

SPIRITUAL TIMES,

A WEEKLY ORGAN FOR THE PROMOTION OF SPIRITUAL & PROGRESSIVE TOPICS,
 A REGISTER OF PASSING SPIRITUAL PHENOMENA,
 AND
 A MISCELLANY OF SPIRITUAL LITERATURE.

Spiritualism unfolds to our internal senses substantial realities; it presents us not only with the semblances, but with the positive evidences of eternal existence, causing us to feel that the passing shadows we speak of belong not to the Spiritual, but to the Material world. It is easy to imagine that we are dealing with the absolute and enduring, because we associate our thoughts with the external and apparently lasting, but, on reflection, we discover that the only absolute and enduring facts are beyond the tomb.

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"The life that now is shapes the life that is to be."
 "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."

The Spiritual Times.

SATURDAY, JUNE 25, 1864.

PROGRESS.

There is no standing still; everything moves. The law of progress is eternal. It is in vain that old-fashioned imbecilities essay to intercept it. It still, as Galileo said of the earth, "moves." We gaze upon the blinding sun, and feel that Progress lives in its diurnal course. Slowly uprising in the east, it progresses until it sets in the west. The moon and all the stars are progressive, and obey the order of nature, revolving with unerring certainty. The dial of Progress is ever in motion—its works are incapable of derangement, being watched over by an Almighty eye. Man looks at himself, and beholds a microcosm of wonder and development—every faculty needs culture, and grows strong by exercise. He thus learns his capacity for higher development, and ascertains his imperfections. As the seed germinates in the soil and gradually grows a plant, a sapling, or a tree,—then as the seasons progress, bears its green laurel leaves about it in token of his strength, amid storms and frosts, does man from the embryo present himself on the stage of being from the same wonderful law of Progress. He no sooner feels his kingship than he delights to wield his sceptre. At every addition of power he stretches forth his hand for more—never satisfied he fulfils his destiny, and passes to the tomb. And there beyond the tomb the law of progress lives. Death cannot end progression, but is a means of its fuller development. There is yet a compensating principle of conservatism preserving the grand centre of truths, and sustaining the individualities of life. Progress develops; conservatism protects. Thus the human features enlarge, but lose not their characteristic expressions. Institutions grow but retain their peculiar and essential elements of action. Peoples advance in the arts and sciences—intermingle and grow into brotherhoods, while still in their manners and modes of life they preserve national, individual, physiological, and psychological traits. We thus see a wise conservatism working the way of Progress. There is nothing lost in

Nature's economy, although matter perpetually changes, becomes reconstructed or reorganized. First life, then death; decomposition and new life in some form or other. First,—Time—the flowing stream; then Eternity—the grand unmeasured ocean, into which by a law of progress, Time merges. From the unit to units we calculate until the very numerals are lost in numbers.

From A to Z there is a gradual progressive march, still the alphabet is conserved while out of it flow words and deeds of an inconceivable variety and number. The idea that the spirit retains its individual characteristics, and yet by a law of its very existence that it possesses is one that seems to us supported by analogy. Comparing the facts, we know with those we assume by a law of deduction, we cannot well reason ourselves out of the idea that Progress and Conservatism not only act here on this earth, but there, in the spirit realms beyond the tomb. The one developing—expanding—raising; the other—protecting or conserving. With this idea we are led to suppose that the spirit retains its individuality or marked peculiarities of form and feature as it treads the halls of the blessed in the spirit life. Arguing only from external observations it is a consistent and logical sequence to accept this idea, but when we reflect on the teachings of the spirits themselves in their various communications with man, how overwhelming is the testimony in its favor? The hypothesis which teaches that spirit life is progressive and conservative is one of the most valuable to us. By it we learn that the condition we call death is only another name for change—that decomposition touches only the material part of us, that in fact, the spirit aspires while the body goes down to the dust. That it is the lot of all to die proves nothing more than that death exists by the laws of Progress and Conservatism. The one preparing the victim—the other conserving the instrument. As the tree falls so it lies, is true only of man's carcass. His spirit, owing to the light ethereal nature, must rise above the truth. The tree falls, and while it lies on the earth, sponge-like, sucks up its moisture, leaving the atmosphere to dry up its leaves and rot its branches; and even this is the work of Progress. The spirit of man is kindred with God, and from its own affinities it *must* aspire above the body which is of the earth. The more pure the spirit, the higher it will rise, and the nearer it will reach the Divine Presence. It is this thought that should inspire us to high hopes and heroic aims—this thought which should preach to us perpetually of goodness, and prove to us that we can never escape the just penalty of our misdeeds. If we indulge in sins limpit-like they will



stick to us, keeping us nearer to the earth than we should otherwise exist. The idea that Progress not only lives this, but the other side of the grave, is to us a pleasing one, because it is consonant with our moral instincts, and moreover it gives additional proof of the great Father's goodness to us His children. The popular idea of eternal punishment is, to say the least, brutal and opposed to all analogy either in the physical or moral world. It is likewise a direct violation of spiritual teachings, for if there be one fact in connection with spirit-communications which strikes us as a marvellous proof of our position it is, that however widely spirits may differ on other topics, they are almost unanimous in discrediting the notion of eternal damnation.

The pulpits have thundered abroad the horrible hell doctrine under various forms or modifications, in order to reconcile the idea with our moral instincts, and cause mankind to swallow the pill with the aid of a little sugar, but it remains for Spiritualism to annihilate the doctrine, and reconstruct faith on a firm foundation of truth. Here is work for Progress. Old tattered garments of doctrine must be torn from the back of Sectarianism, and new robes of an enduring texture must supply their place. The priests who have petted their pet dogma of endless misery, like Cardinal Wiseman, may go ahead denouncing the advancement of the people as heresy, and all the thunders of sanctimbeciles may reverberate over the wide range of the universal human mind, still the hand of progress shall take the sickle, and cut down the false weeds of doctrine, while it plants the flowers of truth in their stead. This eternal punishment question is a bone of contention which must ere long be picked. It will not do much longer to force interpolations of a revolting nature on the conscience, and expect the judgment and just instincts to offer no resistance. Surely God the infinite is more compassionate than man the finite? Will He, the Creator, have no mercy for man the creature? "His ways are not my ways." Very true, and we cannot conceive His divine designs are so malignant and fiendish as to condemn his own poor, weak, erring, children, to perpetual misery in a place or state where no assuagement can come, and from which there is no possible escape. Thank God Spiritualism comes to us to set the mind at rest on this point, proving that the spirit progresses even beyond the tomb, and that the eternal-death doctrine is an unreality, existing only in the fancy of the priests, and those who are affrighted with the horrid phantom. Progress, hand in hand with Spiritualism, is doing a glorious work in the direction of faith, and is destined ere long to subvert a few of the most stubborn edifices of wrong. If the advancing intellect has to be curbed by priestly interference, and the doctrine of eternal punishment is to linger with us, on account of its antiquity or its mighty influence, to terrify the ignorant into a recognition of the common principles of duty, or to make them tremble through existence. There is nothing left for us but to submit to a dreary stagnation of progress, and to continue incapable of looking lovingly to the Father. Who can recognise Almighty mercy in Hell punishment, ever-enduring? Who can reconcile, even with a lawyer-like culture of the intellectual principle of justice with damnation? We confess, for years we have been unable to reconcile the idea with our thoughts on divine mercy and justice. But the idea of progress beyond the grave settles the matter. We have no need of further conflicts of mind upon that topic, feeling satisfied that Spiritualism teaches what our own moral sense appreciates, and every reasonable thought goes to establish.

