

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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SATURDAY, APRIL 9, 1864.

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“You must all Believe in Spiritualism, for the Truth will come out.”—*Spirit-message delivered at a public meeting, January 18, 1864*

The Spiritual Times.

SATURDAY, APRIL 9, 1864.

STEREOTYPED MODES OF OPPOSITION.

It has ever been the sad misfortune of old-fashioned opinionists to occupy a very false, or, at least, a very inconsistent position in relation to their own opinions, and the opinions of others who differ from them. They hold, of course, tenaciously to what is theirs, but are very apt to deal out abuse and ridicule in full doses to those who hold as tenaciously as themselves to that which is theirs. It is the same through the long career of history. The men who cry aloud for their own rights, have rarely much regard for the rights of others, but perhaps they think that all they have to do is simply to take care of that which essentially forms their own internal and external possessions. But there is a material as well as an individual law, which is necessary for the protection of society, therefore the individual interest must direct itself towards the mutual or social interest, or society cannot hold together. The individual interest, isolated, partakes of selfishness, when it becomes chastened by duties and mutual relationship, it partakes more of the character of benevolence.

If men live to themselves they will forget the pleasures derivable from social intercourse, and, instead of diffusing or exchanging benefits, will become misanthropic, and absolutely at war with their own nature.

There is no halting half-way on the incline stages of faith, and placing a sentry that shall impede further progress, without a battle being provoked, which can only end in liberty of progress. If a man think himself right, however mild he may to himself and others appear, it is his duty to protect his own faith, and by virtue of his dependence on others, to defend the right of all to the same liberty as he demands for himself. But it is practical despotism of the worst form, for him to crush out the liberty of others because they either do not come far enough, or too far for him. If facts appear to one mind in a different light to what they appear to another, it is only a good reason why each should be at liberty to speak about them in just the way he knows how.

As one star differeth from another, so one mind is impressed with different ideas to another. We may differ from, but we should not deny without investigation, the truth of any subject, however extreme it may appear.

The same modes of declamation and extravagant assumptions which meet the Spiritualist on all hands in the present

“enlightened” age, met the reformers and philanthropists of every people, and every age, therefore we see the old evil spirits, intolerance, persecution, and ignorance haunting the ages in spite of the civilization which has been growing with our growth, through every epoch of the Christian era.

When Christ was on earth he was assailed and persecuted by the embodied spirits of evil, which appeared before Him to insult Him with pharasaical cant and slander. It was His mission to redeem, therefore He taught his divine lessons with courage and compassion; but, nevertheless, He was smitten, spit upon, and ignominiously crucified. If Christ bore all this and more, with humility for our sakes, shall we hesitate to bear the paltry stereotyped modes of opposition which modern adversaries employ to crush out of our souls the spirit-life?

In Christ we perceive the embodiment of divine perfection, and looking to Him find consolation and encouragement. If He suffered so much for our sakes, shall we complain to bear our slight burdens for His? Let, however, those who wrong us by ridiculing us, falsifying our doctrines, and insulting our holiest affections, remember that their work is of the spirits, not of good, but of evil. They practically invoke the evil spirits, which haunted the presence of their Saviour, and devote themselves to their service. It may be that they imagine they are otherwise engaged, serving Christ, because they seek to put down opinions which they call unchristian; but Christ forgave even his crucifiers; when He was reviled, He reviled not again. Would they learn to do likewise, then let them use argument, not ridicule—persuasion not malevolent abuse—investigation not hearsay assumption. Persecution in any form has ever proved the weapon of weakness. No true cause was ever yet advanced by its agency, only when it has been used against it.

Let us reason together, not abuse each other. Kind words break no heads, but will often find their way to the heart, and effect a peaceable revolution in the understanding, which whole armies of assaulting ridicule and passionate abuse, with all their cannon-like forces, could never induce.

It is better to be wise than rash—kind than cruel—Christ-like than Devilish. Which do our opponents prefer?

Spiritualism teaches us golden maxims, and Christ himself has appeared to impress them on our hearts. Spiritualism, older than the days of Christ, is, nevertheless, a beacon which lights us to Him. Because modern forms of spirit-manifestations are to us new, we sadly err if we pronounce Spiritualism, which embraces all things relating to eternal existence, a novelty. There is no necessity for our opponents to lose their temper, or to seek after private scandals to hurl at private Spiritualists, vainly thinking thereby to crush the mighty spiritual truth. They cannot hurt Spiritualism, nor serve Christ, nor even themselves, by that mode of illogical, weak antagonism. Let them rather seek to find the truth, without prejudice, and they will surely find it, or, at least, so much of it, as to make them wiser, calmer, more philosophical, and a thousand times more Christian.



DECEIVING SPIRITS.

A correspondent, who gives his name and address, but who does not wish his letter to be published, sends an account of his experience, and wishes to know our views upon it. As it is possible others may have had somewhat similar experiences, and as we cannot possibly answer all our correspondents individually, we once for all, make the following observations in reply.

Our correspondent, through a medium, received a communication telling him that in place of attending circles, he was to sit with another person named, two evenings a week, and that he would be developed as a medium. He did so, and on the second occasion his hand was moved to write. A sacred name was written, and he was told to go to London for the glory of God. This course did not commend itself to his judgment, under the circumstances in which he was placed; he therefore adjured the spirit in the name of the blessed Trinity to truly answer whether this communication was the desire, and for the glory of God, and was answered "No." He was then told that the entire communication was for the purpose of deceiving him, that it came from the Devil, that Spiritualism originated with the Devil, &c., whereupon our correspondent concludes that the agency at work is evil, and that the mode of eliciting such communications is against the will of God, and warns us of the consequences that may ensue.

We have no doubt of our correspondent's sincerity and good intentions, and that he has correctly stated his own experience, which, rightly understood, is an instructive one, for it shows that there is a spiritual agency at work, which many of our readers do not yet admit. That the subject is not one to be trifled with, and that it is as necessary now as it was in the days of the apostles, to "try the spirits, whether they be of God." This, we think, is an important conclusion to arrive at, as it is diametrically opposite to the philosophical Sadduceism of the age. But we think our friend, like most enquirers at the outset, jumps at conclusions somewhat too hastily, and generalises on very narrow and insufficient data.

If we were to meet a Chinaman in London, one in reality of the very lowest grade, but who passed himself off as a Mandarin of the highest rank, and who, upon being detected, then assured us that there were no Mandarins in China, that all were of his own degraded level, would not our correspondent think we were very weak and credulous if we accepted the statement of one who had been detected, and confessed himself as a liar and impostor? Our readers will remember the similar story of the man who affirmed that all Cretans were liars, but acknowledged that he was a Cretan himself. That in the case of our correspondent the answers of the spirit were given under solemn adjuration to speak the truth, is not a circumstance to affect any general conclusion on the question, for even did this place upon him a necessity of speaking what he believed the truth, it would not follow that he knew the truth; he could only answer according to his own depraved consciousness and corrupt nature, just as a savage in some parts of Central Africa might answer that the inhabitants of the earth were cannibals. It is, besides, notorious that under similar adjurations other spirits have asserted that Spiritualism is not diabolical, but divine. But, indeed, the whole truth of the matter cannot be learned by any single experience, or by any single class of experiences, taken separately, such experiences are found to be of the most diverse and opposite characters.

