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The Editor

Wishes all his Readers at home and abroad

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and

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The Mystery of the Old Bureau.

Daisy Barker.

I.

VIOLET REDWAY studied her uncle's face with painful intensity. She read something there which disquieted her. It seemed to her that there was something wrong—something on his mind which he hesitated to tell her. She made no comment, however, but the shadows deepened in her blue eyes.

At last William Brahim spoke. "Violet, dear," he said, turning away from his desk and facing her squarely, "remember this. When I am gone, I want you, and you only, to use this old desk of mine. Maybe I am a foolish old man, but I have a sentimental affection for this piece of furniture. I could not rest, knowing that strangers were desecrating that which I have always held sacred. Sweet memories linger around this old bureau for me, for it belonged to my dear wife and your mother, jointly, when they were girls together. You and I know that, by its association with those dear ones, it is indeed hallowed, and I look to you to respect my wishes."

"I will remember, uncle," said the girl. "Indeed I will, but it hurts me to hear you talk as if you were going to leave me—soon. Surely you are not worse than I know? Oh, Uncle, what should I do without you?"

"My dear," returned the old man, kindly, "I do not think you will be lonely for long. If I have read the signs aright, someone else will be seeking the right to cherish you. Life is getting short for me, and on the whole, I am not sorry, but I do not want to—must not leave you yet. My child, it may seem incredible, but it is a fact that I have not yet made my will. If I were to die before that is done, my brother Henry and his shrewish wife would step in and take everything. If I were to die intestate," repeated William Brahim, "you would be practically penniless, for you are only my dear dead wife's sister's child, though dearer to me, heaven knows, than any other living creature. I have sent a message to my old friend, Solicitor Brown, asking him to come and see me to-morrow, when I hope to put my affairs in order."

"Uncle!" The girl's voice trembled with emotion. "Tell me, tell me, what is it? What did the specialist really say?" Her hands clutched at his coat, and her eyes, filled with anguish, looked into his.

Her uncle tried to smile and pass it off, but she would not be denied. She clung to him desperately, pleading for, yet dreading, the truth. The veins stood out on the old man's hands, as he grasped the desk with trembling fingers, and looking away from her anxiety-racked face, replied: "He told me bluntly that it would be wise to prepare for the Great Change—I may go any day."

The girl covered her face with her hands, gave one stricken moan, and fell to the floor. Hastily ringing the bell, William Brahim summoned help. Presently the butler made his appearance, followed by the housekeeper. These two were old faithful retainers, and prepared for all emergencies. Under their ministrations the almost heart-broken girl revived, the old man, her uncle, standing by the couch and watching her return to consciousness with a most pathetic air of helplessness. This expression was so foreign to his master's countenance that the butler could not refrain from glancing at him covertly from time to time. Mr. Brahim was usually so full of vigour, and active far beyond his years, but somehow he seemed to have aged strangely of late. The butler's thoughts were interrupted by his master suggesting that the housekeeper should now assist Miss Violet to her room. The girl clung to her uncle convulsively, and they embraced tenderly ere parting.

Left alone, William Brahim sat down heavily, his face grey and strained, and for a time he remained motionless. At last he moved resolutely, and murmuring "That will assuredly be the safest thing to do," he drew pen and paper towards him.

her to tell the master that she was quite recovered. The worn-looking face relaxed somewhat as he listened to Mrs. Simkin, and thanked her. He intimated to the butler that he did not require anything, but as the two servants were about to withdraw, he recalled them.

"By the way," he said, "you may as well let me have your signatures whilst you are here."

There was nothing unusual in this—they had witnessed their master's signature many times, and they both signed their names without any curiosity. Afterwards the incident passed completely from their minds for the time being, for they became engrossed in speculation as to what had caused Miss Violet's swoon, and why the master looked so queer.

It was William Brahim's custom to let his domestics retire early. He usually went to bed very late, and turned out the lights in the study himself. That night the butler woke up out of his first sleep, and try as he would, he could not settle down again. As daylight began to filter through the blind, he determined to get up and see if all was right. He arose silently, and crept down stairs. Everything was serene and quiet in the servants' domains, so he passed to the front. He glanced in one room after another, but all seemed right, until he reached the study. The door was closed—an unusual thing—and an unaccountable dread took possession of the old servant. Softly but fearfully he turned the handle of the door and peeped in. The lights were on at full, and there, seated at the old bureau, sat William Brahim—dead. Without a second glance, the butler knew it, and a horror-stricken cry of dismay and grief rang through the silence.

* * * * *

It was many days before Violet Redway realised her loss. The shock caused by her uncle's disclosure of his critical state of health, followed immediately by the butler's tragic discovery, proved too much for her frail physique. For a long time she was unable to take any part in affairs, or even to ask any questions. At length her youth and vitality began to assert themselves once more. She questioned her nurse, and found that much had taken place during her illness.

Her beloved uncle had been interred with all due solemnity and pomp, his brother Henry and his wife as chief mourners. She insisted upon the lengthy press notices being read to her, and smiled sadly at the sympathetic comments anent her own absence. She who had loved him best had had no part in the last rites—had never taken a last farewell of that still, cold form—and now, now she was all alone. Even her Uncle Henry, as she always called him, was not in actuality a blood relation at all.

The nurse informed her that Mr. and Mrs. Brahim were still resident in the house and anxious to see her as soon as they could be allowed. Mr. Henry, said the nurse, seemed a very nice gentleman, but only very poorly himself. He had inquired constantly after the patient, and seemed most thoughtful and considerate in every way. Violet noticed that her attendant omitted as much mention of her uncle's wife as she possibly could, and from that the girl drew her own conclusions.

She herself knew very little of Mrs. Brahim, except that her Uncle William disliked her intensely. He had made them a handsome allowance since the breakdown of his brother's health, but had systematically discouraged any intimacy between the two families.

Anxious to see a familiar face again, Violet asked for the housekeeper. The nurse demurred at first, but finding it bad policy to thwart her patient, she finally admitted her.

