley-straw, frogs, roots, and weeds. The churches and convents were stripped of everything, and around the towns lay heaps of destitute people who had been refused entrance into them, or had been driven out a prey to the frosts of the winter, of fevers, dogs, and wolves. At St. Quentin the townspeople were on the point of driving out the remainder of the sick country people to the same fate. Near Rethel, two thousand Spaniards, killed in the battle betwixt Marshals Turenne and Du Plessis, had lain two months unburied. At the request of the missionaries, men were sent to bury them, and money for this and a thousand other demands.

For ten years that these intestine wars raged, Vincentius sent off on an average monthly from 15,000 to 20,000 livres, or from 180,000 to 200,000 livres annually—partly in money; partly in linen, clothing, food, seed, corn, and agricultural implements, and all this time his numerous establishments for healing and nursing had to be maintained. Many times almost every one but himself was in despair. On one occasion, when a number of clergy had to meet at the Hospital of St. Lazarus, and to be entertained, the steward came to him in affright, saying that they had not a penny for the ordinary, much less for such extraordinary demands. "Oh! good news!" said St. Vincent. "God be praised! Now it will be seen whether we have trust in God or not."

On another occasion, one of his priests recommended that they should make a charge to the young clergy who took up their abode for ten days in the hospital whilst preparing for consecration, as the establishment could not support the burden. "Well," said Vincentius, "when we have spent all for our Lord, and nothing more remains, we will put the key under the door, and take our departure." They were always helped through. In these circumstances St. Vincent reminds us of our old friend, the Curé d'Ars.

For ten years, during the minority of Louis XIV., under the regency of Queen Anna, Vincent was a Councillor of State, and in this office exerted himself to prevent the appointment of bishops and other clerical dignitaries being made matters of political favour. As he had always laboured to reform and improve the lives of the clergy, so now he laboured equally to check simony and the desecration of sacred offices by appointment of unfit persons; for which faithful conduct he often received the grossest insult and most malicious persecution and defamation.

But the fact which renders St. Vincent the proper topic in these pages is of a spiritual character. To such a man the interior condition must have been peculiarly open to psychical

influences, and, accordingly, we find numbers of instances in which he perceived or exercised those powers called supernatural. As first observed, he himself attributed it to a miracle that the money sent to Lorraine held out so wonderfully. If we consider that during the ten years of war he had contributed largely to remove the direful destitution, sickness, and misery of twenty-five cities and vast districts of country, and had to the scores of ravaged churches refurnished the altars and resupplied them with silver vessels for the church services, we must admit that his wonder was quite natural.

In 1644, Vincent de Paul lying extremely ill and his life despaired of, a young missionary priest of Picardy, named Dufour, who also was ill, and who, in common with all France—indeed, the whole Catholic world—felt the insuperable loss that his death would be to many thousands, prayed earnestly that his life might be taken and that of Vincentius spared. It was remarked that from this time Dufour began to get worse and Vincent de Paul better. A while after, some priests who were watching by Vincent heard at midnight three knocks at the chamber door. They opened the door, but no one was there. On this, but without any remark, Vincent requested one of the priests to read the prayers for the dead. It was at once believed by those present that he was convinced of the death of Antonius Dufour at that moment, which proved to be the case.

He never spoke of things of this extraordinary character happening to himself, but when he did mention them, it was as though they had happened to a third person. But it was observed by various persons that God gave him glimpses into the future, and announced to him things occurring which there were no outward means of communicating. A remarkable fact of this kind, amongst others, is recorded in a letter written by Martin Hussen, a celebrated Member of Parliament of that time, and then French Consul at Tunis, to a missionary priest, soon after the death of Vincent de Paul.

No fewer than sixty-four remarkable cures were said to be made at the tomb of St. Vincent, but the Roman commission which inquired into the evidences of them, confined its attention to such as they considered perfectly beyond question, from the publicity of their occurrence and the wide-spread public knowledge of them amongst the contemporaries of those thus healed. Amongst these were the cure of a boy of twelve years, who had been quite blind for eighteen months; of a girl of eight years, who had been dumb from her birth, and without the use of both legs, speech and full use of her limbs having been received at the tomb of St. Vincent. But one of the most publicly-known and well-attested cures was that of Mathurine Guerin, the Lady Superior

of the Sisters of Mercy at Paris. At the age of seventy-six she was affected with a severe and most painful ulcer on one of her legs for three years. M. Vernage, Dean of the Faculty of Physicians in Paris, despaired of it. This cure, however, took place at the tomb of St. Vincent, and for six years after—that is, till her death—she continued her philanthropic labours as a nurse of the sick. A boy, eleven years old, who for years was so lame in both hands and feet that he could neither walk nor feed himself, was in like manner perfectly cured, though Florentius Franchet, a celebrated surgeon, had declared him incurable.