It is only when we look at the question on broader grounds than that of a merely personal experience, and compare one experience with another, and different kinds and classes of experience, that we begin to approximate to a correct understanding of the matter. The fact is, that the spirit-world, being the world of departed humanity, it must, of necessity, consist of many millions of spiritual beings, and of every grade of intelligence, and of moral worth and unworth. Let this great, but very simple, idea once take possession of the mind, and we shall not be surprised to find, if the power of communication belongs to all, as it appears to do, that false and evil-disposed spirits may sometimes intrude upon us, and we shall not be so unwise, and so uncharitable, as to charge these qualities of character upon all who may enter into communication with us. Our present world is not all made up of rascals, though there are among us some very black sheep indeed, and we do not refuse all intercourse with society because scoundrelism is one of its elements. The other world, we may well believe, is not worse than this; and even in this, the classes who figure in the Newgate Calendar form the exception, and not the rule.

One practical and useful conclusion, at least, may be deduced from what has been said, viz: that it is not wise to trust implicitly to any

ipse dixit, whether it be that of a clergyman, a reviewer, a newspaper editor, or a departed spirit; but that every communication we receive, from whomsoever it may come, should be judged by its intrinsic merits, and its conformity with reason, conscience, and those principles which Jesus Christ has himself given us.

[A record of current spiritual phenomena is valuable. We present a letter containing a spirit-message, and hope to receive from others accounts of sances; but in all cases, we think it better that the writers should allow their names to appear, as a guarantee to the public of their good faith. Ed. S. T.]

A Spirit Message.

To the EDITOR of the SPIRITUAL TIMES.

DEAR SIR,—Feeling desirous that the spiritual phenomena should not be misrepresented, and having been a constant investigator for more than six years, I have had a number of communications, through writing, by various mediums. I should feel obliged if you will publish in the *Spiritual Times* the following, which was given through a medium last Sunday evening, at Twickenham, at the house of a private friend of mine. It purported to come from my own son, who left the earth 27 years since. I was at that time only three weeks old. I have had several communications from him during the last two years. I have copies of them all, but this being the most recent, I thought it best to send it first. I cannot think the Rev. Mr. Nangle, or any other Rev., can attribute such to a satanic source.

"You are my father, God bless you. I come once more in God's name to tell you I love you all; and to tell you how to obtain everlasting happiness, and that surely is worth knowing; aye, some would give all they possessed to know for a certainty. Let them humble to God, and to no one else; let them come as little children to God's holy communion table,—praising God in their hearts, and then shall they be comforted. We do not come to be trifled with. God is good, and protects those He loves. My dear father, to ensure eternal happiness, "Be ye followers of Christ in all things." Oh! they say that is stale; nevertheless, it is the only way, and cannot be too often repeated. God bless you all. "E. P."

Kingston, April 6, 1864.

THE APPEARANCE OF ALLEN PEARSON.

At the Old Town, Eastbourne, lives one Mrs. Pearson, a poor woman who obtains her livelihood by going out to wash and scrub. Hearing of her having been visited by an apparition, I visited her, to glean the following particulars.

She appears to have lost three husbands, and although upwards of sixty years of age, is at the present time able to do a good day's work.

Allen Pearson, her last husband, was originally a soldier, and carried arms for His Majesty the King on the plains of Waterloo. He afterwards settled at Eastbourne, where he died.

Mrs. Pearson was engaged to work out at the house of Mrs. Griffin, stationer, Eastbourne. The morning she started from home the rain fell in torrents. Allen wished her to have the use of his great-coat to shelter her from the wet, and although he was bad with rheumatics, did not appear unusually ill. She left him in bed, and gained the kitchen at Mrs. Griffin's, and busied herself scrubbing the floor. Whilst she was in a stooping posture she felt a tap on her right shoulder. She took her pail, and looking round beheld her husband, Allen Pearson, standing before her in his shirt. Surprised at his presence in such a manner, and doubtless with some involuntary exclamation, she advanced towards him. That instant he was gone. Mrs. Pearson looked about her, and hunted on the stairs for him, but he was not again visible. She felt no fear, owing to the reality of the apparition, but when it was gone she knew that something of a supernatural order had taken place, and feared to think of the probable consequences. Mrs. Griffin came down in the kitchen to lunch. Mrs. Pearson described the particulars of the appearance of her husband in his shirt, but she was told it was only a spectral illusion created by her own mind. When her work was done, Mrs. Pearson went home, and then the fearful truth of the apparition was manifest. She found her husband in his shirt, dead upon the floor, blood oozing from his mouth. He had broken a blood vessel, and had doubtless got out of bed in a vain endeavour to obtain assistance. Perplexed with the awfulness of his situation, his spirit, sped on by an irresistible impulse, had mysteriously presented itself to his wife.

The news soon spread of the remarkable appearance of Allen Pearson to his wife at his death, a few persons only believing—the rest pronouncing the whole matter an invention of Mrs. Pearson's. But there is this awkward fact against them. Mrs. Griffin corroborates the fact that Mrs. Pearson told her of the apparition long before the discovery of the corpse.

It appears, from what I could ascertain from Mrs. Pearson, that she has before had warnings—and once the apparition of her grandmother, who brought her up, stood at the foot of her bed, and bent over her in an attitude of grief.

Distinct knockings of an unmistakable character were heard by her before her second husband died. Six weeks before the death of Allen, she says that she awoke him from sleep and made him cross by telling him of three loud knocks which came upon a little box that stands under the window.

The testimony in favour of the truth of the reality of the apparition of Allen Pearson wants no link to fasten it to truth. Had the woman failed in making Mrs. Griffin understand that she had been visited by her husband, it might have satisfied scepticism to brand Mrs. Pearson with delusion or falsehood, but it can scarcely do the like with Mrs. Griffin, who neither favoured the reality of apparitions nor Mrs. Pearson's imperative manner of insisting on the actual occurrence of the visitation.—From J. H. Powell's *Spiritualism, its Facts and Phases*.

Spirit upon Spirit.

PART THE FIRST.

In commencing this series of papers a few explanatory words should introduce their nature, and indicate their object and history. Briefly, therefore, the writer will say that for many years he has had the advantage of enjoying communications with spirits, as the numerous spirit-diaries on his shelves testify. These communications have been conducted in various ways, but chiefly of late years by the means of writing and impressional mediumship through his own hand, and through that of a near relative. The records in existence contain a vast mass of matter upon many subjects of great interest. But a recent conversation has led to a series of responses which should become public property, as they contain comments upon what others have not hesitated to give to the world. Hence the present publication, in which the writer plays little more than the part of amanuensis, though deeply interested in the subject-matter presented.

Two objects are gained by the method of publication adopted,—a reprint of Judge Edmonds's famous work on Spiritualism, so far as the replies given by Swedenborg and Bacon are concerned, and a running commentary on them by an esteemed spirit friend, who has given them for this very purpose of publication.

A few words yet as to the circumstances. The writer, who will presently appear as the interlocutor in the first person, requested an essay from the spirit visitant—a portion of which was indeed dictated—this led to a farther conversation, which, as it requires no preamble, is here given:—

Thursday, February 18th, 1864.

Q. If I read out some of the works descriptive of the spirit-world, of which I spoke, will you listen to them, and favor us with your opinion?