Well then, if we have assurance from the spiritual manifestations of our day that death is the outlet to progressive life, and that no doleful eternal stagnation of misery desired by the Almighty can be possible in accordance with His own eternal laws of Progress and Conservatism, we are at once brought in harmony with His Almighty goodness, and can worship Him with affections that are in tune with truth, and lips that know not how to designate Him the Father, other than a wise, a good, and a long-suffering, yet never relentless God.

Spiritualism at Maidstone.

Mr. J. M. Spear, a trance-medium from America, and Mr. J. H. Powell, editor of *The Spiritual Times*, spent two interesting evenings at Maidstone. On Tuesday evening, the 14th of June, a parlour party was got together, consisting, amongst others, of a few earnest and intelligent spiritualists. Addresses were given by Mr. Powell and Mr. Spear, which were listened to with interest, after which some of the friends suggested a "sitting." After a few objections had been urged, and replies elicited, several of the party sat round the table, which, after a little while, moved slightly, then came distinct rappings, which were heard by all present. One gentleman found his hand guided as he held a pencil on a piece of paper. A lady also gave promise of becoming a drawing-medium. It was then decided to present

Spiritualism before the Maidstone public for discussion the next evening. Announcements were given, and the Mitre Assembly Room was crowded with a most respectable and intelligent audience, consisting of several hundreds. Mr. T. Grant, a Maidstone gentleman and spiritualist, was elected to the chair. After a few introductory remarks he called upon Mr. Powell, who gave a rapid *resumé* of his past experiences. While he was speaking Mr. Spear was entranced, and standing in readiness to speak. Observing this, Mr. Powell sat down. In a few seconds Mr. Spear commenced, and in the midst of profound silence, gave a clear, energetic, and beautiful discourse, on the supernatural evidences of the Holy Scriptures, philosophically maintaining that those who believed the sacred records, to be consistent, must see the possibility of modern spiritual manifestations existing in fact. The address lasted about half-an-hour, and was very effective. Mr. Powell then gave the audience a brief sketch of Mr. Spear's doings in America, after which a gentleman rose, and said he had come to the meeting to hear about modern spirit manifestations, whilst he had to listen to a discourse about manifestations which occurred 18 centuries back. Mr. Powell said in reply, he thought it could hardly be said that modern spirit manifestations were not spoken of—in his own case he had related facts for which he could vouch. Mr. Spear said it was impossible to say in an hour everything that could be said on the subject. He contended that being himself entranced before that audience was a modern manifestation; besides, every speaker could be charged with not saying this or that. The best plan, he thought, was to argue against what had been said, not against what had not been said.

A spare curate-like gentleman, with fair complexion and energetic voice, rose and said he had heard nothing but what he had seen in the newspapers during the last six years. He did not condemn Spiritualism without investigation. He had sat with some friends round a table, and there certainly were raps heard which some of the company present believed to be supernatural, but he did not. On going below the rapper was discovered with a poker and sheet in the person of one of themselves. This anecdote caused considerable fun, which no sooner subsided than Mr. Powell replied, he did not know whether the gentleman was a clergyman or an editor, but he knew that manifestations of the character alluded to by him were of a gross kind. If men would sit with persons capable of arming themselves with pokers, and dressing themselves in sheets, they must expect anything but good manifestations. Table tiltings and rappings were mostly of the gross kind, and suitable for gross minds. The purer the persons sitting for manifestations the higher would be the character of the phenomena. If the gentleman wished to investigate Spiritualism, and would pay his own expenses, and come to Eastbourne, he (Mr. Powell) would be happy to afford him what evidences he could. Having tested the matter with one who was a cheat, he should sit with persons incapable of arming themselves with pokers, or in any other way perpetrating a hoax. The spiritual subject was too solemn and awful to play with. Respecting the reports of Spiritualism in the papers, little could be said for them. The press of this country almost ignores the subject, and seen by no means disposed to deal justly with the spiritualists.

The Chairman favored the audience with the details of his own experience, describing a number of interesting facts, and relating how he discovered himself to be a drawing medium. (We have seen his drawings; they are wonderful productions.) He said he had in his possession about 300 volumes of books on the subject of Spiritualism, which he should be happy to lend persons disposed to study the subject. He should likewise feel proud to shew his spirit-drawings to them, and added that he had no knowledge whatever of drawing.

Mr. Collins, an ironmonger, spoke at some length in a vigorous and effective manner, maintaining that the manifestations recorded in Scripture were none of them through spirit-mediumship, but they were all produced by the direct finger of God. He had the pleasure of attending the private meeting the over-night, and he was bound to confess the table moved, and certain rappings, which could not have been produced with the knuckles, were heard, but he thought it was only reasonable to attribute these manifestations to electricity or magnetism. He had the highest opinion of the sincerity of the gentlemen who had come before them, but he believed, nevertheless, they were very much deceived.

A gentleman now rose, with a curly, Indian-looking head, and a marked singularity of expression. He might have been a scripture-reader, as some person whispered to us. He rose to thank Mr. Collins for his able defence of the truth. These persons (alluding to Mr. Powell and Mr. Spear) wished to undermine Christianity. Mr. Spear wanted them to believe when he closed his eyes and addressed them that he was in a trance; it was no such thing, he only pretended to be in a trance. If he had really been entranced he would have been transfixed. (Hisses here followed, and a few remarks from Mr. Dann, a mesmerist, who felt angry that the scripture-reader should talk about that which he did not understand.) Then (continued the speaker) what nonsense has been spoken about Christ sitting to eat. It was quite a mistake to suppose that the spirit of Christ could eat, it was only his body which sat down to eat with his disciples.