Louisa Elizabeth Sackville, a young English lady, a Catholic, lived with her sister, Xaveria Sackville, at Paris, with Mr. and Mrs. Hayes, also English, but Protestants. After a severe fever, Louisa Sackville found that she had lost the use of the right leg, so that she could not put it to the ground without severe pains and fainting. Neither physicians nor baths procured her any relief.

Some weeks before Christmas of the year 1732, some nuns recommended that she should be carried to the monastery of St. Lazarus, where at the tomb of St. Vincent, one of their fellow nuns, Maria Angelica Mackenna, an Irishwoman, had been cured of a similar ailment, after a nine days' course of prayer in the church of that house. For some time, Louisa Sackville refused to listen to their advice, having lost faith in her own cure after so many vainly attempted remedies. At last, however, she gave way to the entreaties of her friends and commenced her *neuvaine* on the 20th of December. She was taken thither in a carriage, and so brought back every day, and, besides her crutches, had the support of two servants.

On the 29th of December, about four o'clock in the afternoon, after her return from the church, she felt the natural warmth in the leg, and said to her sister that she believed she was cured, and could walk without her crutches. Her sister in alarm, ran towards her with one of the crutches, but she had already sprung up and walked forward without any support or protection. The maid-servant was called, who saw with astonishment Miss Sackville going to and fro, as well as ever. Mrs. Hayes was then asked to come in, and Louisa, telling her she was cured, rose up and walked towards her. Mrs. Hayes fainted in her joy and astonishment. This lady gave another testimonial of her knowledge of the loss of the use of the leg in March, 1730, and its restoration on the 29th of December, 1732; and that her friend continued as well at the time of signing the document, February 3rd, 1733, as ever she had been in her life, and that for some time before, and wholly afterwards, she ceased to take

medicine or use any means of healing but the prescribed prayers. Mr. Hayes also always spoke of this cure as one of the greatest possible miracles.

The last of these cases that we shall quote is that of Franz Richer, a merchant of Paris, who, through lifting a heavy weight, had done himself so much bodily injury that he was subject to attacks of pain of such violence that he often swooned away. At the grave of St. Vincent he found himself perfectly cured, and returning home, threw into the fire before his astonished wife the bandage without which he had not been able to walk a step. The two surgeons who had attended him, declared that the cure was most amazing.

Certainly, if men are rewarded after death, by being enabled to continue the philanthropic practices of their earthly life, none deserved more richly such a favour than St. Vincent de Paul. But if heaven confers "the luxury of doing good" on such men, what does it confer on the coarser and more numerous, whose lives, business and delight it is to scatter death and misery ten thousandfold amongst their fellow men? Verily, they, too, will have their reward.

W. H.

EVIDENCE OF THE REV. WILLIAM HARNESS.

THE Rev. A. G. L'Estrange relates of the Rev. William Harness, late Vicar of All Saints, Knightsbridge, and Prebendary of St. Paul's:—*

"One December, when I was about to leave for the country, he told me the following stories, with which I might amuse my friends round the Christmas hearth. They are interesting, as being supported by a stronger amount of evidence than such accounts usually possess.

"On one occasion, in the time of our grandfathers, a hundred and fifty years ago, the mansion of Lord Townshend, at Rainham, was so full, that the rooms in ordinary use were not sufficient to accomodate the guests. To solve this difficulty, it was proposed to place one of the visitors in a chamber which was generally supposed to be haunted by a white female figure. It was late at night when Lord Townshend conducted his friend to his apartment, and the consternation of both may be imagined when, on opening the door, they perceived something white and tall, like a female in a long robe, gliding across, and disappearing

* *The Literary Life of the Rev. William Harness.* By the Rev. A. G. L'ESTRANGE. London: 1871.

through a panel opposite. Next day Lord Townshend examined the wainscoting, and observing a slight peculiarity in the panel, ordered it to be removed. Behind it a kind of niche was discovered, containing a human skeleton. It was now learnt from some of the oldest inhabitants of the neighbourhood that the white apparition had formerly been considered to be connected with a Lady Townshend, about whose death there had been something dark and mysterious: Lord Townshend ordered the coffin, in which she was supposed to have been buried, to be brought up from the vault, and a strange confirmation was given to the ancient rumour, when, on its being opened, it was found to be empty.