R. Yes.

Q. Then I will begin with Judge Edmonds, and go through them, and you can observe upon them when we sit for replies from you.

R. Good, will you begin to-morrow?

Q. I do not mean for you to give your replies at once, but merely to listen.

R. Good, it will be good for both to read on the subject. Good night.

Friday, February 19th, 1864.

Q. Will S. J. come this evening?

R. I am here, and greet you.

Q. Will you make a mark when you desire to observe upon any passage?

R. Yes.

I then read as follows:—

Section One, Monday, April 4th, 1853.

Through Dr. Dexter, it was written, at his house:—

In the name of God, I am Swedenborg.

Does a man know a star because he seeth the light thereof? Sayeth he, the moon burneth because she casteth a shadow? Does not the water bathe the shore of both worlds? and is not ocean's bosom broad enough for the ships of all nations? And yet a star is but one in a galaxy of glory in the heavens, and the moon's light is borrowed from a brighter orb than her own mountains. She reflects only the light that she borrows. Can you contemplate a whole creation because you see the light of one star or one moon? And can you determine the extent of the ocean because you behold one of its waves? Thus you can as little judge of spirit manifestations as you can of the star, the moon, or the ocean. Wait and watch; for ere long what is dark will be made light, and what is difficult made easy. Do you love your wife or child, and see in them attributes which confer happiness? Can you look on earth in her beauty, her hills and dales, trees and flowers, and not feel as if it was made for your enjoyment? Have you ever examined truly your own hearts? Do you really desire their purity? Are your thoughts the mirrors of your souls? Do you sincerely live that your death may be glorious? Let each one ask himself these questions to-night; and when I meet with you again, you shall hear the truths which it is my mission to teach.

R. This is true, but only what has often been said in other words.

Section Two, Tuesday, April 5th, 1853.

Through Dr. Dexter the following was written:—

I come from the land where there is brightness and beauty eternal. I have come in the spirit of peace to greet you, my friends, this night.

SWEDENBORG.

I asked you last night if you desired purity of heart, and if you really wished to live that your death might be glorious. I have a motive in asking these questions, for I desire to inform you of the nature of these spirit manifestations, and as far as you can understand, unfold to your minds the hidden mysteries of this new idea.

Beyond this life, in the bright regions where dwell the spirits made perfect, are manifest the glories and attributes of God. From that region come I, and my mission is of love. My body is bright, and my soul is visible to the spirits by which it is surrounded, by reason of its congeniality with them.

When God created man he placed, in his material body, a soul. When the earth was in its infancy, the souls of men were visible to those around, by their affinity or congeniality with the souls of others. When, by the increase of sin, the soul of man was rendered incapable of manifesting its peculiar attributes, it lost the power of making itself felt or visible. But in the world from whence come I, the spirit is visible through its material surroundings; and that, too, the spirit

thought is met by a congenial thought, and spirits know the truth of them with whom they associate.

I do not expect you will understand all my expressions, for, to tell you the truth, I shall be obliged to use phrases to express my ideas that may appear ambiguous; but, as plainly and simply as I can, will I give my views and teachings. Profit by all you do understand, and leave the rest for after consideration.

Here the spirit interposed and wrote:—

R. I do not think there is anything in this which is difficult to understand.

How beautiful the thought that when God created man he placed in his body a living soul, capable of appreciating its high destiny, and that this soul looked out from its surrounding materiality, and responded visibly to the same affinities in another body. On this, if you can but believe, rests the whole of spirit manifestation.

God has no locality. His presence fills the whole universe. Far off in the realms of space, where human eye has never fathomed, where even human thought fails to reach; beyond even the fabulous regions of Satan's resting place, is the Divine Presence recognized in all the power and glory of the Creator's works, as it is in this little ball of yours.

Say what men may—teach what men may teach—still the soul of man is a part of God himself. It lives for ever, and has lived since ere the morning stars recognized the glory of the God-head. Man's material creation was as perfect as all the rest of God's works; that is, according to the laws of materiality, perfect in the exhibition of all the powers and resources and capabilities which belong to his organism. Man was connected with the world around him by his material organization; that is, he was connected with the vegetables, animals, and the earth, by the affinities which belonged to his material nature. Thus, his material nature respond to the effects or influences of the natural world, as when he became influenced in the healthful indication of the functions of his body, by causes which emanated from the earth, or when his body became affected by the conjunction of certain minerals, as in galvanism, or by the effect of a change in the atmosphere, or by all those natural causes which have had and still have so great an influence on his organism.

How distinct the influence which exists between man and the animal creation! I mean the influence which man exerts on the part of God's handiwork. This influence, emanating from man, is but the visible presence of his spirit, recognized and obeyed by the brute. And you will agree with me that the spirit of a master mind is often felt when swaying a multitude by its eloquence, or controlling a turbulent spirit by the power of its own will. Man's relation spiritually with the spirit world is no more wonderful than his connection materially with the natural world. The two parts of his nature respond to the same affinities in the natural and spiritual worlds.

While we admire the harmony and beauty which characterize his connection with your world and the next, we see that by his creation it was designed that he should understand what that connection was, and that he should be able to view it without fear. It would, indeed, appear unnatural if God had created man without this special knowledge; and it would appear incompatible with His glory that he should have designed a portion of himself to exist for ever in a place of which it should know nothing. The very intention of this creation (a small one to be sure) was that man should understand both life and death, and instead of arriving at a knowledge of death, by the fall (if indeed this be true) he lost the knowledge of death. It is, indeed, true that a knowledge of death was necessary to an appreciation of life, always supposing that the man was pure as his nature could permit him to be. Man's body was made to die. He was not created to live on this earth for ever. It could not be. His whole organization would have been changed. His material part would have been constructed so as to have endured ages of time, and resisted the combined influences of natural causes of decay. Therefore you will agree with me, that instead of being created ignorant of what was to be his destiny, he was created with the knowledge that he was to die, and that in his death he was to live again in that world which his spirit know to be eternal; and that he must have had intercourse with spirits is proven by the facts recorded in the Bible; that his nature was pure, and that angels visited the earth hourly and daily, and conversed with man, and that his spirit could associate with them without fear.

R. Certainly, the material part of man must die or decay. The world and the passage through were a means of purification to the spirit of man—that he might again take his place among the angels, for the ADAM or man was created long before the date, or story of Adam known to the world—which is an allegory. Man being a much later creation than the angels, he was not so near to the Creator, and thus the love being less, his will was not so congenial, and by degrees thoughts of self and evil passions began to prevail, but if man, when placed on the earth, had tried to control these propensities, he would have been happy, and the clothing of the flesh would have hidden the evil till it was exterminated by his earthly trials, and purified by the passage of death to the real life. Now man has much more to bear—for as the evil in time increased, the whole earth, and what is on it, partook of the general destruction, or rather imperfection; and even many who lead as good lives as the nature of things will permit, suffer much, both physically and mentally; but the joys of heaven soon blot out these sorrows.

In the next portion of these papers the writer will continue to transcribe from Edmonds, and give S. J.'s comments, together with his own questions, where any such occurred.

K. R. H. M.

(To be continued.)

THE MEDIUMS.

AN ORIGINAL SPIRITUAL TALE.

By J. H. POWELL.

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CHAPTER I.