Mr. Powell replied by drawing a comparison between Mr. Collins, and his supporter, the scripture reader. He said he honored men like Mr. Collins, who could be consistent and manly in their opposition, but he could not honor men like the scripture reader, who forgot to be charitable or to imitate the Saviour, in their onslaughts on opponents. The gentleman had talked about the absurdity of Mr. Spear supposing that Christ ate in the spirit with two of his disciples, was that more difficult to comprehend than his own logic, that the body of Christ, without the spirit, went there and ate? If Spiritualism were put on its trial, let who might be jurymen, he should be sorry to trust its defence in his (the scripture reader's) hand. With respect to Mr. Collins' idea of the table-rappings being magnetism, and only magnetism, Mr. Powell said there must be an agent of some kind to

collect and use the magnetism for the purpose of producing given raps. Take Paley's watch argument, in favor of design. A watch gives evidence in its complicated parts of a designer; it could not make itself. The universe gives evidence of an Almighty Designer. Well, apply this to table-tiltings. If a table move blindly, without any apparent purpose, say it is an apparently blind cause which produces the movement; but if the table movements betray intelligence, then, following out the same line of argument, they must indicate an intelligent mover.

A gentleman, who expressed himself a sceptic, favoring the ideas of Mr. Collins, spoke for a few minutes, and proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman, coupling the names of Mr. Spear and Mr. Powell, whom he thought had proved themselves earnest and deserving. This closed one of the very best and apparently interested audiences we have witnessed. May Maidstone press on in the good work, and may Mr. Grant, Mr. Dann, and Mr. Court feel the consolation which attends well-doing.

Correspondence.

[We do not hold ourselves responsible for the opinions of correspondents.]

Right or Wrong.

FINAL REPLY.

To the EDITOR of the SPIRITUAL TIMES.

DEAR SIR,—In reply to T. P. Barkas in your last impression, I have to say, that as he really does not know, and is not willing to accept, the testimony that is given, and the evidences that are clearly within his reach, are not deemed satisfactory to his mind, although conclusive to thousands of others. I must say that he is still in an inconsistent position. Whether he can see his inconsistency himself, that is quite another question. Will he tell me that the healing medium, Dr. Newton is impressed by "wicked spirits," and that hallucination enables him to restore the sick, give hearing to the deaf, and to make the lame to walk? Will he tell me that he has no proof from the fruits and teachings of spirits that there are "good spirits?" I say, he is most solemnly and seriously mistaken. I do not bow to the more dictation of any great names, "as such," but I consider the seers Swedenborg, Edmonds, and Davis, to be better qualified than Mr. Barkas, who depends on personal testimony for all his experience and materials. I say, that until T. P. Barkas himself can see and discern spirits, he has no right to positively set up his standard above the heads of the seers, but to receive from them whatsoever teachings harmonises with reason, conscience, and the highest religious experiences of the human family. We are not called upon to accept any seer's teachings that contradict nature, reason, and the highest religious emotions of the human soul, but we must always take the standard of development as the criterion. The lower cannot test the higher, no more than an ignorant and unlearned man can test the accuracy and correctness of problems in algebra and astronomy.

When T. P. Barkas can see spirits, and has the seventh plane of mediumship, or "spiritual state," then I think he will change his opinions, and discover that from imperfection all perfection comes, and that the "undeveloped spirits" are only schoolmasters to bring us to a higher plane of development of mediumship and spirit-intercourse. That such exists, good and evil, I believe has been proved by me in this discussion.

Wishing Mr. Barkas may soon arrive at a higher plane of spiritual vision,

I remain, yours truly.

JOSHUA WOOD.

June 15th, 1864.

Letter from an Anxious Enquirer to a Clergyman.

To the EDITOR of the SPIRITUAL TIMES.

SIR,—Several of my friends have urged me to publish the two enclosed letters on the subject of Spiritualism, thinking they may prove interesting and useful to other anxious enquirers, and if you deem them worthy of space in your paper you are at liberty to insert them. I will mention they were written in 1862, when I was called upon by the leading minister of the Established Church, to which I belong, in this town—a man, loved, honored, and respected by all who knew him,—with the most kindhearted and sincere desire to convince and satisfy me that the subject of spiritual manifestations which he heard I was investigating is to be avoided, as fraught with danger to the soul. I felt the greatest desire to go into the subject with him, and to have the benefit of his superior judgment, and gladly accepted his offer to spend an evening at his house to discuss the subject. It was to prepare the way, that I wrote the first letter, stating as clearly as I could my general views, and I also sent him, for perusal, a book or two, which had made much impression on my own mind. A few days after, we met as appointed, and I confess I felt greatly disappointed to find that he then declined to look into my books, or to investigate in any way, resting upon the sole position that the whole matter was forbidden in the Old Testament under the term "necromancy," and

he therefore could not consent to go into it. He gave me, with strong recommendations, a little book, which is mentioned in my second letter, to which I never received any reply further than a polite acknowledgment of its receipt. With this preface I leave the letters to you, being myself still a most

ANXIOUS ENQUIRER.

LETTER, No. 1.

It appears to me that the questions of the possibility of intercourse with the spirits of departed persons—the various conditions necessary to accomplish such intercourse, and the laws which govern it, also the means of identifying the spirits,—may be properly and profitably investigated *simply as a science*, and altogether aside from religious questions, and whatever truths may thereby become established must be so far a valuable gain to the knowledge of the world, and diminish superstition, which is the result of ignorance.

It was with this feeling that I entered into the enquiry at the end of 1857, being then quite sceptical as to any *outside* intelligence, although I had become practically conversant with the established facts of mesmerism, clairvoyance, electro biology, &c., but I soon had clear proof in my own house of the presence of unseen intelligences, and a table was moved without being touched by any person in the room. I have since experienced various manifestations myself, but I have been more occupied in collecting and considering the experiences of others, either in the numerous published accounts, or from personal statements, and the evidence I have thus collected is so extensive, so interesting, and so convincing, as to the main facts, that I feel it is like emerging from darkness into light, a process which I think should be eminently favorable to true religion, and I feel much more competent and desirous now, to consider the religious aspects of the matter, than at any previous time.

It would be folly to ignore the fact that these evidences of spiritual interference are spreading simultaneously and rapidly in every part of the world with a power and concerted intelligence quite independent of, and far beyond human control, and it seems to me but doubtful wisdom to shut both our hearts and our eyes in stolid ignorance; it must surely be more reasonable to look the matter in the face, courageously and honestly, *but prayerfully*, and accept thankfully any good that may come.