Mrs. Simkin was completely overcome. "O! my dear Miss Violet," she sobbed, forgetting, in her eagerness, all the nurse's admonitions, "I'm so glad you are getting round; but oh, my poor lamb! what a getting round it is. I should never a' thought it of the pore master—an' what's more," she continued defiantly, "I never will—but they can't find no will nor nothing, an' that there usurer has took possession—so to speak—already!"

She stopped for lack of breath, and as her eyes met the vexed disapproval in the nurse's, she realised her indiscretion.

At first Violet did not understand, used though she was to the housekeeper's somewhat confused mode of speech, but when she realised that "usurer" was merely the good woman's term for "usurper," she comprehended fully.

Half-an-hour or so later, the butler returned to see if he required anything. At the same moment the housekeeper appeared to report that Miss Violet was in bed, and wished

Concealing the pang at her heart, she took the housekeeper's hand in hers.

"My dear Mrs. Simkin," she said, gently, "I am sure you must have had a trying time, but I know that you and Watson would do exactly what was right, and what you thought my dear uncle would wish."

"And indeed, Miss Violet, we should have done," broke in the housekeeper, indignantly, "but Mrs. Henry arrived, and since then we have been treated like dirt. Mr. Watson, as has bin here nigh on thirty years, as bin treated somethink shameful. Mrs. Henry's ordered him about wors'n I do the lowest maids. It's bin Watson this and Watson that, until my blood fairly biled. Him as the master used to make so much of, too. Ah! The poor master—many's the time as he's jokingly said to me, 'Now come, Mrs. Simkin, when are you going to fix it up with Samuel?'"

Seething inwardly, the nurse here interposed. Gently but resolutely, she turned the housekeeper out of the sick room. Mrs. Simkin departed, brimming over with tears, and sought the butler. Mr. Watson always adopted a superior attitude towards her.

"Pray calm yourself, my good woman," he said, severely. "When you har'pupset, your langwidge is somethink dreadful, it is hindeed."

"I'm very sorry, Mr. Watson," sniffed the housekeeper, "but I can't help it, and anyway," she continued, with a touch of spirit, "Miss Violet, who is a REAL lady, and not like such as you, she don't take no notice of my grammar, an' I don't see why you should be allus taking me up—so there!"

"It is for your own good, Mrs. Simkin, I assure you," returned the butler, somewhat taken aback. "If I did not think so much about you, I should certainly not trouble to point hout your defects."

"I'm sure I'm werry much obliged to you, Mr. Watson, an' I 'ope as you won't take no offence, but I'm that upset you couldn't think. To see our young lady lying there so frail and wan and sad, fair breaks my 'eart, while that there woman—she's no lady, and I don't care what nobody ses—lording it iver as she does. If them theer lawyer chaps was as clever as I used to think they was, they'd ha' found the pore master's will somehow, whether he made one or not. I'm sure he meant to, and that's good enuff for me, anyway."

"Come, come, my good woman," said the butler, loftily. "Do talk sense. We don't know whether he made one or not. Why, good Lord! Emma, what DID we sign the night he died? It might have been some sort of a will—who knows? I'd clean forgotten, but I'll tell Mr. Brown as soon as hever I get the chance, that we signed somethink that night."

"It'll be no good," said the housekeeper, pessimistically. "If it was his last will and Bible, he must ha' tore it up after we left him, for they've looked iverywhere."

Despite her pessimistic words, Mrs. Simkin's face had brightened visibly; whether it was due to the faint germ of hope engendered regarding the master's will, or whether it was caused by the butler's use of her Christian name, it would be difficult to say. Mr. Watson only forgot himself in moments of great excitement, but each lapse was treasured up in the memory of Mrs. Simkin, and such a day became a red-letter day in her inmost heart.

Overcome by weakness, Violet Redway lay quiet and still after the housekeeper's brief visit. She was aroused by the loud imperious tones of her Aunt Judith, and the lower, expostulating voice of the nurse.

"You need not waste your breath, Nurse. I intend to see my niece. The housekeeper has been, and therefore there can be no reason why I should not see her. It was a piece of great impertinence on both Mrs. Simkin's part and on yours for her to gain admittance before I—the mistress—had seen my niece."

"Really, Mrs. Brahims," said the nurse, heatedly, "apart from the question of precedence, can't you understand that the patient is not strong enough to see another visitor yet?"

"I can understand nothing," returned Mrs. Brahims, haughtily, "except that I ought to have been the first to have seen Miss Redway. I will not stay long, but if any harm ensues, the responsibility is yours. Let me pass!"

The nurse gave way, and Mrs. Henry Brahims swept in effusively. Large and well-formed, with an elaborate coiffure of raven-hued hair, she formed a striking contrast to the fair, frail invalid, whose blue-veined eyelids seemed almost too heavy for her to raise.

"My dear Violet," began the intruder, patronisingly, "I am so glad you are better. Your uncle and I have been quite anxious about you."

The sick girl murmured an appropriate reply, but in her weakness felt almost overwhelmed, and it was only with an effort that she conquered the faintness which was stealing over her.

"I feel sure, dear," continued Mrs. Brahims, unheedingly, "that if you will but exert your will-power we shall soon have you downstairs. You know, my love, it is neither good nor natural for a young girl like you to lie moping here. I have been wanting to come and cheer you up for some time, but nurse here was so dreadfully stupid, and the wretched doctor upheld her, so really, what could one do? Your Uncle Henry," she rattled on, without waiting for a reply, "is not very well. I really think he is becoming consumptive, and on that account I do not like the children being with him so much. But you know, dear, he is dreadfully self-willed, and he NEVER takes me and MY feelings into consideration at all. I will tell him how much better you are, and perhaps he will come and sit with you awhile. Well, really dear, I must be going now. I notice you are not very cordial, but I suppose we must forgive you as you are still something of an invalid. I hope you will be downstairs soon, my love, for I simply hate sick-rooms, and I am sure you would find some useful occupation far more beneficial than lying here, brooding. Oh yes, Nurse, I'm coming. Good-bye, my dear, make haste and get quite strong."

"Well," said the nurse to herself, as she returned to her patient, "I never was in such a house in my life, and I hope I never shall be again!"

Her patient was very quiet and gave scarcely any clue to her feelings. Beyond asking that she might see Mr. Brown, the solicitor, if he called, she said very little, but her temperature had risen, and for some time she was in grave danger of a serious relapse.