"Be attentive to your lessons, and never forget the counsels of your dear mother. Remember, whatever you do, that the eye of God is on you, and for ought you know, even your mother's spirit may be near you, impressing you to good," said Mr. Humphrey, and he kissed two little sweet-featured girls, Ada and Emily, his motherless children, as he left them in the charge of Miss Peters, at her academy, Clapham.

Ada was about ten years of age, whilst her sister was two years her senior.

Mr. Humphrey resided at Southampton, and did business as a shipwright. He was a man much respected, very reserved in his habits, but of an exquisitely refined temperament. He had prospered in business, and was considered wealthy. Absolutely divested of ostentation, he nevertheless allowed his name to head many a subscription list, but it was done to give the *list*, and not himself, importance. The fact is, he was an influential man, and he knew it; therefore he allowed his name to appear, backed by a considerable donation, at the head of many a subscription paper, because others might give largely. Those who knew him revered him, and many a poor widow and sorrowing orphan had occasion to bless him. His religious views were not in the least degree stiff: he had a simple earnest faith in Christ, and a hearty disregard for formalism. To *do* good, to him appeared more good than to *think* good. He loved to commingle with congenial natures, and although he never was known to be over talkative, he was fond of saying sage, quaint, and profound things which won him the merit of being a wiser man than his neighbours. He hated the babble of tongues excited by partizan prejudices, and would turn away from heated disputations, remarking that Truth needed no vehement forces to give it authority.

Mr. Humphrey had married when he was twenty-four years of age, and had found, during a period of twelve years, marriage life, as much happiness as generally falls to the share of men who, like himself, make affection and not position the primary consideration in matrimonial engagements. Miss Emily Peerless was the only daughter of an architect, a man of extreme sectarian views, yet withal, a blunt, generous kind of man. He had been well to do, but of late years very unfortunate in his professional undertakings. At the time young Humphrey first warmed acquaintanceship with love, and proposed to wed Miss Peerless, her father was a bankrupt. The lovers had met for the first time at an evening *soiree*. They met very often after that event. It was enough for Mr. Humphrey to feel that he could be happy with Emily for his bride; he had no thought of a marriage dowry with her, all he asked was her hand, her heart being already his.

It is astonishing how speedily love finds a way in and out of difficulties. Rugged paths become suddenly transformed into gardens of roses; the very air which may be impregnated with fetid exhalations from some chemical decomposition of matter, to lovers is balmy with sweetest incense. Never in the career of human nature, in its progress to old age and death, is such mad conduct perceptible as in the heyday of love. Very shrewd lawyers, who would split hairs with the keenness of a razor in all matters pertaining to law and ordinary themes, when they fall head-over-ears in love, forget their sage shrewdness, and positively perform so many acts of folly as to make it a question whether a certificate from two respectable doctors as to their sanity be not the most desirable thing in the world. Very grave, pious, and extremely straight-necked persons, whose features have been washed so often with vinegar, that they have thereby contracted the habit of devoutness, which is marked in their demureness, when they tumble head-over ears in love they forget their vinegar, and let their stiffened necks relax, and their faces lose their gravity of character in a madness of passion which becomes only the more absurd as it is indulged. It is a very ludicrous farce indeed, this love, when it is played out by lawyers and parsons, but when shipwrights and such sober-solid sort of beings leave their musty offices and heavy ledgers to do homage to Cupid, although it may not be quite so funny, it is, nevertheless, a very laughable piece. But it is, after all, part of the great drama of human life. Its ludicrousness is not its sole characteristic; at least, Mr. Humphrey did not think so, for he found very many solid pleasures in the days of his love-making.

Miss Emily Peerless became Mrs. Humphrey, and by a process of figures in the handwriting of the bridegroom, Mr. Peerless got out of his difficulties, and entered afresh on the duties of his profession.

A small villa, about a mile distant from the shipwright's place of business, which bore external aspects of age, was newly done up, and made suitable to receive the bride. Although it was an ancient abode in its internal parts, it was the very receptacle of comfort. Mrs. Humphrey had not entered on her wifely career in the old habitation more than a month, when she expressed a desire to have the pleasure of christening the villa. It was a funny request, but Mr. Humphrey made no demur, his wife not allowing him to know the name she had chosen. One day when the shipwright was returning home from business, just as he was about to enter the gate leading to the front door of the house, his eye caught the words *Humphrey Villa* neatly painted just over the bell on the main post. He laughed heartily at the joke, and displayed his approval by kissing the fair joker.

In the course of time the shipwright became a father, and never was a fonder one on earth. The little Emily was the miniature resemblance of her mother; the same quiet sweet-featured pleasantness which belonged to the mother seemed to be imparted to the child. There was, however, a quickness of intellect amounting almost to precocity in the little Emily, which belonged not to her mother. Both were nervous, sanguine, and of an intensely sensitive nature. In the features, hair, and in the physiognomical appearance of the skin the mother was visible in her child.

Mr. Humphrey loved both with a deep devotion, and found no joys apart from his wife and child, he so idolised them.

When Ada was born Mrs. Humphrey was afflicted with sickness, and never again rose from her couch, in the flesh. Every attention that a kind husband could bestow was paid. Her complaint lingered with her even for years, until her once robust beautiful form wasted by disease, became haggard and shrunken. Her intellect remained clear, and her pure principles firm even to the last. It was a painful scene to witness the stricken husband's anguish when he saw her eyes close, and knew that her spirit had gone from its earthly habitation, which was left like a ruined, deserted castle, to fall to decay.

Emily and Ada were too young to realise the full extent of their loss; yet they were old enough to know that a sweet, loving voice, which was familiar to their childhood, and which spoke to them of heaven and angels, depicting the sufferings and glories of Jesus, had suddenly been silenced by the mysterious hand of death.

Mr. Humphrey had now a double duty to perform towards his children, if it could be possible that he could have a deeper regard for them, or pay them more devoted attention.

After the solemn ceremony of burying his wife was over, he retired alone to his study, and sat in silence, meditating on his wifeless fate and his motherless children. He had, as far as he knew how, performed his duty as a husband and a father; therefore, he had nothing to reproach himself with, but he felt the death of his wife to be a sad blow to him. He silently pondered, and as he pondered he wept. He was a man of strong physical structure, and his ponderous breast seemed to heave like a sea under the strong influence of his grief. A hand was gently placed upon his shoulder from behind. Surprised and electrified he turned round and beheld his wife. Mr. Humphrey was one of the last men whom you might expect to credit a belief in apparitions, but here, in his own study, stood one before him, wearing the sweet smile of his wife, and the ordinary dress which she wore when she was in the flesh. He gazed at her speechless with surprise, but not fear. She waved her hand to him, and was gone. It was then that cold drops of perspiration fell from his forehead, and tremblings took possession of his strong limbs. Yet his grief was less poignant, and altogether, he felt more composed. He put his hands to his forehead, and endeavoured to press his mind to a conviction that he had been dreaming, but it was useless. He could no more divest his brain of the reality of the apparition than he could fly. How to prove to his own satisfaction that what took place did not take place, was the most puzzling of all the problems he ever had occasion to solve. He arose and left the study, treasuring in his own breast the secret of his wife's appearance to him. He had heard very many times relations of ghost stories, and had laughed heartily at them, believing them all simple inventions of fiction. But the experience of the last hour had upset the idea which had lived with him for years.

(To be continued.)