Spirit intercourse appears to be the basis of every system of religion ever known upon earth, if therefore it can be established that such intercourse is as much regulated by fixed and unchangeable laws as the other works and ways of the Almighty with which we are acquainted, and that these laws may to a great extent, *by searching out*, be ascertained and understood, how important in the cause of truth and knowledge must such an investigation prove, and if I were to assert that it is so established, I believe I should not be saying too much.

To become subject to spiritual influence it is necessary that the *power of the flesh* should be subdued by prayer and fasting, or else that one's individuality be overpowered by the influence of others, as in mesmerism, perhaps identical with "the laying on of hands," or "the assembling together," as in *spiritual circles*. Many persons are, however, habitually at times in this negative state, and such persons are generally in the habit of receiving spiritual influence or manifestations often without knowing it, but frequently in the shape of visions, dreams, or apparitions. The number of persons in every society who have experienced these things is quite surprising, although they are seldom talked about. I know of a person in Maidstone, who for many years had frequent visits from his deceased father, and held long conversations and arguments with him, as we are informed that Torquato Tasso did with his spirit-friend.

When a person is in the proper negative state, then termed a medium,—spirit influence may come to him in one or more of a great many ways, according to his peculiar organization and development. Sometimes rappings or other noises are made to effect the sense of hearing—or physical movements of material objects, as furniture, &c., to attract the sight and feelings—or the medium is controlled to write or draw—or to speak (often in various languages)—or to play instruments of music—or to see visions of writing and pictorial representations—or to dream dreams—or to cure various diseases—or the spirit leaves the body in a state of trance, and visits the spirit abodes on distant parts of the earth, and often carries back to the body a full and clear remembrance of all it has seen and heard. Sometimes the body is possessed for a time by another spirit who is sometimes identified to persons present, who knew him in the flesh by every word and action, even to the features of the face. Sometimes the spirit appears to the medium in a visible form, either as on earth or in its present glorified state. There are a great many other modes of inspiration, all of which are well understood and classified, and all or most of which classes have examples in the Old and New Testaments.

There is abundant evidence to show that after death, or separation from the body, the spirit remains for some time in the same state, moral and intellectual, retaining every opinion and prejudice, every habit or peculiarity to the minutest particular, and it is only by degrees, often very slowly, that new information is obtained and errors and imperfections eradicated.

The great chief law which governs the spirit world is the law of affinity, by virtue of which spirits of kindred desires and feelings attract each other and are necessarily associated together, and spirits, with contrary or opposite dispositions, separate and repel each other, and Heaven is represented as consisting of innumerable societies of angels, all advancing towards higher spheres as they progress in knowledge and virtue. The spirits, therefore, who can approach a medium, must be such as he has an affinity for, either from the character of his natural disposition, or from the state of his mind as cultivated by desire or prayer. It will then be seen that medium-

ship should not be sought or cultivated except with the most pure and exalted feelings, the only security for a good influence.

This law of attraction and repulsion might have been the great gulf fixed between the rich man and Lazarus; it also explains the great power and value of *true* and *earnest faith*, which is indeed equal to the production of any result not inconsistent with divine laws.

All departed spirits who come to us are said to be angels, and there are no angels who had not lived as men and women on this or other planets, indeed it is represented as the natural order of existence.

From the foregoing it will be seen that all inspiration must be colored and moulded by the medium through whom it passes, just as certainly as water will take the shape of the basin it is poured into. No matter in what form the communications come, they will always bear traces of the settled peculiarities of the medium. This idea, I think, seems to be borne out by a comparison of the various writings in the Old and New Testaments, which differ in every characteristic as widely as ordinary writings.

It seems to me by the light of these investigations, that the attractive powers of earnest love for all that is pure and good, and for Christ as the great exemplar, such as a child may understand,—and an undoubted acceptance of the spiritual gifts that thence may flow, is adequate, by a course of development, to secure all the blessings promised in the scriptures, and the animosity engendered by the violent contentions now so common, about such abstruse and incomprehensible subjects as the exact meaning to be attached to "The Divinity"—"Trinity in Unity"—"The Vicarial Atonement"—and other doctrinal points cannot redound to the honor of God, or man, and I fancy is directly opposed to the spirit of Christianity.

After enquiring into this interesting subject apart from religious questions, and then looking out upon the Christianity of the present day, one cannot help being forcibly reminded of the "valley of dry bones," so utterly dead in regard to spirituality have all the various Christian sects become. Religion seems to have sunk to little more than empty form, the very existence of the immortal spirit is practically ignored, and the evidences which were common to the early Christians would now be considered *satanic*, and cause alarm to most Christians of the present day, notwithstanding that our Saviour himself declared that they were signs that should "follow them that believe;" and again "he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father." The administration of the sacraments have long since ceased to produce any apparent spiritual effects such as was formerly the case, and the clergy of the present day, instead of going about to heal the sick, causing the lame to walk, and the blind to see, and preaching life and immortality, by obvious inspiration, to the multitude, now confine themselves to the maintenance of doctrines, traditions, and opinions, many of which they do not themselves even profess to understand, and which give rise to innumerable unseemly contentions and differences between themselves—a mere "shaking of dry bones," so that it has become a general remark that nothing is more difficult than to find two ministers of religion who can agree in their religious opinions.

Perhaps a more striking instance of the lifelessness of modern Christianity cannot be found than in the reports of the various missionary societies. I have before me the statement of the "Church Missionary Society," for the year ending March 31st, 1861, the 62nd year from its foundation. There are 148 stations in all parts of the world—192 European, 66 native clergy—200 native catechists—800 mission schools. Income for the year £149,182, which has been exceeded to the extent of £6,100. Can a more gigantic failure be conceived than is apparent in the following professed results:—Only 16,000 reported conversions last year, averaging six to each clergyman, costing £93 each conversion,—130,000 reported conversion from commencement of society (*two generations*), equal to 2,100 per annum, costing many millions. The report significantly states "there are about 750 millions still lying in heathenism." May it not well be said "Son of man can these bones live?" How very different is the spread of Spiritualism going on throughout the world at this moment, and without any human effort whatever.

Much of this lifelessness arises, as it appears to me, from the great error of regarding the Bible as a literal perfection, which it cannot be for very many reasons—first, on account of the various imperfections of the media; secondly, because of the utter incapacity of languages to convey elevated truths in their purity even if retained in their original words, much less, *very much less*, after translation through various other languages. Thirdly, because the book contains evidences of human instrumentality and imperfections without number. To worship the letter of the Bible as people do, appears to me to be idolatry as fatal as falling down to the stock of a tree, but while "the letter killeth, the spirit giveth life," and if the Bible be read by the light of the spirit, no doubt it may be found to contain a collection of saving truths of inestimable value.