* * * * *

"I wish to goodness," said Mrs. Brahims, irritably, "that that girl would make haste and get well. I want to get things on a proper footing. I should have asked her before now what her intentions were, but that nurse is such an interfering cat!"

"Going to do?" repeated her husband mildly. "Why, my dear, she is going to stay here, of course."

"She is going to do nothing of the sort, Henry. The sooner she is out of the house the better," said Mrs. Brahims, decisively.

A lengthy argument took place, but in the end the usually easy-going but kindhearted man triumphed. Violet must live with them.

"Oh, well," said Mrs. Brahims resignedly, "she will do to teach the children and look after Mollie."

Violet was now able to leave her bed, but she looked a mere shadow of her former self. Although her changed position was understood by all, no direct mention of it had been made to her. The children, however, frequently forgot themselves, and made remarks, unthinkingly enough, which stung the poor girl to the quick. The boy Herbert remarked one day, as he wandered round his cousin's room and looked out upon the spacious and lovely view from the broad windows: "I say, Vi, make haste and get well. Mother says I can have your room as soon as you are well enough to move. You are to have the little one next to Molly's room, so's you can look after her when she's poorly."

"Shall you mind very much?" asked little Mollie, wistfully, as she timidly stroked the slender hand.

"My dear," answered Violet sincerely, as she took the loving little hands and kissed them, "I would do anything for you."

Mollie was a sweet, pale-faced child, and her father's pet. She had always been delicate, but now she seemed more ailing than ever.

About this time a most unsettling incident took place. Her father found her seemingly asleep one day, lying across the piano keys. He gently removed her and placed her upon

a couch. Presently she opened her eyes, gave a deep sigh, and then, to the great distress of her father, burst into a very passion of tears. Henry Brahim took his little girl tenderly into his arms and tried to soothe her. Little by little her heart-breaking sobs subsided, and at last she was able to tell the cause of her distress.

"I don't think, daddy, that Uncle William likes us being here," said the child, tremulously.

"But, dear, Uncle William is dead."

"Yes, daddy, I know that, but I'VE SEEN HIM. I was practising my music," continued the little girl, snuggling closer in her father's arms, "when all at once I saw Uncle standing by. He looked so cross that I cried out, 'Oh, Uncle, what have I done to vex you?' 'Nothing, child, nothing,' he replied, 'I will not harm you!' And then, daddy, he melted away," the little girl concluded quaintly.

"And I found you asleep resting on the piano," said her father, tenderly.

"Did you, daddy?" said little Mollie, opening her eyes widely. "Anyway, I wasn't asleep when I saw Uncle William!"

Nothing could shake the child's belief, and in spite of himself, Henry Brahim could not help wondering if the little girl had really seen a visitant from another world. Mollie and her father were all in all to one another; no one else understood them, as they understood each other, and Henry Brahim, clasping his treasure to his heart, wondered if it were an omen of evil. She was so frail and ethereal, and since their change of residence her little face had grown so wistful and subdued. Both she and her father looked and felt as if the change from their former home was the reverse of beneficial.

Violet's first visitors from the outside world were Mr. and Mrs. Brown. The former came as her late uncle's adviser, ostensibly, but he and his wife were very much attached to Violet. They had no girls of their own, and it had been, for years, a secret hope of their hearts that this sweet-natured girl would one day be their daughter-in-law. The union of the two families would have been in every way desirable, and William Brahim's tragic death and the consequent change in Violet's fortunes grieved them greatly.

Mr. Brown, in his tactful way, tried to steer clear of awkward subjects, but the girl insisted upon having her position clearly defined. She told Mr. and Mrs. Brown of that last scene with her uncle, and the tragic sequel. The two elderly people listened intently as Violet in her low, but perfectly steady voice, told every detail.

"Well, well," said Mr. Brown, when she had finished. "Your story, following upon what the butler has just told me, makes me think that your poor uncle must have made some attempt to execute a will. We can find no trace of it, however, and we have searched everywhere, especially the old bureau."

Mr. and Mrs. Brown talked with Violet for a long time, and heard without any great astonishment that she intended to leave that house as soon as she was able. Then Mrs. Brown, in her motherly fashion, and out of the sheer goodness of her heart, asked her to come and stay with them until her strength was fully restored. Violet gratefully accepted, so gratefully, indeed, that poor Mr. Brown was compelled to blow his nose long and vigorously.

"It will be as well, too, for you to remain near at hand; for one never knows what may turn up. Your Uncle Henry, as you call him, my dear, seems a very fair-minded man, and sincerely grieved that you should have been left unprovided for. I am afraid he will be distressed when he finds you are determined to leave him in absolute possession. I met him this morning on his way to the station, and he told me he did not feel at all comfortable. He said it would be a great relief to him—an almost insupportable burden removed, were his actual words—should it transpire that his brother did make a will in favour of you, as we all know he intended to do."

"Has Uncle Henry gone away?" asked Violet in surprise.

"Only for a few days, my dear. He was called away unexpectedly by telegram, and he left quite early—too early to disturb you, he said. In my opinion," concluded Mr. Brown, as he and his wife took leave, "in my opinion, I say,"

he repeated, "and in strictest confidence, mind, your uncle would not be installed here at all if it were not for his wife. He is entirely under her thumb, and her influence is not altogether a wise or beneficial one."

Violet was attached already to her Uncle Henry, and hated the thought of paining him by refusing to share his home. She felt, however, that she could not stay, and decided to leave during his absence, lest his entreaties should prevail.

As tactfully as possible, she intimated to her aunt that she wished to go and stay with Mr. and Mrs. Brown. The storm which followed was beyond the pale of Violet's imagination. Mrs. Brahim's indignation knew no bounds. She must not think of such a thing—people would say they had turned her out, and so on, until Violet was on the verge of a collapse. Having—albeit reluctantly—accepted her husband's decree, Mrs. Brahim immediately took it on as her own, and forgot entirely her previous determination to be rid of her niece at the earliest opportunity.

"I am sorry to vex you, Aunt Judith," said Violet, with trembling lips, at the end of a long tirade, "but I am determined to go, for the present, at any rate. I may be glad to return later. But in the meantime, I want you to grant me one favour. Will you let me take the old bureau—the one at which my uncle passed away?"