“ Lord Glenelg’s father told Mr. Harness that once when his son was staying at a country house, and the party were assembled at the breakfast table, he observed from the window a lady (who was to have left that morning) crossing the lawn. On making inquiries, it was found that the lady in question had left the house, and it subsequently transpired that an accident had occurred, in which she had lost her life, at the very time when she appeared to be passing before the window.

“ Dr. Baring, when Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, rented for a short period a house which had belonged to Sir J. Paul, the grandfather of the present baronet. Miss ——— was soon afterwards staying with him as a visitor. One night, on putting out her candle and lying down in bed, she beheld, to her astonishment and alarm, a little old man sitting in the arm-chair, warming his hands over the fire. Her first impulse was to call for help; but she restrained herself, and, the figure continuing motionless, she at length fell asleep. In the morning she related what she had seen, and from the description she gave of the old gentleman, one of the party at once recognised him as the deceased baronet to whom the house had previously belonged.

“ A vessel was sailing in the Atlantic, when the mate, on looking into the captain’s cabin, saw a stranger sitting at the writing-desk. A sentence was afterwards found written there: ‘ *Steer to the North-West.*’ The captain supposed it must have been written by one of the crew, but none of their hand-writings in the least resembled that found in the cabin. After some consultation, the captain changed his course, and stood for the North-West. When they had sailed for a considerable distance, they came in sight of an ice-bound vessel. ‘ There,’ cried the mate, as soon as they went aboard her, ‘ there is the man I saw writing in the cabin.’ He was one of the sailors, and had been asleep at the time stated.”

Harness was at Harrow with Byron, and like Byron was lame. “ If any fellow bullies you, tell me, and I’ll thrash him

if I can," was Byron's sympathetic speech to Harness when he made his appearance at Harrow, pale and thin in consequence of a severe fever.

Among Harness's more intimate friends was Henry Hope, the millionaire and author of *Anastasius*. Hope died in 1831, and the night after his death Harness dreamed that he saw Lord Beresford's country residence in an unusual state of commotion. He woke up with the impression that some death or other great calamity had happened there; and though he afterwards thought lightly of the matter, he determined, as he was going in that direction, to call at Lord Beresford's in Duchess Street, on his way home. On arriving there, he found the blinds down, and the house shut up; and upon inquiring, the gate-porter told him that Mr. Thomas Hope had died the day before at Bedgebury Park. Mr. Harness had not known that his friend was either ill or in England. Mr. Hope left Mr. Harness his literary executor.

Alluding to this strange coincidence, and to other remarkable dreams, Mr. Harness related that a lady friend of his, when about to return with her husband from India, prayed to him to reconsider his determination, as she had dreamed that she was drowned, and that, as she was dying, she saw a white cloud passing over her. He laughed at her fears, and represented to her how absurd it would appear to their friends to say they had determined to remain in India because she had the night-mare on the eve of their departure. They accordingly sailed as they had arranged, and reached Alexandria in safety. "What do you think of your dream now?" inquired her husband. "We are not yet in London," she replied doubtfully. They soon arrived safely in Paris. "We are not far from London now," he observed jocosely. "But we are not yet there," she persisted. They crossed to Dover, and were proceeding by rail to town, when the well-known accident occurred to the train at Staplehurst—described by Dickens in the preface to *Our Mutual Friend*. The carriages were overturned in the water; the lady was drowned, and the white steam of the engine was blown across her like a cloud.

Mr. Howitt, it may be remembered, relates* that Mr. Harness was a firm believer in Spiritual Phenomena, though he said little about it. One evening at Miss Coutts's, just after the *History of the Supernatural* appeared, he said, "I am going to read that directly." Said Mr. Howitt, "Do you believe in such things?" "Believe!" replied Mr. Harness, "Why, don't you know who first published the account of the Wynyard

* *Spiritual Magazine*, 1869, p. 561.

apparition, and the account of the apparition of an old friend to Miss Jane Porter, at Esher." "No," said Mr. Howitt. "I published them both," replied Mr. Harness, "and know that such things are true."