Universal Spiritualism.

To the EDITOR of the SPIRITUAL TIMES.

SIR,—I am a believer in all sorts of spirit. I believe in the spirit of the birch, the sword, the thumb-screw, and the stake. I believe in the spirit of bondage, and the spirit of toleration, which is only a modification of liberty, seeing the spirit of bondage is constantly contending with the spirit of liberty. And what is liberty? Is it the liberty to use the birch, the sword, or any exorcism? I wish the tables were turned on a variety of these sorts of instruments used in the spirit of pretended order and subordination. The spirit of truth

and free discussion may bring about changes, for change is the destiny of all things. Constant change or transformation in the law of nature, and the greater the variety the more the wonder. Why should any one object to a spiritual magazine or journal which ventilated the subject? There are people who will read a spiritual paper who will not take up anything on Materialism. I believe there is no Spiritualism so universal as that of the churches. The spirit of Paganism, Mahomedanism, Jewdaism, Protestantism, and Catholicism, have most powerful effects on the Materialism of the populations of the world. Garibaldi is a fine, noble, and brave man, and his spirit struggles and impels him to try and expel the Pope from Rome, by the power of the sword, wielded by the arm of the flesh, which is impelled by the spirit of liberty. But suppose that Garibaldi, and some few thousands of brave fellows, were to drive out the Pope from Rome, would that drive out of the hearts and affections of the whole Roman Catholic communities the religion with which the Pope and his priests have embued the souls and spirits of millions of weak men, women, and children throughout Christendom? The spiritual nature of all the multitudes of the Roman Catholic religion, in Spain, Italy, France, Russia, Germany, Ireland, and the whole of the mixed communities of Christendom, are, in a greater or less degree, imbued with the spirit of the Roman Catholic religion, of which the Pope is the head, and who is looked up to by all the multitudes whose spirit he represents. Would the Materialism of expelling the head of a spiritual sect from his eminent physical locality tend to expel his influence from the souls of these populations? I think not; but on the contrary, I believe that such a proceeding would awaken more sympathy in his favor, and therefore, I believe that in that respect the Emperor of the French is a wiser than Garibaldi. At the same time I applaud the Liberator's spirit, and should like to see it more universally prevalent. What is the intention of all government, but to rule the populations to bring about harmony, well-being, and order? The Churches have large material possessions to back their spiritual power. The Church of England and of Rome are upheld by large endowments and great material possessions. They have a numerous priesthood, regularly and handsomely paid, upheld and countenanced by the nobility, aristocracy, princes, and potentates and governments of the whole of their dominions, and with a spirit of propagandism they are always striving to increase their adherents and dominions. I ask if any one reflecting on these matters can believe that these Churches will ever be overthrown? No, never, I assert. A thousand or even a million Luthers, Calvins, or Colensos, will never overthrow these Churches, but their spirits and influences did and may cause modifications in their administration and doctrines. All that spiritual men can struggle for is enlightenment and freedom of discussion. The circulation of tracts, and all sorts of discussions, and information on the various questions agitated throughout the world, are the best means I can think of to make a happy, prosperous, and orderly population. May your spiritual journal prosper, and partake of a large and liberal spirit, and thus embrace all cavillers, and, like the vast expanse of nature, subdue in spirit the littleness of narrow-minded and selfish men, who think their views alone to be the only means to get at the truth.

I remain, &c.,

THOMAS MACFARLANE.

Brighton, June 20, 1861.

Spirit upon Spirit.

PART THE TENTH.

The next evening of conference was Tuesday evening, March 15th, 1864, at 9.3 p.m. Scarcely had we sat down than S. J. announced his presence—writing:—

R. I am here.

Q. Welcome. You come so rapidly that it seems as if you had been here before.

R. I thought you would call me, and it is later than usual.

Q. Have you any message to night?

R. No.

Q. Shall I continue the book?

R. Yes.

After a preliminary address Judge E. asked the following questions:

"You say, 'there lies the body, and the spirit is floating over it.' In what does it float? Has it a new body?"

Yes, most certainly, a body composed of new materials, refined and sublimated, but still entirely material.

"Does it take that body with it from its old body?"

It does not take the materials from the old body, but it is a new creation. The spirit when leaving the body leaves it for another, probably ready for it. Even spirits don't see the process.

R. I scarcely think the body in which the spirit is can be called material—certainly not as to *earthly* matter.

The writer continued:—

Judge Edmonds remarked:—You describe what is the fate or course of one whose aspirations are upward. Please describe also the fate or course of an opposite one. One, gross, material, and very simple. It was written in reply:—

When the good man dies, or rather one who has done all he could to live properly and justly, he finds a new world opening to his view,

and a new race of people inhabiting it. The very air is redolent of peace and joy, and the whole landscape is filled with everything so beautiful, that it is impelled to stop at every step and drink up, as it were, the rich draughts of pleasure which are every where proffered him. To his mind the opening of one object or view, whether of world or thought, is but the incentive to a greater effort to progress, and thus he is led from one point to another, culling by the way side, and from hill and dale, from spirits of friends and spirits of strangers, the truths which his soul most desires to know, until he has arrived at the place which the true affinities of his nature assure him is the locality where his probation is to be passed.

But to the spirits who have lived a life of selfishness, disregarding the claims of their race, who have toiled and struggled for no other motive than to accomplish their own ends, at no matter what cost, who have bowed their spirit to the rule of error, and who have delighted to circumvent their fellows, who have, while they professed to serve God, denied him by their acts—they die, and their spirits enter new bodies. Now I beg, in this connection, to say that, there must either in man's residence on earth be the development of his spirit and the corresponding progress, or there must be a retrogression and a consequent depreciation of the true desires of his nature. Thus it is, when the spirit by its act retrogrades, the true type of that condition is most distinctly manifest after death in the acquired tastes of that spirit for the scenes which on earth afforded him pleasure. And it turns from the contemplation of what is around, above and beyond, to the constant yearning after that which is below, which is gross, which is circumscribed in the limits of your globe. It does not associate with those whose aspirations are for the good. Its affinities lead it toward those whose desires correspond with its own, and it chooses for its companions those whose habitations are near this earth, and whose tastes are of the same character. Its body is not as specifically light as are those of the progressed spirits, for with us, as with you, certain localities change the very particles of our organization, and develop characteristics really opposed to the intent of our creation. I cite in corroboration of this statement the tribes of Hottentots, whose organization is so gross that the very formation of certain organs of the body is so changed that they do not resemble that of a human body. By living near the earth, obtaining their sustenance from the bodies near to it (for we can transport ourselves miles without number in a moment of time) they acquire an aspect differing widely from our external appearance. Their bodies are sublimated, it is true, but still, were you able to see them, you would scarcely distinguish the difference between them and many of your own earth. I now speak of spirits whose minds are not really evil, but not progressive.