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An Enquiry when Christianity is to Begin.

BY WILLIAM HOWITT.

You may, if you please, say that the Bible is not true,—or you may say that its ethics are not practicable; but if you say that the religion of modern Europe is CHRISTIANITY, you must excuse me laughing in your face. Come, let us lay aside our disguises. Christianity, we know is sublime, but the sublime is not easy. The world is very easy, and clever at a compromise. So she has entered into a pleasant convention with us,—to pronounce a staring copper Brummagem Christianity, the TRUE CHRISTIAN SOVEREIGN; and it is amazing with what acceptance it passes with a clever people like us who would blush to be out of the fashion!—From a description of "The admired Image of Christ, pronounced by the best judges superior to the original antique, being from the modern Brass Foundry of Cosmos, Sarx, Diabolos, and Co."

Do Men gather Figs of Thistles, or Christianity of Classical Paganism?

Nearly two thousand years have elapsed since the advent of Christ, and we have not yet been able to accept and to incorporate in our intellectual constitutions, Christianity. I say this seriously and advisedly; and if any one will take his New Testament in his hand, and examine what is the standard of Christianity as there laid down by its divine Founder, and then just look round him on this present world of ours, he will soon see that we are just where the moralists, the poets and dramatists of Greece and Rome, placed their world in the scale of ethics. And why so? Simply because we educate our children still in the Paganism of Aristophanes and Juvenal. We do it, and always have done it, diligently, uniformly and thoroughly. We beat Paganism into our children, and expect them to turn out Christians. We used to put young sweeps up chimneys, and might as well have expected them to wave their brush from the chimney-pot with clean faces and ungrimed shirts. We have done with that; but we always did and do put our young men through the sinks and stews of Paganism, and expect them to emerge saints.

Why, these very Pagan writers themselves warn you in a thousand places of the inevitable consequences of the first teachings of youth. Habit, we say, is second nature; but the old Pagans seemed to think that it became the first, foremost, and only nature. We could quote a volume from Plato, Meander, and his imitator, Terence, from Seneca, Lucian, Horace, and the rest of them, to prove that what you sow in your children you are sure to reap.

—Dociles imitandis

Turpibus et pravis omnes sumus.—JUVENAL.

But if you want to know what the ancients thought of education, read the whole fourteenth Satire of Juvenal.

—Cum septimus annus

Transierit puero, nondum omni dente renato,
Barbatus, licet admoveas millo inde magistros,
Hinc totidem—

That is, when your boy has passed his seventh year, and has not yet renewed his teeth, you may give him a thousand bearded masters, if you will, but it will be all the same. But if this be the case at the end of seven years, what must it be at the end of seventeen? How is it then, that the Society for the Suppression of Vice has not turned its attention to the works used in all our national and other seminaries, as the text books in Greek and Latin? They explore Holywell-street diligently, and bring forward books and pictures destructive of public morals for condemnation, yet they never turn a single glance on Westminster, or Harrow, or Eton, or Rugby, or a thousand other schools, where the children of the higher and middle classes are daily and regularly indoctrinated with Paganism, and this in its most obscene and unchristian forms. Lactantius, in his day, declared that it had been impossible to the heathen, however educated or civilized, to comprehend true virtue, much less to be virtuous, because their gods were set before them as examples of every species of violence, injustice, lasciviousness, adultery, and crimes unnameable. He especially mentioned the books of Homer and Virgil as abounding with all these indecencies and monstrosities; as fraught, from beginning to end, with the spirit of war, of aggression, of physical violence, of sensuality, and a turgid and intolerable pride. Yet what are the books now employed in all our schools in the teaching of the two languages which are deemed absolutely essential to every man of education? Precisely these very same books. Homer, Virgil, Terence, Ovid, Horace and the like, are the books which are expected to be daily in the hands of all our boys who are to become our senators and rulers, our preachers and teachers; to form and lead the public sentiment, to originate the acts and the history of the nation. Is it any wonder, then, that Christianity remains only a name amongst us? That in all our great opinions and practices we are as essentially Pagans as were Homer and Thucydides themselves? That pretending to be disciples of the Prince of Peace, we are unblushingly the disciples, and very zealous ones, of Mars and Bellona?

We pronounce with Ulysses most earnestly—

The hour of vengeance, wretches! now is come,
Impending fate is yours, and instant doom!

Whilst we are told that, under the influence of real Christianity, we shall beat our spears into ploughshares, and our swords into pruning-hooks, we are, as a nation, armed to the very teeth; spending thirty or forty millions a-year in warriors and war-ships; and growing so excessively Homeric that our very lawyers and doctors, and clerks and shopkeepers are rushing from their stools and desks, their pill-boxes and counters, to strut as volunteers, and say to our French neighbours, "Come on, we are ready for you?"

What a Christian nation! What a wonderful progress in the principles of the religion of peace in only eighteen hundred years! But

can it be otherwise, when every day our boys grow up in admiration of Mars and Hector, and Achilles, and Ajax Telamon? When they gloat open-mouthed, over Achilles boasting—

I sacked twelve ample cities on the main,
And twelve lay smoking on the Trojan plain.

Or see with wonder—

How raged Tydides, boundless in his ire.

Fed for days and years on this sort of food, can these lads long for anything so much as to sack their twelve ample cities in India, or somewhere else, and then, like him, vaunt—

The wealth I gathered, and the spoils I made?

How is it possible that the meek and humane sentiments of the Gospel can ever enter souls thus nurtured, thus built up? That they can ever regard its precepts as anything but to be heard in churches, and left there in the great church Bible, as their only proper place?

How is it to be expected,—what fools we must be to expect anything but what we see from a nation's whole youth familiarized every day for above ten years together,—those growing, susceptible years,—those years when their feelings are developing, their passions are kindling into volcanic strength—with all the roving rapes and peccadilloes of gods and goddesses, whom they have learned to admire above all things, by the preference given them by the most approved of all systems of education? When the luscious things of Catullus, and Anacreon, and the tenfold indecencies of Ovid, are put into their hands as their daily and nightly study?

We educate the nation as Pagans of the highest type and deepest tone, and we expect them to become Christians. What logic! We roll our children in a Styx of heathen grossness and satyr bestiality, and we expect them to become, as a matter of course,—pure as lilies, and gentle as lambs. And yet, is not everybody complaining of the sad tone of our public schools? I heard a very learned man say lately, "When my boys come from Eton, I try to instil a little Christianity into them. But bless me! it seems of but little use." Nevertheless, so completely has custom blinded us in this respect, that the most Christian of our teachers, the most pious and sagacious of our preachers and prelates never discern the enormity; never suspect the rottenness of the system that they perpetuate. They put filth into all the food of youth, and think that, like manure and sewerage at a tree root, it will percolate into piety, and produce the most salutary fruits. "O fools and blind!" How is it that such men as Arnold and other school reformers never get a glimpse of this great Serbonian bog of moral pestilence and death?