Mrs. Henry Brahim swung around, her handsome, self-willed face red with passion. "I will not—no, not on any account—you shall not have it. If you will be so stupid, you shall not take anything with you, not a farthing's worth, if I can prevent it."

Violet was unused to such scenes, and in her weak state she found it terribly distressing, but she made valiant efforts to retain the old bureau. It was useless, however, her aunt was as hard as a rock, and she left without it before her Uncle Henry's return.

She was warmly received by Mr. and Mrs. Brown, and later by their son Jim, whose sympathetic eyes noticed with shocked surprise the havoc which grief and sickness had wrought in the once high-spirited happy girl. Jim Brown was not what is called a gay young dog, his mother and Violet being the only two women that he cared a toss about, and so far his love for Violet was, he imagined, his own secret.

Up to this period the old bureau had stood neglected since the futile searches for the will it was thought William Brahim might have made. Violet's explanation as to why she particularly desired the old piece of furniture Mrs. Brahim dismissed as mere sentimental rubbish, which must not be encouraged. She began to take an interest in the old desk, however, from that hour, and was very much annoyed when she found that the household generally showed a distinct desire to shun it. She ordered her son Herbert to do his home-lessons in the study, and to use the bureau. He opened his mouth to protest, but knowing his mother's obstinacy, sulkily complied, and placed his books in position. She looked in awhile later, and found him seated at a small table as far away as possible from the old bureau. Peremptorily she demanded the reason. He answered in an awed voice that the desk kept rocking, and was so unstable that he could not write a single word, and also that that side of the room was very draughty, and it made him feel as if cold water was being poured down his back.

Declaring angrily that it was all nonsense, Mrs. Brahim imperiously ordered him back. The boy stood still, turning red and white alternately and showing such obvious distress that his mother flounced across in a temper and sat down before the old bureau herself. Hardly was she seated, however, than for some inexplicable cause a bottle of Indian ink emptied itself into her lap. Jumping up in a towering rage, she suddenly collapsed, saying that something had seized her foot. Pulling herself together, she made a frantic attempt to escape, and succeeded in doing so at the expense of a severely trapped finger, incurred she knew not how. Once free, she flung herself away, screaming with pain and fright. She declared the thing was bewitched, and that nothing on earth should ever cause her to go near it again. She had her finger attended to, and calming down, told her son that he was not to go near the old bureau again on

penalty of her severe displeasure—adding incidentally, that it was all his fault. After which she gave herself up to some painful recollections. William Brahimi's last words to his niece, as related by Violet, kept recurring to her mind, and she sincerely regretted now her attitude towards the girl and her desire.

It was an unusually subdued wife who met Henry Brahimi that night on his return. She related the departure of Violet, but purposely refrained from any mention whatever of the old bureau. It was too late for Henry to go and see Violet that night, but distressed beyond measure, he determined to send her a note at once, begging her to return to the family roof.

Anxious to send his appeal with the least possible delay, he entered the study as the most likely place to find all writing materials at hand. To his surprise he found his son Herbert there, sheepishly grinning at one of the maids, who was dancing round the room, declaring she had got "pins and needles all over her, and Master Herbert wanted a good whipping for daring her to sit there."

Both boy and maid disappeared at Mr. Brahimi's entrance with remarkable celerity, the boy not even stopping to greet his father, and, wondering what mischief Herbert had been up to this time, Henry Brahimi sat down at the old bureau.

II.

Violet had now been the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Brown for some days. She was rapidly gaining strength in her new environment. Though actually only at the other end of the large village, she seemed very remote from her Aunt Judith. She still felt very much troubled about the old bureau, and had mentioned the matter to the faithful solicitor. Mr. Brown assured her that as soon as her uncle returned she should have her wish granted, for he would make it his duty to mention it personally to Mr. Brahimi, and he knew her uncle would assent immediately.

On the night of Henry Brahimi's return, Violet retired early, unaware of her uncle's near proximity. She fell asleep almost at once, only to wake again when all was dark and still. While wondering what could have aroused her, she became aware of a faint luminosity which increased by degrees. All at once she started up in a transport of excitement.

"Uncle!" she cried. "Oh, uncle, speak to me!"

She fell back upon her pillow, half fainting, and then she felt the gentle hand of her Uncle William caressing her head. Low as a whisper, but insistent, came his well-remembered voice. "Look in the secret drawer, Violet!" That was all, and then everything became dark and silent again, but a flood of remembrance swept over the girl. The secret drawer in the old bureau! Did anyone beside herself know of its existence? What secret did it contain?

She longed to hear her uncle's voice again—to know if he was happy, and to ask a hundred questions—but his insistent request, "Look in the secret drawer," overshadowed everything. She worked herself up into quite a fever, and at last decided that she could lie still no longer. She determined to go to her old home, and see if she could effect an entry at the study window. Then she would steal to the old bureau and touch the spring of the secret drawer—that secret hiding-place whose existence she had completely forgotten until her dead uncle's voice reminded her of it.

She rose swiftly and dressed, putting rubber shoes upon her feet. Looking out of the window, she noted that the moon was rising—it would soon be shining in through the windows of her uncle's study.

She stole silently down the stairs, but just as she reached the hall, a latchkey was thrust into the lock, the key turned, and the door opened. The lamp was burning dimly, and by its light the girl recognised Jim Brown.

"Why, Vi!" he exclaimed, "where are you off to?"

In terse, feverish sentences she explained her project and the reason thereof. He listened in amazement, and when she spoke of the secret drawer, his face glowed with excitement.

"We found no secret spring," he said, "and if I can't persuade you to abandon your extraordinary plan, I'll go with you. You can't possibly go alone at this unearthly hour. What a lucky job I was home to-night later than usual."

Violet made no demur, she had implicit faith in the son as in the father, and silently they crept out. A thrill of pleasure shot through Jim as the girl placed her hand upon his arm. He had worshipped a long time now in silence. In the olden days it had been his ambition to have a home worthy of his bride before he asked her to be his wife. Now that she was left practically penniless, he longed to make her his own that he might love and cherish her and shield her from the world. So far, however, his respect for her grief had kept him tongue-tied.