R. The greater part of this is very good, but we have conversed on it. But what you have just read is singular, as God does not judge those harshly who have not had the means of progress, each according to the light within him.

There is another class to which I will direct your attention, as belonging to that division who are really body, and who, by a long course of evil life, have denied their obligations to man, to God, and to the laws which he has established. After these spirits have passed into their new bodies, they are so heavy, so much more dense than are the other spirits mentioned, that they cannot maintain themselves even near the earth, but sink far below it, and are really of so dark a hue that they are almost black.

Now the place of their residence is far below that which I ever had a desire to visit, and I can not tell you from actual observation what it is, but it is said to be an extensive plain, with but one single mountain in the centre. So attached are the inhabitants to this interminable level that they scarcely attempt for years to ascend this mountain. Now it is almost always night there, or rather a condition midway between night and day, and if they were to ascend this mountain, it is said they would catch a glimpse of the brighter lands beyond, and a desire would be created in their minds to leave this place for the world beyond. How true this I cannot say; probably there is some condition or state resembling this, and it may be this is true. Sometimes, inspired by their own wicked feelings, they make a strong effort, and force themselves to your earth, and then it is that some unfortunate one is impressed with wicked thoughts, and is impressed to do wicked things; but God in his infinite wisdom does not leave the administration of His divine or material laws to beings of so corrupt a nature. He prefers that man shall have no one to blame but himself, and the circumstances around him, for his sinful acts; and it would conflict with the laws He has instituted, if He permitted man to be controlled by spirits inferior to himself. But you can imagine the darkness of ignorance into which these spirits are plunged, by comparing the benighted cannibals in your own earth with yourselves, only adding to the comparison the fact, that in one it is a developed spirit, advanced one step beyond earth, and in the other it is of earth.

R. Here there is a place described, not a state. How can we make the earth a centre, or point to measure up or down? Wherever an evil doer is, there will he find his place, or state, of punishment; and he cannot force himself into the presence of a good spirit. When men give way to bad inclinations, they attract the evil spirits to them, but good spirits will also be always found ready to induce them to reject the evil, and to foster any good feeling.

The first-class referred to are those who confuse these revelations most, particularly by misrepresentation and deceit. They are always on the alert to seize on impressible mediums, and through this channel to impart incorrect statements relative to "life in the spheres."

Spirits—unprogressed ones—dare not assume the personality of any other spirit, so you demand of them the truth in the name of God. But they misdirect, bewilder, confuse, make false statements of the nature of these manifestations, and would willingly create doubt; for these spirits are allowed to mix with other spirits whose duties bring them to earth, and thus they are enabled to make false statements concerning them. In short, they delight in inculcating error, as they did in receiving and learning it on earth.

The dark spirits do progress, but it is in a cycle of years. The mischievous spirits progress also in much less time, but both have laborers among them from the advanced spirits, whose duty and pleasure it is to instruct to disabuse their minds of ignorance and prejudice, and to point them to God as the source of all things.

R. If a medium sit down in a proper state of mind, no evil spirit can enter or harm. That spirits often sign or give other names is true, —and many who do so will give very good communications,—and very probably give the name of a person whose ideas they admire, and wish to give as if they were quoting.

When you and I, Mr. Warren, shall have reached the last stage of material life, then, indeed, we may turn and look at the operation of the principle of every law which governs nature.

Q. You observe, S. J., that the spirit here alludes to "the last stage of material life," does this mean, that up to a certain point material duties and a species of material existence prevails, and that finally there is an absorption into celestialty or divinity in some remote and happy state, or is this a mere figure of speech?

R. I cannot agree on this materiality. The spirit retains (if not a good man) his love of the world, but it does not retain any earthly material. Of course, as the spirit progresses and loses the worldliness, its nature is refined, and it enters into a more ethereal state. I conclude, the spirit, speaking on your book, only uses this mode figuratively.

This concluded the evening's conference, and is a fitting place to break off.

K. R. H. M.

June 16th, 1864.

STRANGE NOISES AT POITIERS.—We read in the *Journal de la Vienne*:—"Five or six days ago there happened in the town of Poitiers such an extraordinary occurrence, that it is become the subject of conversation, and of the strangest commentaries. Every evening, after six o'clock, singular noises are heard in a house in the street Neuve-Saint-Paul, inhabited by Mlle. d' O—, sister of the Count d' O—. These noises, from what has been related to us, have the effect of detonations of artillery. Violent blows seem to be struck on the doors and shutters. People at first attributed the cause to some tricksters or ill-intentioned neighbours. A most active watch has been organised. At the complaint of Mlle. d' O— the police have taken the minutest measures; agents have been posted in the interior and exterior of the house. The explosions are produced nevertheless, and we know from a certain source, that Lord M—, brigadier, has been so surprised by the extent of the commotion, that he could not even give an account of it. Our entire town is occupied with this inexplicable mystery. The enquiries made by the police have not at present met with any result. Every one seeks the origin of this enigma. Some persons, initiated in the study of Spiritualism, pretend that the spirit-rappers are the authors of these manifestations, to which a famous medium would not be a stranger, who, however, does not inhabit this quarter. Others relate that a cemetery formerly existed in the street Neuve-Saint-Paul, and we have no need to tell what conjectures they have given rise to on the subject. Of all these explanations we do not know which is the right one. The public is greatly disturbed by this event, and yesterday evening such a considerable crowd was assembled under the windows of the house, that the authorities found it necessary to form a piquet of the chasseurs, to evacuate the street. At the moment we are writing, the police and the gendarmes occupy the house."

Nevertheless the theory taught by the Priest and by intellectual classes whom the Priest has influenced and educated,—that something else than the outer and material world which is continually impressing all men, curbing them, guiding them, governing them, must be studied and followed to obtain welfare,—holds its ground against ages of experience. A theory which seems contradicted by almost every perception and almost every act of life, is more ridiculous than either of the ancient astronomical or geological fables. Judging by action, no man assents to it, and we may, therefore, hope that ere long, this very ancient and very erroneous theory will be banished from our books and our thoughts, and the absolute empire of the outer world over all be by all acknowledged.—*Brighton Guardian*.

Poetry.

—o—
[ORIGINAL.]
—o—

THE LIGHT OF LOVE.