Yet Plato saw it, and denounced the desolating impurity of Homer and the other poets; so that he excluded the poets altogether from his model republic. Yet the early fathers saw it. Lactantius saw it; and Augustine saw it. Let us look a little at the "Confessions" of the latter, "Over the entrance of the Grammar School is a veil drawn! True; yet this is not so much an emblem of night recondite as a cloak of error. Let not those whom I no longer fear cry out against me... Let not either buyers or sellers of grammar cry out against me... But woe is thee, thou torrent of human custom! Who shall stand against thee? How long shalt thou remain undried up? How long roll the sons of Eve into that huge and hideous ocean, which even they scarcely over-pass who climb the cross? Did I not read in thee of Jove the thunderer and adulterer? Both, doubtless he could not be, but so the feigned thunder might continue, and pander to real adultery. And now, which of our gown'd masters lends a sober ear to one who from their own school cries out—'These were Homer's pictures, transferring things human to the gods: would he had brought down things divine to us!' Yet more truly had he said,—'These are, indeed, his pictures, but attributing a divine nature to wicked men, that crimes might be no longer crimes, and that whoso commits them might seem to imitate not abandoned men, but the celestial gods...' "And yet, thou hellish torrent, into thee are cast the sons of men, with rich rewards for compassing such learning; and a great solemnity is made of it, when this is going on in the forum, within sight of law, appointing a salary besides the scholar's payments; and thou lashest thy rocks and roarest—Hence words are learnt; hence eloquence; most necessary to gain your ends, or maintain opinions." As if we should never know such words as "golden shower," "lap," "beguile," "temples of the heavens," or others in that passage, unless Terence had brought a lowly youth upon the stage, setting up Jupiter as his example of seduction:—

Viewing a picture where the tale was drawn,
Of Jove descending in a golden shower,
To Danie's lap, a woman to beguile.

And then mark how he excites himself to lust, as by celestial authority:—

And what god? Great Jove,
Who shakes heaven's highest temples with his thunder.
And I poor mortal man, not do the same?
I did it, and with all my heart I did it.

"Not one whit more easily are the words learnt for all this vileness, but by their means the vileness is committed with less shame. Not that I blame the words, being, as it were, choice and precious vessels, but that wine of error which is drunk to us in them by intoxicated teachers; and if we drink not we are beaten, and have no sober judge to whom we may appeal. But, O my God, in whose presence I may now without hurt remember this, all this, unhappily I learnt willingly, with great delight, and for this was pronounced a hopeful boy.

"Bear with me, my God, while I say something of my wit, Thy gift, and on what dotages I was compelled to waste it. But we were forced to go astray in the footsteps of the poetic fictions. What is it to me, O my true life, my God, that my declamation was applauded above so many of my own age and class? Is not all this wind and smoke? And was there nothing else whereon to exercise my wit and tongue?"—B. L.

Is there nothing else, indeed, after more than a thousand years on which to exercise the wits and tongues of our children? After all the praises of the classic writers of antiquity, are there not to be found sufficient prose and verse among them worthy of a Christian mind to imbibe and a Christian memory to retain, without the polluted pages of a Homer, or a Virgil, or of some of their compatriots, who, with all their genius, are sources of a moral poison thus sucked in by unsuspecting youth under the highest sanctions of the learning, the talent, the station, and the custom of this country? Are the souls of men, looking back on this early feeding under the upas trees of classic Greece and Rome, still to repeat the lamentations of Augustine? Still to deplore the desolations that these Pagan poisons have perpetrated on their lives? Are men with the gospel of peace and holiness, of a divine purity, of a God-like forgiveness, of an arch-angelic nobility in their hands, daily read or readable in their houses, weekly read in their churches, still to have their moral perceptions, its world-restoring truths forestalled, prevented, made impossible by this Pagan virus, diffused through every vein and artery of their bodies, through every sense and sentiment of their souls; and thus to go on re-enacting old Paganism in wars and aggressions on their neighbours for ever? Are they to scatter pollution through our cities, till men's minds stand aghast at the torrent of licentiousness that sweeps through our streets, sweeping down women's peace and virtue to destruction, the souls of our youth to perdition?

Are Homer and Virgil, and Catullus, and Ovid still to envenom our passions with death; still to dictate our life's maxims; still to model our opinions, and give to our sentiments a lethal dye, as if there were no gospel, and no vitalizing Christ? These are questions which it is high time for all men to ask themselves. It is not the question whether we shall learn Greek and Latin, but from what source? It is not the question whether we shall read Homer and Virgil, but when? In mature life, and with hearts and minds filled and fortified by the divine spirit and doctrine of Christianity, we may read and enjoy the nobler parts of these authors, rejecting, by a perfected taste, their offal, as we feed on beef, and cast away the garbage that once accompanied it. But for God's sake, for humanity's, that savage war may cease to disgrace a *soi-disant* Christian world, that sensuality may be checked and snubbed, and whipped down into its own nether regions, let not the tender minds of our children be fed on poisons pregnant with death and misery, and anti-civilization to every generation which is past, and to every generation which shall still use them.

Cast a glance on our Europe of 1861. Behold its enormous armies, its despots, its war spirit, its peoples groaning under the weight of a martial taxation, its every nation living in distrust of its neighbour. Look at the enormous mass of litigation in this country, and remember the words of St. Paul, who thought it monstrous that Christians should "go to law one with another." Is that a mark of our religion? Behold the vices of cities, and the ignorance of the poor, and ask yourselves whether this could have possibly been the Europe of to-day, if a fair and manly Christianity had been taught with half the zeal and honour with which we have taught the fierce dogmas, the resentful pride, the loveless ethics, and the sensual prurience of Paganism. Augustine tells us twelve hundred years ago, that this could not have been the case in his day, "had the tender shoots of the heart been supported by the prop of the Scriptures. So it had not trailed away amid these empty trifles, a defiled prey to the fowls of the air. For in more ways than one do we sacrifice to the rebellious angels." Augustine remarks how much more men are shocked at a barbarism of speech than of action. That they had rather hate a *human* being than omit the aspirate in a *uman* being. That if they were pleading before a judge in public, they would feel more shame in murdering the words *human* being, than in having murdered the human being himself. And this, he adds, "Was the world at whose gate unhappily I lay in my boyhood; this the stage where I feared more to commit a barbarism, than having committed one, to envy those who had not. These things I speak and confess to Thee, my God, for which I had praise from them whom then I thought it all virtue to please."

These were professedly Pagan teachers, but would not Augustine be rather astonished, if he returned to earth, after more than twelve centuries, to find a professedly Christian world still laying their children at this same gate of Pagan debauchery? But this would not be his sole astonishment. He would have more in beholding the terrible and discouraging fruits which it has scattered over the world. Fruits more prolific of armed men than the dragons' teeth of a thousand Cadmuses or Jasons.

And has not every one beheld the avidity with which such works as Tom Brown with his fisty-cuffs, and Kingsley's novels and their "Muscular Christianity," have been read? How the war-spirit has been inflamed by them, and they again by the war-spirit? How the whole country is mad with Tom Brownism and Muscular Christianity in parliamentary votes for "The Services," and in Volunteerism? Muscular Christianity! Muscular nonsense! Paganism with a sham-Christian whitewash! The genius and eloquence of these writers, and the usual justice of their sentiments have enabled them the more vigorously to stimulate this belligerent mania.

The corruption of the age—a Christian age too, forsooth!—has just had a charming revelation in our Divorce Court, and in the "Pretty Horsebreaker" correspondence in the *Times*, which journal by no means went to the bottom of that gangrene, for the *Times* dare not probe thoroughly such a fester on the very forehead of society. There is a step onwards beyond the young single men and their "pretty horsebreakers," in amongst the married men in high places and the same Aspasias. In fact, nearly two thousand years after Christ, we have not yet adopted Christianity, but teach and practise Paganism as diligently and as successfully as ever. Is, it not then, premature by a thousand years to expect people to embrace Spiritualism?