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

NUMBER OF SPIRITUALISTS IN THE UNITED STATES.

OUR friend Mr. William Tebb, has just returned from a visit to the United States. Being struck by the confused and conflicting statements as to the number of Spiritualists in the United States, he made this a subject of special and very careful inquiry in order to ascertain the facts of the case. Mr. Tebb says:—

"If there is one privilege which a stranger travelling in America may count upon, without fear of giving offence, it is that of asking questions. And taking advantage of this, I have sought for information on this subject in a journey through the Eastern, Middle, and Western States, from my fellow-travellers and from those likely to be best informed on the subject, on steamboat, railway car, and omnibus; in village, city, and remote frontier settlements; in fashionable watering places and manufacturing districts, extending through a journey of over six thousand four hundred miles."

The result of these minute and extended enquiries is thus stated:—"I consider that a fair and liberal estimate apportioned amongst the States of the Union would be as follows:—

	Population.	Ratio.	
Eastern States	3½ millions	Three per cent.,	... 105,000
Middle States	10 "	Two "	... 200,000
Western States ...	16 "	Two "	... 320,000
Southern States and } Western Territories }	10 "		35,000
	39½ millions.		660,000

This will include the children of Spiritualists, as is usually estimated by statistis in enumerations of this sort. The accuracy of these figures, I feel persuaded, will be confirmed by any one who will undertake, as I have done, the work of investigation, with the sole object of ascertaining the facts. And however disappointing it may be to discover that the number of those in accord with us are fewer than we had reckoned on, it is better that the truth should be made known, and it is to be hoped that

the publication of the facts I have given will help to explain how it is that the influence of the Spiritualists of the United States on public opinion is so much less than might be reasonably expected from the large estimates of their numbers that have been given."

Mr. Tebb prints a letter from the Rev. Adin Ballou, which corroborates the conclusion arrived at by himself: He concludes his article in the November number of *Human Nature* as follows:—

"So far, I have stated only the results of my own personal observations and inquiries, but I am aware it will be urged, if these results are even approximately correct, how is it that the Roman Catholic Convention of Bishops at Baltimore, in 1867, estimated the number of Spiritualists in the United States at from ten to eleven millions? I have sought anxiously to obtain a copy of this Report, that I might see its own *ipsissima verba*, and in order to ascertain on what data this estimate is founded, and who are comprehended by it under the term Spiritualists. I have, however, been unable to obtain a copy. I have also enquired of those likely to be best informed on the matter, but the only statement that came to me, with any air of authority, was to the effect that under this name was included secularists, sceptics, and free-thinkers of every shade of opinion; and however strange this, at first sight, may seem, it will appear the less improbable when we consider the generally hostile attitude of the Spiritualists of America to Churches and Church beliefs. But however this may be, it should be borne in mind that the number of Spiritualists is not enumerated in the United States Census, or, as far as I am aware, in any other official document. And in face of the facts I have given, and of many others that might be cited, in looking at the circulation of its journals as compared with that of other bodies; at the number of children attending its Lyceums in comparison with those of the schools of other denominations; at the admissions made by its missionaries, lecturers, and the correspondents of the Spiritualist journals from all parts of the country as to the unpopularity of Spiritualism and its inadequate support, I think it will be evident that the estimate said to be given by the Baltimore Convention is not in accordance with the facts. Beyond this, I know of nothing which can strictly be considered as evidence on the point. It is true that Judge Edmonds speaks of there being 80,000 or 100,000 Spiritualists in New York, and of his extensive correspondence, and of the numerous enquiries addressed to him on Spiritualism; but all this would only show that the Spiritualists in the United States are very numerous, a point which is not called in question, but not that they are from ten

to eleven millions, or even from five to six millions at which Judge Edmunds had himself estimated them only the year before. In arriving at this conclusion, I hope it will not for a moment be supposed that I desire to depreciate in the least degree the position and influence this movement has attained in the United States. As Moses said of the people of Israel—"Would God all the Lord's people were prophets!" so I can say most heartily Would God all the people of America were Spiritualists; But we must not allow our wishes and our imaginations to give any colouring to the facts. Judge Edmonds has adopted as his motto, "The Truth against the World;" so, in this inquiry, my first, and last, and only object has been to elicit the truth, whether that truth proved itself to be as I wished it, or otherwise. I believe, however, that the result of my investigations will not be useless. Nothing, perhaps, has more discredited Spiritualism, in England, at all events, than the rash and obviously exaggerated statements on this point made by influential Spiritualists, and whose statements are, in consequence, called in question even on other matters where they are entirely deserving of credence. What is especially needed of Spiritualists, it seems to me, is to state facts simply, carefully, and, above all, with the most painstaking accuracy, and if, in spite of all my efforts, I have at all erred in this respect, I shall feel thankful to be corrected.