From heaven to earth's remotest pole,
The light of Love illumines the soul;
Wherever Christ's pure virtues shine,
There man aspires to the Divine.
The spirit link'd to spirit, sails
On seas that swell with heavenly gales;
The body, born of clay, to clay
Sinks down, and hourly finds decay.
The purer spirit in the frame,
The purer glows its future flame;
While grosser senses press'd to earth,
Behold the gross, and sink in worth.

The spiritual eye can see,
Behind the veil where angels be;
While mere material sense can know
But things that Matter claims below.
The finer essence mounts above,
As spirit-truth on wings of love;
While grosser matter by its weight
Oppresses earth, like fiendish hate.
The pure, the true, the free, are light,
And like the angels take their flight
From earth to Heaven, when Love attends,
And bodied being slowly ends.

Angels and guardian spirits dear,
Descend to draw our spirits near—
To pour into our wounded lives,
The healing balm that Gilead hives.
Earth hath its stars of countless numbers,
That shine while life is lost in slumbers;
Heaven hath its spheres where spirits sing
The praise of the Almighty King:
Where golden crowns and robes of white,
Are worn by angels with delight;
And Love's celestial radiance flings,
A halo over earthly things.

June 20th, 1864.

J. H. POWELL.

THE MEDIUMS.

AN ORIGINAL SPIRITUAL TALE.

By J. H. POWELL.

—o—

"There you are wrong, most decidedly, Charles. I am quite positive you must be under a delusion to say your table moved. I want to know how it is, if you call up spirits, you don't do so now; there's my table, and here we are sitting like noodles round it, but it budges not." Mr. Peerless was very positive, but withal good humoured. His face was lit up with the radiance of his mirthful nature.

"Suppose," said Mr. Forbes, coming to Mr. Humphrey's relief, "you take a pencil, and see if the spirits will communicate." He did so. His hand trembled, and was guided across the paper. Mr. Forbes picked it up and read aloud—

The conditions are wrong; change seats.

Interest was depicted in the countenance of Mrs. Peerless, and a waggish, supercilious look in that of her husband, who burst forth with his ordinary laugh. "Now, come, Charles, don't look so artless. Had you never known the art of penmanship I might be induced to think it curious this writing should be produced in this hysterical manner. But I suppose the farce will soon be at an end, and we shall be permitted to return to substantial, sensible subjects again. For my part I certainly must say, were I on a commission of lunacy, if you were brought before me I should be obliged to give in my opinion that you are insane upon just this one point."

"Peerless, how can you be imperative. Did not Charles know you so well I should not be surprised if he took offence," exclaimed Mrs. Peerless, looking displeas'd at her husband, and evidently venturing more than usual.

"Oh, never heed him, good mother; he does it all in love, and since I know him so well, and know likewise I shall yet prove every position even to his satisfaction. Why, we may just as well proceed to obtain some of the wonderful phenomena which have made me a fit subject for the consideration of a commission of lunacy." Mr. Humphrey said this so good temperedly that Mr. Forbes was obliged to acknowledge to himself that the shipwright was of all men the one best adapted for the full investigation of spiritual phenomena.

They all changed seats, which act to Mr. Peerless appeared a piece of direct shuffling, but which nevertheless proved to be a condition favorable to success.

They had no sooner placed themselves in comfortable positions, than quite in opposition to Mr. Forbes' expectations, and to the great joy of Mr. Humphrey and Mrs. Peerless, the table tilted up and down—knocked out answers to questions with the most perfect ease. Mrs. Peerless looked excited and kept close to her son-in-law whilst her sceptical husband exclaimed, "now, Charles, if you please, I must not be played with. You push the table."

"Indeed, I do no such thing, Mr. Peerless, and to convince you that I do not, there—I take my hands entirely off the table." Mr. Humphrey drew his chair back and allowed his father-in-law to satisfy himself, that if the table should move again it would do so without any muscular pressure from his hands.

Now, spirits, please," said Mr. Forbes, "give us something else." The table gave evidence of some strong motive force, and made several evolutions. Mr. Peerless did not smile as was his wont. He looked under the table while it was in motion, and finding no one's feet at work moving it, he said, "Mr. Forbes, will you please excuse me; I don't rush hurriedly to conclusions, but really common sense tells me I must place this clever dodge at your door. I trust you will not consider me ungentlemanly, but in matters of this character it is necessary that the strictest scrutiny should be exercised. Will you favor me by withdrawing a few yards from the table?"

"Really, Peerless, you are insulting," whispered the lady in his ear.

"I cannot help it, I must shew up this horrible superstition, even for the saving of Charles," he quickly answered.

"Oh, certainly, Mr. Peerless, I'll draw my chair away from the table and allow you to scrutinize if you like until doomsday," said Mr. Forbes, drawing himself, chair and all, a few paces from the table, while his face exhibited signs of anger.

"Now, I defy your alleged spirits to move the table," said Mr. Peerless very triumphantly. The words had scarcely fallen from his lips when the table leaped about the apartment as though it were a thing of life, with only Mrs. Peerless' hand upon its surface.

Mr. Peerless jumped from his seat like an automaton on springs. "Mrs. Peerless; do you practise trickery upon me?" he inquired at the topmost pitch of his voice.

The lady laughed and replied—

"I can no more help the table jumping about than I can fly."

"Well, then, to satisfy me you must leave the table. I have grown too old not to know that a hard piece of dead wood cannot dance of itself."

Mrs. Peerless left the table with the utmost obedience of manner.

All of them sat in different parts of the room, and from the table, in silence. Perhaps three minutes elapsed, when to the utter amazement of Mr. Peerless and the delight of the others, the table moved, taking a circular direction.

"What say you to that?" enquired Mr. Humphrey, addressing his bewildered father-in-law.

"How do you account for that?" added Mr. Forbes.

"Perhaps you did not see it move, Peerless, being subjected to some hallucination," retorted his wife, with a ringing laugh that caused her husband to bite his nails.

"Well, well, Mr. Peerless, I did not expect to find you so thoroughly dumb-founded. I suppose you will not say tomorrow that the table did not move without contact—that you were only insane on this point; and that if you were called before a commission of lunacy you ought to be brought in *non compos mentis*." Mr. Humphrey never was more disposed to triumph, but after saying this much he reproved

himself for his eagerness, and proceeded to make amends by proving in his manner that he was still as true to his original feelings for Mr. Peerless as ever.

There was a deal of laughter at the architect's expense, but it all ended well, and before a brief hour had passed away he could not be made to believe *he* had ever been so positive as to deny the possibility of table movements taking place without trickery.

Mr. Humphrey was quite content to know that his father-in-law's imperative assumptions had received a blow which time would prove effectual. He therefore wisely forbore making further remarks which could do no good and only serve to vex.