And yet, let no one mistake me, and say that I stamp us all as Pagans. Not so. Though I say, and that by the clearest marks and proofs of gospel test, that for any nation yet to call itself a Christian

nation, is a gross and impudent assumption, yet it is equally certain that God has a large and a true church in each. In none, perhaps, so great as in England. That is a church still in the wilderness, but it is a true and a great church. It has grown in spite of the deep and systematic foundation of Paganism laid in education. It has grown by the labours of great and independent souls of all sects and establishments, and of no sects and establishments—by such as have broken through the bondage of scholastic teachings and creeds, by such as never knew them. By pure, diligent, unambitious men, in thousands who have borne the badge of hierarchy or anti-hierarchy on their backs, but the lamp of God's love and light in their hearts, and have gone on their way forgetting outward names and institutions in the ever-absorbing and overflowing spirit of divine benevolence towards their fellow men. Such men we see penetrating daily into the darkest, foulest, most man-forsaken, but not God-forsaken purlieus of our great cities; undaunted by contempt, uncheered by applause, unslackened in their zeal by the prospects of an almost boundless wickedness. God's heroes! true, staunch heroes! who shall never receive estates and seats amongst our peers for their services, but the far more glorious heritage of those who "shine as stars in the firmament for ever and ever." This church has grown by the self-devotion and self-sacrifice of Catholic and Anglo-Catholic, of assenter and dissenter, of learned and unlearned, and it is the great cheering fact of the age that it is visibly and widely growing. In all ranks, and in all places, we cannot come into contact with our fellows without discovering a deep and earnest spirit of enquiry after a more pure and inward life. The great cry is—

More life and fuller 'tis we want.

While the tempest of Paganism sweeps on amid guns and drums, and the brazen music of strife and bloodshed; while Babylon, the harlot, still claims her tawdry and voluptuous votaries in this wealthy and corrupt age, there is yet "a still small voice" of the tender and the divine whispering amongst loving hearts and earnest, tearfully aspiring souls; and as this breath of the upper heavens, of the inner sanctuary of the Saviour's peace, touches more and more of the seeking ones as it passes, the numbers and the boundaries of the living undivided church must still expand. And it is to aid this expansion, to favour this genuine life, that it is necessary that the old philosophy of Paganism should be put into its proper place, and the opening of life be cleared from the poison plants of Pagan passions and ideas, and be inaugurated only amid the dews and scented herbage, the flowers and free airs of unfettered, unprevented, unperturbed CHRISTIANITY.

American Progressive Statistics.

From published lists, which, we are informed, "are presented rather to keep fresh in the memories of our many readers the names of those who have laboured in the van-guard, than to include the many who are now battling for freedom, or laboring in more peaceful fields for the good, the beautiful, the progressive, and the true," we collect the following facts:—

There are 99 progressive writers and speakers, 13 of whom are females; travelling lecturers on spiritualism, philosophy, and reform, 56, of whom 31 are females; local and occasional speakers on the same subjects, 110, of whom 30 are females; medical magnetists, clairvoyants, and mediums, 112, of whom 77 are females; anti-slavery reformers, 93, of whom 8 are females; temperance and health reformers, 34, among whom is one female; social agitators, 23, two of whom are females; woman's rights reformers, 26, of whom 22 are females; practising women physicians, 153, who are of the allopathic, eclectic, hydropathic or hygienic, homœopathic, and rational schools. There are five medical colleges for women.

With regard to the dress reformers, "the list is compelled to be omitted this year, for two reasons; first, the difficulty of obtaining a reliable list of those who wear the reform dress exclusively, and, second, the want of space for recording the growing multitude who wear it, in part, as a dress of convenience." We also find that the present plan of ladies' riding is about to be improved on, and under the head of "The New Riding-Suit we get the following information:—

"The unsafe, ungraceful, unhealthful, and unnatural position, which women assume in riding on the side-saddle, has induced a number of ladies to have recourse to the original (now called "masculine") style of riding astride. This excellent fashion, though only initiated in the summer of 1862, has been adopted by more than one hundred American ladies, and a much larger number in Europe. May it be universal by the end of 1864!

"The following is a detailed description of the RIDING-SUIT usually worn: Blue cloth dress-coat, with black silk-velvet collar, and extra-rich, plain, flat gilt buttons, one inch and a quarter in diameter, fourteen in the set. Pantaloon of double-milled cassimere, (dark blue, light blue, dove, lead, or lavender color,) cut shapely to the form and strapped under the boots. Vest of canary buff cassimere, with standing-collar, and full-length row of extra-rich, plain, flat gilt buttons, half an inch in diameter, the upper half worn unbuttoned. Black silk-plush dress-hat, black cravat, turn-down collar, plain or ruffled linen, dark woolen gloves.

"The above, which is conceded to be more becoming to ladies than any other style of male attire, is what may be called *full dress*, suitable for fine weather. For rough weather the suit may be wholly of gray. In cool seasons an overcoat may be added; while in warm weather the dress-coat and dress-hat may be temporarily exchanged for a thin linen or skeleton cassimere coat and straw-hat."

Poetry.

THE SPIRIT BROTHER TO HIS SISTER ON EARTH.

I shine in the light of God,
His likeness stamps my brow;
Through the valley of death my feet have trod,
And I reign in glory now.
No breaking heart is here!
No keen and thrilling pain!
No wasted cheek, where the frequent tear
Hath rolled and left its stain!
I have reached the joys of heaven;
I am one of the sainted band;
To my head a crown of gold is given,
And my harp is in my hand.
I have learned the songs they sing,
Whom Jesus has set free;
And the glorious walls of heaven still ring
With my new-born melody.
No sin—no grief—no pain,
Safe in my happy home;
My fears all fled, my doubts all slain,
My hour of triumph's come.
Oh, friends of mortal years,
The trusted and the true,
Ye are watching still in the vale of tears;
But I wait to welcome you.
Do I forget? Oh, no!
For memory's golden chain
Still binds my heart to the hearts below,
Till they part, to meet again.
Each link is strong and bright;
And love's electric chain
Flows freely down, like a river of light,
To the world from whence I came.
Do you moan when another star
Shines out from the glittering sky?
Do you weep when the raging voice of war
And the storms of conflict die?
Then, why should your tears run down,
And your hearts be sorely riven,
For another gem in the Saviour's crown—
For another soul in heaven?

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

The Degrading Nature of Medium Revelations.

To the EDITOR of the SPIRITUAL TIMES.

SIR,—I have perused with considerable interest the various numbers of your paper, as they have appeared, and am glad to see you think of altering your plans, and confining your journal more exclusively to matter bearing directly on the points at issue. The prevailing fault of the day in literary affairs is, a flood of loose diffuse information which it is hopeless to attempt to wade through, and the more concentrated your arguments, illustrations, and essays are, and the less mixed up with extraneous matter, the better attention you are likely to receive.