"20, Rochester Road, Camden Road,
London, N.W., Oct. 23, 1871."

PSYCHIC FORCE RINGS BELLS AT BIRMINGHAM.

And why not, as well as play tunes on an insulated accordion at the house of a scientific gentleman in London? We clip the following from the *Medium* of October 26:—

"Mr. Hawkes, Birmingham, furnishes us with the following remarkable account:—'We had, a short time since, an extraordinary manifestation in the ringing of all the bells in the house of a widow, in Bath Row, who lets off her house to respectable lodgers. One of them died after being there a short time, and his widow took the corpse to Ireland. As soon as it had left the bells began to ring at intervals, night and day, so much so that all the lodgers were leaving, and no one would engage the empty apartments. The proprietor applied to the police, and even consulted the medical staff at the Queen's Hospital, then had a carpenter to repair the various parts which had been broken by the violent ringing. Mr. Morris, the electro-galvanic machine manufacturer, examined the wires all

through the house, but no one could trace the cause of such annoyance. While the carpenter, Mr. Evans, was looking at the crank at the doorpost, the wire and crank set in motion, which very much astonished him.' ”

These circumstances led some of the Spiritualists of Birmingham to hold a *séance* at the “haunted house.” A communication, purporting to come from the deceased gentleman, was received, and “psychic force” has since ceased to ring the bells or otherwise annoy the inmates of the house.

DEATHS OF THE INSANE.

Dr. Kitching, the Superintendent of the Friends' Retreat (the Quaker Asylum for the Insane at York), in his last Annual Report, observes—

“Apart from the natural desire in the minds of relatives to know whether the final change in a beloved one was preceded or attended by any indication of consciousness as to the solemn event and its consequences, there appears to be a widespread idea that the process of dissolution banishes from the mind the mists of disease, and gives place to a certain clearness of perception, emphatically called ‘lighting up before death.’

“Popular notions respecting one set of phenomena are sometimes derived from observations made on another set of phenomena. It has been observed that persons who have lived in much neglect of spiritual things, when brought face to face with death, have been aroused to an intense earnestness respecting their eternal state, and manifested amid the decay of the physical powers a vivacity and clearness of soul, which, in one sense, is a true ‘lighting up before death.’ Persons who experience this revulsion of feeling and spiritual commotion, are not dying of maladies involving the rational and spiritual faculties. The latter have been suppressed during life, not by disease, but by the exercise of the will, and are now roused by fear of the future—and there is a true spiritual ‘lighting up’ before death.

“In the region of insanity there is nothing parallel to this. The insane die of or with diseases involving the material organ through which both mind and soul manifest themselves, and the resultant insanity covers all the faculties with its dark and confusing pall. This dark pall remains to the end, and is only removed when the spirit emerges from the trammels and infirmities of the flesh into the light of eternity. The deathbeds of the insane are not therefore scenes where returning reason and spiritual clearness can be witnessed. And I have never seen an instance, among hundreds of deaths, of this sup-

posed 'lighting up.' It is not in fact reasonable to expect such an occurrence. Death from causes not seated in the brain is very often attended by delirium, or cerebral disturbance which confuses the mind; and it is therefore much more probable that death from a disease which in its origin destroys the reason, and, as it advances towards the final issue, increases in severity, and often becomes associated with complications fatal also in themselves, so far from being preceded by renewed power and brilliance in the functions of the brain, should rather be marked by thicker darkness and more inextricable confusion; and experience shows that this is so."

FICHTE ON SPIRITUALISM.