The rising moon shed fitful gleams along the highway as they hurried along the road, and then by a by-lane which skirted the village. Their steps slackened as they reached the comparative security of the lane.

Violet was breathless with her unusual exertion, and putting his arm about her, Jim guided her steps to an old tree stump, and there she rested awhile.

"I am glad you came with me—I don't know what I should have done without you," said the girl gratefully, as Jim adroitly slipped on her shoe, which she had lost in her anxiety to reach the secluded lane.

The young man's face twitched, and he seemed about to say something, but the moonlight shining brightly upon them now, lit up Violet's features in all their purity of innocence, and he checked himself. Holding out his hand, he assisted her to rise, and they continued their journey.

They reached her former home without meeting a soul. As they stole up the avenue, they noticed a light burning in one of the best bedrooms, but the rest of the house was in darkness. Creeping stealthily, they reached the French window of the study—it was unfastened—and they slipped inside. The moon had disappeared temporarily, and the two conspirators waited in breathless suspense for its welcome rays. Jim could hear Violet's heart beating tumultuously, and he pressed her hand sympathetically. Silently she returned the pressure, and then the moon shone once again. They stared round the room, lit up by moonlight, in blank astonishment. The bureau had gone! Not a trace of it remained, and in almost ludicrous dismay, they slipped away again. Neither the man nor the girl thought of looking anywhere else, their sole desire being to get away undetected, and then to find some place where they could give vent to their chagrin. To Violet in her weak state it seemed a disaster of the greatest magnitude. She had lost all sense of proportion, and her reasoning faculties were in abeyance for the time being.

It seemed an eternity before they reached the by-lane. Violet's steps were beginning to falter, and Jim began to blame himself inwardly for consenting to such a mad project. The girl clung more heavily to him with every step she took, and at last Jim said he must carry her.

"Oh no!" she protested weakly, "you musn't—it wouldn't be proper."

Jim could have laughed outright at her sudden remembrance of the law of propriety, but he was too concerned about her—also he was in love. As it was, his hitherto admirable restraint dropped away from him unawares as he gathered her in his arms.

"Oh, Vi!" he cried, "you're so weak and helpless, give me the right to carry you!"

The girl smiled wistfully. "Oh, Jim how can I? I am a penniless girl now. Had you asked me before poor uncle—"

A little sobbing sigh broke from her, and she rested, a dead weight upon him. He raised her in his arms, and in spite of his burden, his footsteps were light. The old tree stump was reached in due course, and there Jim deposited the girl. Violet was now herself again, and there, in the moonlight, her cavalier told her of his love. He reiterated assurances that he loved her for herself alone, finally won her over, and with something like peace in her heart—for the first time since her uncle's death—she promised to be his wife.

Violet was now able to walk without assistance, and they reached home unobserved. They crept guiltily upstairs, and there, outside Violet's room, they kissed for the first time, and then the girl vanished.

With his face aglow, Jim turned away—and confronted his father. "James! Whatever does this mean?"

The most incredulous amazement was in the old man's tones as he stood, staring aghast at his son. Jim was too taken aback at first to answer, but soon recovered himself.

"It's all right, dad," he returned, smiling faintly. "Come down, and I'll tell you all about it."

The old solicitor followed eagerly, and there in the dining-room by the waning moonlight Jim told his father of the doings of the night. The older man was shocked at their escapade, but keenly interested in the news of the forgotten secret drawer of the old bureau. He was as fond as a solicitor well could be of a little romance, but he sighed when Jim told him of his engagement to Violet.

"She is a sweet girl, Jim, and a good one, too, but a rich wife, lad, would have been a great help—a great help."

"Yes, dad, I know," the young man answered, "but Violet is the only girl in the world for me!"

"Well, well," replied his father, "so be it, and good luck to you, my boy."

They shook hands heartily and returned upstairs, Jim to his own room and Mr. Brown to his wondering better half. He told her all the story, and Mrs. Brown's eyes grew misty, and when he had finished, they were both silent. They were recalling fragrant memories of their own little love story of long ago.

Next morning Violet awoke, feeling brighter and better than she had done for many, many months, in spite of the night of incident and roaming. She glanced out of her window as she completed her toilet, and saw a lorry turning in at the avenue which led to the back of the house. It was not the dray which rivetted her attention, it was the fact that her uncle's old gardener accompanied it, and surely—surely—that was the old bureau riding in solitary state upon the lorry. She ran hastily downstairs and out at the front door. The two approaches to the house ran parallel, one on each side of the lawn.

The gardener was leading the horse to the back of the house, but seeing Violet appear, he changed his mind, and turning across brought the vehicle to a standstill just outside the imposing front door. This proceeding brought out the rest of the inmates, and the old gardener took off his hat with a flourish in greeting to them all, but it was Violet whom he addressed.

"I be main glad to see you looking so much better, Miss Violet," he said, in the privileged manner of an old servant. "I've browt you the master's old bureau, and may it bring yer good luck! If you'll let summin gi' me a hand I'll soon hev it off this ere dray. I'm only th'owd gardener, but I knows a bit o' summit, and I'll bet owt yer like that Marm wouldn't let you 'ave it, Miss Violet, if so be as it hadn't been bewitched!"

"Bewitched, John! What do you mean?" asked Violet. Then the gardener in his droll fashion related all the incidents of the day before connected with the old bureau. He concluded by saying: "An' to finish up, the new mester—pore feller, I'm sure HE didn't want you to go, Miss Violet—had been found lying unconscious acrost it, 'zactly same way as pore old mester, an' he hadn't spoken since!"

The gardener was in his element with so many attentive listeners, and he went on to relate with great gusto how Mrs. Henry had grown hysterical. How, as soon as her husband had been removed to bed she had ordered the bureau to be taken away at once. Peremptorily she had instructed them to deliver it to Miss Violet, but as it was already late, the servants had placed it in a tool shed until morning.

"And 'ere, Miss Violet, it be," he ended.

With assistance he deposited it on the ground and removed its covering. Violet sprang forward, and pale with excitement, her host and hostess and Jim crowded round. The girl leaned over the old bureau, her slender fingers manipulated some hidden spring, and a tiny drawer flew open!