Though looking forward with an earnest expectation to another and far better world, and though possessing a sure and certain hope as to the recognition of friends who have preceded there, I am in no wise indebted to the belief which you propounded, for these feelings; and though the voice of all ages and all nations warns me from the folly of a too great incredulity as to the fact of communications few and far between being really received from another state of existence; yet, to be of any value, these visitations should be higher in their manifestations and results than those spoken of at present by your school.

"I would rather a great deal," says Plutarch, "that men should say there was no such man at all as I am, than that they should say there was one Plutarch that would eat his children as soon as they were born."

It is better to be left without any manifestation or visitation at all, from the other world, than to receive one which should either puzzle the senses to explain it, or lower in an altogether insupportable degree the character of our friend who has passed away, and his surroundings after death.

Surely every man or woman of average intellect and average kindliness of heart would have but one desire in any attempt at intercourse with their acquaintances on earth, after they had themselves attained a higher state of existence; and that desire would be to assist them, whether by warning or revelation, or in any other way. We can hardly conceive of any other sufficient reason for such an abnormal intercourse at all.

Beautiful are Longfellow's verses, entitled, "The Footsteps of Angels," where he describes the fancied visits of the departed, and the deep calm and consolation engendered by them: but for most men the pictures which the poet so exquisitely draws must ever be an illusion and an unreality.

"In vain shalt thou, or any, call
The spirits from their golden day,
Except, like them, thou too canst say
My spirit is at peace with all.
"They haunt the silence of the breast
Imaginations calm and fair,
The memory, like a cloudless air,
The conscience, as a sea at rest:
"But when the heart is full of din,
And doubt beside the portal waits;
They can but listen at the gates
And hear the household jar within!"

So speaks a greater than Longfellow, one whose thoughts have been often with great death, and in the spirit land.

To speak of communications from our dead friends being received through a medium, is to deprive such messages of their value. In this world it is the touch of the loved hand, and the gaze into the well known face, and far down into the clear eyes, which is more than mere words. How much more if some revelation is to be made from a higher state? Shall we be satisfied with a poorer, far more puerile and trifling, and less affectionate manifestation than we have received here, and hasten to believe in it? That would be to think of our friends as descended lower, instead of ascended higher.

In fact it seems to me that it is to degrade our ideas of the present world, and of a future state, so easily to admit of medium revelations as your paper would have us to do. We believe, at all events, that the chief reason for our residence here at all is that we may have a chance of progression—all our varied troubles and temptations on earth must affect us in one way or other. If they have their pure and perfect work, they, in common with all else (even the mystery of evil itself), will assuredly work together for good. Your own doctrine is that the next world is to be one of progression likewise. But to rap out meaningless nonsense, and to make mistakes in spelling, through tables and chairs, and other incredibly stupid manœuvres we read of, is a retrogression, indeed, below our usual occupations even here.

If the reply be given that there are deceiving spirits, of what advantage can intercourse be with such? As George Macdonald ably says:—

"It annoys me that able men, aye, and good men too, should consult with ghosts, whose only possible superiority consists in their being out of the body. Why should they be the wiser for that? I should as soon expect to gain evidence by taking off my clothes, and to lose it by getting into bed: or to rise into the seventh heaven of spirituality by having my hair cut. Such a set are the *canaille* of the other world. It is of no use to lay hold on their skirts, for they can't fly. They're just like the vultures, easy to catch, because they're full of garbage. I doubt if they have more intellect left than just enough to lie with."

Swarms of low miserable creatures that so lament the loss of their beggarly bodies that they would brood upon them in the shape of flesh flies, rather than forsake the putrifying remnants. After that, chair, or table, or anything that they can come into contact with possess quite sufficient organization for such. Don't you remember that once, rather than have no body to go into, they crept into the very swine! There was a fine passion for self embodiment and sympathy! that the swine themselves could not stand it, and preferred drowning.

As an instance, how readily *imagination* can conjure up spiritual manifestation, too. I give you an amusing extract from *Gilchrist's Life of William Blake*:—

BLAKE'S VISIONARY HEADS.—At Varley's house, and under his own eye, were drawn those visionary heads, or spiritual portraits of remarkable characters, whereof all who have heard of Blake have heard something. Varley it was who encouraged Blake to take authentic sketches of certain among his most frequent spiritual visitants. The visionary faculty was so much under control, that, at the wish of a friend, he could summon before his abstracted gaze any of the familiar forms and faces he was asked for. This was during the favorable and befitting hours of night; from nine or ten in the evening, until one or two, or perhaps three and four o'clock in the morning. Varley sitting by, "sometimes slumbering and sometimes waking." Varley would say, "Draw me Moses," or David; or would call for a likeness of Julius Cæsar, or Cassibelanus, or Edward the Third, or some other great historical personage. Blake would answer, "There he is!" and paper and pencil being at hand, he would begin drawing with the utmost alacrity and composure, looking up from time to time as though he had a real sitter before him; ingenious Varley, meanwhile, straining wistful eyes into vacancy, and seeing nothing, though he tried hard, and at first expected his faith and patience to be rewarded by a genuine apparition. A "vision" had a very different signification with Blake to that it had in literal Varley's mind. Sometimes Blake had to wait for the vision's appearance; sometimes it would come at call. At others, in the midst of his portrait, he would suddenly leave off, and in his ordinary quiet tones, and with the same matter-of-fact air another might say "It rains," would remark, "I can't go on,—it is gone! I must wait till it returns;" or, "It is moved. The mouth is gone;" or, "he frowns; he is displeased with my portrait of him," which seemed as if the vision were looking over the artist's shoulder as well as sitting *vis-à-vis* for his likeness. The devil himself would politely sit in a chair to Blake, and innocently disappear; which obliging conduct one would hardly have anticipated from the spirit of evil, with his well-known character for love of wanton mischief. In sober daylight, criticisms were hazarded by the profane on the character or drawing of these or any of his visions. "Oh, it's all right!" Blake would calmly reply; "it must be right; I saw it so." It did not signify what you said; nothing could put him out, so assured was he that he, or rather his imagination, was right, and that what the latter revealed was implicitly to be relied on,—and this without any appearance of conceit or intrusiveness on his part. Yet critical friends would trace in all these heads the Blake mind and hand—his receipt for a face: every artist has his own, his favorite idea, from which he may depart in the proportions, but seldom substantially. John Varley, however, could not be persuaded to look at them from this merely rationalistic point of view. At these singular nocturnal sittings, Blake thus executed for Varley, in the latter's presence, some forty or fifty slight pencil sketches, of small size, of historical, nay, fabulous and even typical personages, summoned from the vasty deep of time, and "seen in vision by Mr. Blake." Varley, who accepted all Blake said of them, added in writing the names, and in a few instances the day and hour they were seen.

My letter having now extended to more than the length expected, I will add no further remarks of my own.

I am, faithfully yours,
Borth, North Wales,
30th March, 1864.

E. C. MOGRIDGE.

NOTICE.

It will be seen that we have not failed to act on the suggestion of several of our correspondents, to alter the form of our paper. In doing so we have entailed upon ourself much more labour, besides adding considerably to the cost. We have had many complaints from persons who have not been able to obtain the Spiritual Times through agents; this is to be regretted. To secure the delivery of the papers our friends had better enclose stamps, and receive it direct from the office, per post.

Alfred Port.—We cannot decipher the writing.

Albert Sayer.—Mr. Chadwick's address is 32, Alpha-place, Three Colts-lane, Cambridge Heath-road.

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