All students of philosophy are acquainted with the writings of Johann Gottlieb Fichte, the contemporary of Kant, and one of the most illustrious of the great thinkers of Germany. His son, Immanuel Hermann Fichte, is probably the peer of his father in intellectual power and culture, if not in reputation. Among the great living philosophers of Germany, many students will be disposed to award him a place second to that of no other. The following letter cannot fail to be read with much interest by Spiritualists, showing as it does that Johann Fichte, thinker and philosopher as he is, has had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the phenomena of Spiritualism, and of testing them repeatedly, and that he has come to the conclusion that it is absolutely impossible to account for these phenomena, *save by assuming the action of a superhuman influence*. We find the following letter, translated from the German, in the *Boston Religious Magazine* of Nov. 1871:

"Stuttgart, July 7, 1871.

"My dear Sir,—Accept my warmest thanks for Hare's work, which, had you not sent it to me, would probably have escaped my notice. I made myself acquainted with its contents without delay, and can state the following as being my present impression in relation thereto. As to its revelations concerning the world beyond, they seem to me to be of the highest importance, because they not only, at least for the most part, harmonize with those which have been given by other spiritual seers, but because they are intrinsically reasonable, *godworthy*, and truly cheering. I, myself, have the greater reason to think them valuable, as they essentially agree with the *principles of my own psychological investigation, which is entirely independent of them*. I refer to that which is really essential and decisive, laying aside a great deal that is unessential in these 'revelations' (such as the demonstration of the existence of spiritual spheres which are

said to surround our planets, &c.) which may, I fear, furnish abundant material for doubt and ridicule to those who are unfavourably disposed.

"As to my present position with regard to 'Spiritualism,' I had an opportunity last year of becoming acquainted with its phenomena, and of testing them repeatedly. This was through my personal acquaintance with Baron Gldenstbbe and his sister, who spent the winter of 1869-1870, at Stuttgart, and who honoured me with their full confidence. I have come to the conclusion, that it is absolutely impossible to account for these phenomena save by assuming the action of a superhuman influence; but that deception, credulous acceptance of worthless things, false interpretation of incidental matters, in a word, *subjective admixtures*, are not wanting; on the contrary, that they often play a principal part which obscures the value of the whole thing. In short there is a great deal of chaff, and but little genuine grain in the thing, so that I have often become weary of attending such experiments, or of causing them to be made, although two excellent mediums were at my disposal after the departure of Gldenstbbe. I feel, however, deeply interested in the cause, for I am by no means unaware of its high importance, both in a religious and social point of view. I shall, therefore, be grateful to you if you will continue your communications, and I assure you and your worthy friend, Councillor Aksakow, of my most gracious appreciation of the indefatigable zeal with which you so perseveringly devote your powers to that cause.

"Yours, with high respect,

"J. H. VON FICHTE.

"To Mr. Gregor Constantin Wittig,
Breslau."

APPARITION AT THE TIME OF DEATH OF MR. JOHN BUTLER, M.P.

In December, 1766, Mr. John Butler, M.P. for Sussex, left his seat at Warminghurst, for London, on horseback, attended by a groom. Next morning, his sister-in-law, Miss Frances Brown, saw Mr. Butler coming into her room and walking through it into another chamber. In returning, when she spoke to him, he made no reply. She then became uneasy, thinking he was ill. Upon inquiry below, the steward stated that he also had seen Mr. Butler in his office, but he did not speak, and walked away silently. This occurred about day-break. In the course of the morning, the groom returned, and stated that his master had died about the time when Miss Brown and the

steward saw the vision. His widow seemed to be unprovided for; but Mr. Butler's desk was found in the room where Miss F. Brown had seen the vision, and the will of Mr. Butler in it, with his bequest to his widow, was discovered. Mr. Butler was buried on the 3rd January, 1767.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

Good men sitting amongst their families, or by a solitary fire, like me, when they remember the light that shone over the poor clowns huddling on the Bethlehem plains eighteen hundred years ago, the apparition of shining angels overhead, the song, "Peace on earth, goodwill to all men," which for the first time hallowed the midnight air—pray for that strain's fulfilment, that battle and strife may vex the nations no more, that not only on Christmas Eve, but the whole year round, men should be brethren, owning one Father in heaven.—*Alexander Smith.*

MARGERY MILLER.

(An Inspirational Poem.)

By LIZZIE DOTEN.