Though her heart was pounding madly, she forced a semblance of composure, and calmly extracted the document lying so snugly there. The sight of her dear uncle's last writing, however, almost unnerved her. She read the opening lines beginning "This is the last will and testament," etc., and then overcome, handed it to the expectant solicitor.

Mr. Brown adjusted his glasses and read the paper through. He looked it over carefully, noted the signatures of the two witnesses, and saw that though the will was simplicity itself, it was quite in order. William Brahim had left everything to his niece, Violet Redway.

Anxiously the little party watched the solicitor, Jim's strong young arm supporting Violet. At last Mr. Brown spoke, but it was not to them. "William Brahim, my old friend," he said, fervently looking skywards, "God bless you!"

One by one the others read the much-sought-for will, and Violet was the calmest of them all. The old gardener was beside himself with joy, and capered about like a madman. The doctor happened to be passing, and seeing his patient out so early, and something clearly unusual afoot, thought he might as well pay a visit. He stopped his car and stepped across the lawn. Violet was complimented upon looking so much better, and then he asked genially what all the excitement was about.

Mr. Brown told him the bare facts, but the old gardener would not be suppressed, and loquacious though he was, he had an attentive listener.

The family adjourned at last to the house with the doctor, while the gardener drove triumphantly away, brimming over with the great news. The medical man did not tarry at Mr. Brown's residence, as he had a serious case on hand—Mr. Henry Brahim, to whom he had been called the preceding evening.

Arriving there he found the patient's condition slightly improved. He intimated this fact to Mrs. Brahim.

"Oh," she said, "that is good news. I have been fearing the worst all night, but everything looks brighter this morning. The old gardener has come with splendid tidings, too."

The doctor looked at her keenly, but though she was pale, her features betrayed nothing, and he stroked his moustache gently as he listened. "Everything has come right for our dear niece, as I always thought and hoped it would."

The doctor pulled his moustache, but said nothing, and she continued: "The missing will has been found in the old bureau! I am so thankful. I always felt that my husband's brother must surely have made one in dear Violet's favour. Although my husband was the next-of-kin, we resolutely refused to enter into possession. We should not have been here now, but poor dear Violet has been so ill that we really had to stay."

The doctor smiled enigmatically and stroked his moustache more than ever. "My husband will be as pleased as I am," Mrs. Brahim continued, glibly. "He has been extremely reluctant to fulfil the requirements of the law, and now, thank goodness, there will be no need. Mr. and Mrs. Brown are dear good people in their old-fashioned way, and I urged dear Violet to accept their kind invitation, because of the very painful associations here retarding her recovery."

Her listener nodded in agreement, but looked away with a somewhat quizzical expression. "The sweet girl is so very sentimental, you know, and she begged me to send her the old bureau, so I sent it along at once, and now, thanks to me, she has found her Uncle William's will."

It was a mercy the doctor's moustache did not come out by the roots, but it survived somehow, and when at last he made his escape, the butler heard him ejaculate under his breath, "Lord! what a woman!"

"Heggsaxtly, sir," said the old servant imperturbably.

"What's that?" demanded the doctor, fiercely.

"Hi merely said mind the step, sir," replied the butler blandly.

* * * * *

The news of the discovery of William Brahim's will was hailed with universal satisfaction. Even Mrs. Brahim contrived to carry out the part she had allotted herself so satisfactorily that people began to wonder if they had misjudged her. Always of a generous nature, Violet felt she could afford to be magnanimous, and she invited her aunt to stay in the old house until her uncle's strength was fully restored. Mrs. Brahim thanked her, but as soon as her husband was well enough, she took her departure, assuring all and sundry that she had done a great deal for dear Violet, but the greatest sacrifice of all was in coming to look after things for her while she was ill. It was a most unhealthy place, she declared, and it had undermined her husband's health, caused little Mollie to dwindle almost to a shadow, and as for herself, she felt a perfect wreck. But if she had been of any service to her dear niece she did not regret it.

She left amid scarcely concealed joy, and the butler and housekeeper were left in charge. Mr. Watson and Mrs. Simkin had not been many days in possession, when Mr. Watson made a momentous announcement.

Mrs. Simkin," he said ponderously, "I have been thinking things over, and I have come to a conclusion!"

"Indeed, Mr. Watson, and what may that be?" asked the housekeeper.

"Well, Mrs. Simkin, you and I have always got on well together, in spite of the difference in our upbringings, and it's struck me that it's hardly the thing for you and me to be practically keeping house by ourselves. And so for the sake of propriety, I make bold to suggest as we get wedded!"

"Mr. Watson," said the housekeeper, warmly, "I have a great respect for you, but if you're only asking me for the sake of piety, my answer is, 'No, thank you!'"

"Well, well," said the butler, temporising, "it's not altogether that."

"I don't want no half measures," said the housekeeper, firmly.

"Well, then, Emma," replied Mr. Watson at last, "it's because I love you. And now, having dragged it out of me, you'd better give me a kiss, and no half measures about THAT!"

* * * * *

Violet stayed many months with Mr. and Mrs. Brown, chiefly at their seaside home, and it was not until autumn that they decided to return. Happiness had come back to Violet, and the glow of health had returned to her cheeks. When Jim suggested marrying before returning home, she shyly assented, and it was as a few weeks old bride that she entered the portals of her old home.

Let us take a glimpse of the interior ere the young couple arrived. There is an indefinable atmosphere of brightness everywhere, a feeling of well-being, contentment and happiness pervades the whole place, and the worthy butler combines felicity and dignity to a remarkable degree. The very pictures seem to smile down at one, and as for the master's study, well, that is the brightest spot of all.

"Samuel, man," says Mrs. Watson, "I'm sure that portrait of the master is alive! When I was a-placing of a vase of flowers on the old bureau, ready for our young lady, I happened to look up, and there the master was a-smiling down at me as large as life!"

"I believe you, my love," returned Mr. Watson. "That picture looks very different to what it did when Mrs. Henry was having the time of her life."