It was arranged that another sitting should take place after tea, which came not before it was wanted, and had a stimulating and beneficial effect on the nerves of the whole party.

—:0:—

CHAPTER XI.

It is astonishing to remark the marvellous power of strong young Hyson, on the general tone of thought and speech. All the cold influences of disagreement, under the stimulating and solacing effects of tea appear to dissolve like ice before the sun. Cold water has its virtuous qualities, and runs, like life-blood along the arteries of the earth,—we *could* dispense with tea and other fluids, but not with water. Yet owing to its temporary stimulating and revivifying character a cup of tea has come to be considered the housewife's delight and the author's anodyne. There is no mistaking its value. It is the *elixir* for nervous depression, and the genial friend alike of rich and poor. We cannot too highly appreciate God's good gifts—water is one of them, tea is another. Whilst the one in its native coolness meanders in the stream—rages in the ocean—comes down from the clouds in dews and showers to give moisture, freshness and growth to the flowers; the other invigorates the drooping frame—excites the drowsy brain—melts the ice of the heart, and touches the tongue with the fiery glintings of wit and wisdom.

Mr. Peerless was quite himself again after he had drowned his secret disappointments in tea, and as for Mrs. Peerless and the two visitors they were all elated and full of enjoyment.

The architect was one of those men who are always undergoing transformations of some kind or other; he was restless and fond of change. His transformations were never of a character fatal to his individuality. You always could discover in Mr. Peerless, in any circumstances, the same red-faced, genial, merry-looking, positive-minded, indomitable man. Nevertheless, his sanguine temperament gave him that eternal desire for change—change of scene of persons—of performances, &c., which was the distinguishing characteristic of his organism.

Some men lose health and happiness by allowing themselves to pass through the very routine of monotony. Their energies flag and their enjoyments clog unless the pictures presented constantly to their eyes be changed. As with men even so it is with nature. She is ever wearing the garniture of change. Change is nature's great scenic artist, whose brush never tires. She gives bloom to the peach and radiance to the sun; music to the bird and bee, and beauty to the butterfly. There is nothing from the rolling orbes of the firmament down to the tiny insect on the ground but which is subjected to the order of change. The seasons come and go, accompanied by storms and calms which are all touched by the magic brush of the great painter, change. The blooming rose to-day becomes to-morrow a withered flower. The forest leviathan oak of a century's growth, by a flash of lightning, is splintered and killed in an instant of time. The fresh beautiful verdant crops that wear the ripening tints of Autumn, by a sudden blight become shrivelled and valueless. Cities that cost the genius and labour of millions of stalwart men centuries to appear, by one terrible under-current of electricity, like classic Pompeii and the hopes that falsely delude the heart, are shattered, buried, and remembered with sadness. These are the works of change. We may regret devastation, but we can do no more. We need, however, to be grateful for blessings, and cheerfully profit from experience.

Mr. Peerless found consolation in tea that gave him a change and a most beneficial one.

It was about nine o'clock in the evening when the party sat round the table a second time, with the design of evoking fresh manifestations. Before doing so Mr. Forbes abstracted a promise from Mr. Peerless that he would sit as quiet as possible and offer what objections he felt disposed afterwards. This was considered by Mr. Humphrey to be a point gained, because he knew his father-in-law's natural volubility. As for Mrs. Peerless she was only eager for the *seance* to commence, being much interested in the wonderful things she had already seen.

This time the table gave evidence of the presence of the invisibles in a few seconds. It rose and leaped and pirouetted with all the apparent ease of a ballet girl. Mr. Humphrey and Mr. Forbes were pleased at the speedy demonstrations of spirit presence. Mrs. Peerless was waiting patiently, expecting a considerable number of minutes at least to pass before any movements would take place,—the rapidity with which they came quite startled her. Her husband endeavored to keep silent, but there was a comic restlessness in his eye which strangely contrasted with the staid expression of the countenances of the others. Two or three times he essayed to burst forth in full speech, but having given his word to sit it out, he simply bit his lips.

Mr. Forbes placed his nose in proximity to the table and said—

"Now, spirits, please give us something wonderful." The table stood on tip toe. Mr. Humphrey took from his coat pocket a book, and placing it on the table which was inclined too much for anything to remain of itself thereon, desired the spirits, if they could, to rock the table, and not allow the book to slide off. Presently, to the astonishment of Mr. and Mrs. Peerless, and himself, the table rocked with rapidity, and the book kept its position as firmly as if it had been fixed or nailed there.

"Will you allow *me*, Charles," broke forth Mr. Peerless, unable to suppress his desire. "If the spirits do this for you I don't see why they should not do something for me."

"Well, try them," said Mr. Forbes, "that is the only way to test these phenomena."

"Do so, Peerless," desired his wife, "but for goodness sake play no pranks."

"No, what you do in these matters do with sincerity, or serious things may happen," added Mr. Humphrey.

"Mind I am not about to admit that the causes of these extraordinary things are spiritual, but I wish to try, as a matter of curiosity, a few experiments. I doubt not I shall after a bit find it all out." As Mr. Peerless spoke he rose and placed a pair of bellows with the nosel towards his wife, under the table. "Now, spirits, blow away."

All was silence; but Mr. Peerless' red face was glowing with humour.

"Oh, dear, what a cold air comes to my legs," exclaimed Mrs. Peerless, whilst her husband with difficulty suppressed his risable instincts.

"Nonsense, nonsense, my dear; it is all imagination. You saw me put the bellows under the table, did you not?"

"Of course I did, Peerless, but the wind gets stronger just for all the world as if you took the bellows and blowed me with them."

"I have an impression that you are self-deceived—self-deceived my dear. Had you not have seen me put the bellows underneath the table I might then have deemed it strange if you complained of a similar draught."

Mrs. Peerless found the current of air proceeding out of the nosel of the bellows getting stronger. She determined to leave the table and get out of its way, but extraordinary to relate, her will was not free, or her power was paralysed, which amounts to the same thing. It was in vain she essayed to get out of her chair. She was fixed there by some mysterious agency. It was a self-evident fact that she could not leave the table, and it was another self-evident fact that the bellows still emitted about her legs a cold strong current of air.

"Do not be the least ashamed, Madam," cried Mr. Forbes, "it is a very common occurrence for the spirits to operate upon susceptible persons like they have done upon you."

Mr. Humphrey looked painfully affected. Some, to him, new phase of the subject was presenting itself; being new he had fears for the safety of his mother-in-law, but the encouraging voice of Mr. Forbes dispelled all fears at once.

(To be continued.)

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