OLD Margery Miller sat alone,
One Christmas Eve, by her poor hearth-
stone,
Where dimly the fading firelight
shone.
Her brow was furrowed with signs of
care,
For, Oh! life's burden was hard to
bear,
 Poor old Margery Miller!
 Sitting alone,
 Unsought, unknown,
Had her friends like birds of summer
flown?
Full eighty summers had swiftly
sped,
Full eighty winters their snows had
shed,
With silver sheen on her aged head.
One by one had her loved ones died—
One by one had they left her side—
Fading like flowers in their summer
pride.
 Poor old Margery Miller!
 Sitting alone,
 Unsought, unknown,
Had God forgotten that she was His
own?

No castle was hers with a spacious
lawn;
Her poor old hut was the proud man's
scorn;
Yet Margery Miller was nobly born.
A brother she had who once wore a
crown,
And deeds of greatness and high re-
nown
From age to age had been handed down.
 Poor old Margery Miller!
 Sitting alone,
 Unsought, unknown,
Where was her kingdom, her crown,
her throne?
Margery Miller, a child of God,
Meekly and bravely life's path had trod,
Nor deemed affliction "a chastening
rod."
Her brother, Jesus, who went before,
A crown of thorns in His meekness wore
And what, poor soul, could *she* hope
for more?
 Poor old Margery Miller!
 Sitting alone,
 Unsought, unknown,
Strange that her heart had not turned
to stone!

Aye! there she sat, on that Christmas
eve,
Seeking some dream of the past to
weave,
Patiently striving not to grieve.

O! for those long, long, eighty years,
How had she struggled with doubts
and fears?

Shedding in secret, unnumbered tears.
Poor old Margery Miller!

Sitting alone,
Unsought, unknown,
How could she stifle her sad heart's
moan?

Soft on her ear fell the Christmas
chimes,
Bringing the thought of the dear old
times,
Like birds that sing of far-distant
climes.

Then swelled the floods of her pent-up
grief—

Swayed like a reed in the tempest brief,
Her bowed form shook like an aspen
leaf.

Poor old Margery Miller!
Sitting alone,
Unsought, unknown,

How heavy the burden of life had
grown!

"O God!" she cried, "I am lonely here,
Bereft of all that my heart holds dear;
Yet Thou dost never refuse to hear.

O! if the dead were allowed to speak!
Could I only look on their faces meek,
How it would strengthen my heart so
weak!"

Poor old Margery Miller!
Sitting alone,
Unsought, unknown,

What was that light which around her
shone?

Dim on the hearth burned the embers
red,

Yet soft and clear, on her silvered head,
A light like the sunset glow was shed.

Bright blossoms fell on the cottage
floor,

"Mother" was whispered, as oft before,
And long-lost faces gleamed forth once
more.

Poor old Margery Miller!
No longer alone,
Unsought, unknown,

How light the burden of life had grown!

She lifted her withered hands on high,
And uttered the eager, earnest cry:
"God of all mercy! now let me die.

Beautiful Angels! fair and bright,
Holding the hem of your garments
white,

Let me go forth to the world of light."

Poor old Margery Miller!

So earnest grown!

Was she left alone?

His humble child did the Lord disown?

O! sweet was the sound of the Christ-
mas bell!

As its musical changes rose and fell,
With a low refrain or a solemn swell.

But sweeter by far was that blessed
strain,

That soothed old Margery Miller's pain,
And gave her comfort and peace again.

Poor old Margery Miller!

In silence alone,

Her faith had grown:

And now the blossom had brightly
blown.

Out of the glory that burned like flame,
Calmly a great white Angel came—
Softly he whispered her humble name.

"Child of the Highest," he gently said,
"Thy toils are ended, thy tears are
shed,

And life immortal now crowns thy
head."

Poor old Margery Miller!

No longer alone,

Unsought, unknown,

God *had not* forgotten she was His own.

A change o'er her pallid features
passed;

She felt that her feet were nearing fast
The land of safety and peace, at last.

She faintly murmured "God's name
be blest!"

And, folding her hands on her dying
breast,

She calmly sank to her dreamless rest.

Poor old Margery Miller!

Sitting alone,

Without one moan,

Her patient spirit at length had flown.

Next morning a stranger found her
there,

Her pale hands folded as if in prayer,
Sitting so still in her old arm-chair.

He spoke but she answered not again,
For, far away from all earthly pain,

Her voice was singing a joyful strain.

Poor old Margery Miller!

Her spirit had flown

To the world unknown,

Where true hearts never can be alone.