Presently the sound of a coming motor puts the whole staff in a flutter. The butler tries to look as dignified as possible, as he flings wide the door, and he and the housekeeper prepare to welcome their new master and mistress. The car curves round the bend, and comes to a standstill, and Violet, regardless of everything, puts her young arms round Mrs. Watson. Jim slaps the butler on the back until the poor fellow is quite breathless, and altogether it is a very pretty, if homely, scene.

Everything passes off without a hitch, and when the young couple have got really settled down, Mr. Watson turns to his wife with a return of the old lofty demeanour.

"My dear Hemma," he says, "how very foolish of you to be crying. Allow me to lend you my handkerchief."

"Nay, nay, Samuel," replies his better half, "you're needing it yourself—you're letting your tears fall right down your waistcoat!"



ELSIE WRIGHT'S great song, "THERE ARE NO DEAD." In keys to suit all voices.

FROM the Caxton Press, Llanfairfechan, comes the preliminary announcement of the publication at an early date of an unconventional novel entitled "The Rosicrucian" by a well-known author and journalist. The author delineates the abnormal mentality of an "atheist who believed in God," and analyses the aberrations of one Egoman, of "The Zodiac"; gives a humorous exposé of "methods adopted by a section of the daily press to delude the credulous public"; also shows how even the alert Zodiac itself was, in turn, egregiously tricked by an alleged wonder-worker, a nefarious "magician." The price will be 4s. 6d.

The Blind Men and the Elephant.

It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the elephant,
Though all of them were blind;
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

The first approached the elephant,
And, happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl,
"God bless me, but the elephant
Is very like a wall."

The second, feeling of the tusk,
Cried, "Ho! what have we here?
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me 'tis mighty clear
This wonder of an elephant
Is very like a spear!"

The third approached the animal,
And, happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hand,
Thus boldly up, and spake:
"I see," quoth he, "the elephant
Is very like a snake."

The fourth reached out his eager hand,
And felt about the knee;
"What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain," quoth he.
"'Tis clear enough the elephant
Is very like a tree."

The fifth, who chanced to touch the ear,
Said, "E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most,
Deny the fact who can.
This marvel of an elephant
Is very like a fan."

The sixth no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope
Than, seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope,
"I see," quoth he, "the elephant
Is very like a rope!"

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long;
Each for his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong.

MORAL.

So oft in theologic wars
The disputants, I ween,
Rail on in utter ignorance
Of what each other mean,
And prate about an elephant
Not one of them has seen!

—J. G. SAXE.



FOR meditation retreat within your own castle and raise the drawbridge.

ALL temptations come from the plane of activity, hence they are of the devil.

LET those who have found the light of wisdom so hold it that those less fortunate may see.

HE who loves money and secures the object of his love hugs destruction without knowing it.

KNOWLEDGE and dishonesty cannot exist in the same person. An education often only refines dishonesty.

Do the Dead Return?

Phenomenon in Psychic Photography.

THE "North Cheshire Herald" says:—

The great Shakespeare well and truly wrote, "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy," and year by year, hour by hour, this is daily evidenced in all directions.

The best brains of the world are ever working out something beneficent to assist humanity in its upward, toilsome march of progress. Hardly a week passes but science blazons forth some new marvel, or religious thought takes a new turn. This is the material side. But there is another. What of the Beyond, and what lies behind the veil? Is it possible to peer behind the curtain of the grave?

In all circles, from the highest to the lowest, this great question is being asked. Some of the greatest pioneers of thought have answered it with a direct negative, and others, again, as positively assert it.

It is a subject in which we are all interested—in fact, a wave of interest in matters Spiritualistic has swept right through the country, embracing all circles and all classes.

Spiritualists are ever seeking and inquiring for the truth. Now, a strange and weird experience befel two well-known Hyde Spiritualists whose integrity and veracity are beyond dispute, and we record the details.

In giving the plain unvarnished story that brought about so strange a manifestation upon a photographic plate, it is not within our province either to explain or yet to theorise.

Others can essay this task, and we will content ourselves with the recording.

Psychic photography, as all the world knows, presents an absorbing study in itself, and few are more interested in it than Mr. J. T. Meal, of Market-street, Hyde, who decided to test the powers of Mr. W. Hope, a well-known photographer, of Crewe, under conditions of the severest kind.

Having fixed up an appointment with this gentleman, Mr. J. T. Meal, journeyed to Crewe in the company of his mother, Mrs. J. H. Meal, and Mrs. McEwen, of Denton, another unimpeachable witness.

Upon arrival at Crewe they were introduced to Mrs. Buxton, who has very largely assisted Mr. Hope in his psychic photographic work. Mr. Meal had brought with him a sealed packet of photographic plates which he had previously purchased in Hyde, which had never been out of his possession afterwards, but had been most jealously guarded. The whole party—which consisted of five people altogether—first had a short seance, and then proceeded into the room where the camera was placed. Next Mr. Meal made a most painstaking and exhaustive examination of the camera, and saw Mr. Hope fix the plates he had brought with him—and which had by the way been privately marked—into the camera. The sitting took place about 2 p.m. on a bright sunny day.

Four exposures were then made, and by way of additional precaution Mr. Meal afterwards accompanied Mr. Hope into the dark room, where the plates were developed under his close scrutiny, and the negatives carefully examined. When the developing was complete there was revealed upon one of the plates the remarkable portrait of Mr. William Johnson as depicted above. We recognise the likeness, for he was an esteemed worker at the "Herald" Office for about forty years. Mr. Johnson passed away on the 1st August, 1914, whilst the photograph was taken at Crewe on the 3rd of May, 1917, nearly three years later.

What is the explanation? Was it thought emanation sent out by the sitters which was so positive in its action

that it was able to impress the sensitive plate? Against this theory the persons photographed deny thinking of Mr. Johnson at that particular moment, whilst the photographer had no knowledge of him.

The sitters believe that Mr. Johnson's spirit was actually present, and was able to impress his image on the sensitive plate when it could not demonstrate his presence through the more material and fleshly veil of those taking part.—"NORTH CHESHIRE HERALD."

NOTE.—Mr. William Johnson was well-known to the Spiritualists of the past forty years. He was one of the strongest propagandists of the North of England, and his bold advocacy earned him the sobriquet of "Sledgehammer Johnson." He sat for many years on the Council of the Spiritualists' National Union, and took the chair at its first annual conference, and was a Director of THE TWO WORLDS up to the time of his decease. Many old Spiritualists will recognise the accompanying photo.

Hypnotic Crime.

By a Psychotherapist.

It is extraordinary how frequently the idea of the hypnotic crime recurs. The latest recrudescence is the story of Grundmann, told a few days ago in a cable from Vienna to "The Daily Mail."

He hypnotises a girl to believe that an eminent mental specialist is responsible for the death of her lover. She visits the professor and threatens his life with an antique blunderbuss. Grundmann is now accused of designs on the girl's mental stability, and also on the professor's life.

I made some experiments on crime under hypnosis and came to certain very definite conclusions. Altogether I have hypnotised some 300 cases, so that I claim that my experience of hypnotism is as good as most people's.

The first experiment was as follows: In a number of cases the subject was given a watch, and told that it was a bomb, and that he wished to throw it. He did so with the greatest readiness, and would no doubt have continued to do so until the supply of watches was exhausted.

He was then given his own watch, knowing it was his own, with similar directions. In only one case did he fling it away. He was ready enough to pretend to do so, but stopped short at sacrificing his own property. The one subject who did smash his watch, immediately on waking asked the operator for the cost of its repair!

A second experiment was made on a man who had a small operation performed under hypnosis. Although the hypnosis was so deep that there was complete anaesthesia, and the knife was not felt at all, a suggestion that he would appropriate a shilling which was dropped into his hand caused him to fling it away with vigorous manifestations of refusal.

A more ambitious experiment was the third. In 20 instances the patient was hypnotised and given a cardboard dagger and told that the operator was his enemy and that he wished to kill him. Invariably he broke the dagger on the operator's chest. Then he was given a real knife and the same story was told to him. At first precautions were taken against accidents, but later it was found perfectly safe to conduct the experiment unarmoured.

Of the 20 cases, not one made any efforts to wound with the real knife. In other words, that portion of consciousness which survives even in the deepest hypnosis quite recognises the difference between the real knife and the cardboard imitation, and can never be persuaded by any suggestion to strike a blow with the former. After this



a variety of experiments were conducted, and it was shown in some 50 different cases that, although the subject would play at murder and commit acts of imaginary dishonesty, the suggestion was ineffective when real weapons or dangers were at hand or real transgressions of the moral code put before him.

If this powerlessness of suggestion to affect the deeper moral issues was generally recognised it would be a good thing for psychotherapy, but a bad thing for the authors of those romances which depend on the so-called mysteries and supernatural powers of hypnosis for their interest and sensations.—“DAILY MAIL.”

Evidences, Probable and Irresistible.

Rev. B. F. Austin, Editor of “Reason.”

ALL the evidence in favour of spirit return very readily falls into two classes: first, the probable evidence, and second, the proof irresistible. Nearly all the lines of evidence must be ranked as merely probable, as furnishing a basis for belief, but failing entirely to completely satisfy the sincere truth-seeker, or justify his claim to knowledge of spirit return.

In this connection it may be proper to state that all of the things men believe and most of the things about which we claim knowledge, rest only on probable evidence. Even in courts of law very few things claimed by attorneys to have been actually proven, have more than probability in their favour. Most of the actions of our lives are based on convictions and beliefs, the evidence for which falls far short of demonstration or logical proof. Even in the sciences in which men are supposed to know, men draw general conclusions from a few isolated facts. So it is not at all surprising that man's attitude toward the future life should be belief rather than knowledge.

Among the lines of evidence which make spirit return a probability and justify man's belief therein, we may mention:

1. The persistent belief of men in all nations and ages in spirit return.
2. The fact that all the great religions have been built upon alleged inspiration, communication and revelation from the spirit realm.
3. The fact that all religions claim the same class of miracles—healing, clairvoyance, clairaudience, clairsentience—as evidence of their divine origin.
4. The fact that the miracle workers, whether known as prophets, seers, apostles, wizards, healers, or poets, evidently have the same general characteristics, forming a class by themselves.
5. Many facts of human history and experience justifying the view that the psychic phenomena are becoming more general and destined to be an endowment of all the race in a fuller state of development.
6. The conversion of scientists, scholars, statesmen, artists, clergymen from former opposition to a firm belief in spirit return.
7. The painstaking care bestowed on the investigation of the psychic phenomena by the Psychic Research Societies of Great Britain and America resulting in the conversion to this belief of men of great intellectual ability and men skilled in the art of observation, fully warrants those who have not had absolute proof in their own experience in saying, “I believe in spirit return.”
8. Yet even the remarkable and astounding testimony of Prof. Robert Hare, of Epes Sargent, of Zollner, of Lombroso, of Flammarion, Crookes, Wallace and Lodge does not warrant a man in saying, “I know spirit return is true,” unless he has had the same or similar evidence in his own life.
9. The spontaneous character of the psychical phenomena, coming to children and to people opposed to Spiritualism, and the marvellous results of mediumship in speech, art, music and writing, furnish strong probable evidence of spirit return.
10. There is just one kind of evidence, and one only, that justifies a man in affirming his knowledge of spirit return, and that is a personal experience in which he gets

irresistible proof of the presence and identity of some departed friend.

This may come in a variety of ways. It may be in face and form, it may be in tone and gesture, it may be in handwriting, it may be in a photograph, it may be in the disclosure of knowledge of some special facts and experiences known only to himself and the departed. When a man gets evidence of this kind, as clear, definite and convincing of the presence and identity of a spirit friend as would justify him in going into court and testifying to his recognition and identification of an earth friend, then he is justified in saying, “I know the so-called dead are living and they can communicate with men in the body.”

This knowledge has happily been mine for a score of years.—“REASON.”

Psychic Recollections of a Sensitive Churchwoman.

Professor Geo. Henslow has requested us to reprint the following from the “International Psychic Gazette” with a view to eliciting from our readers any parallel experiences.

A SENSE OF CONSECRATION.

WHEN I was staying with ——— some years ago, I had intended to go and see the old parish church with the Vicar, who had given much time and study to its history. At the time I went he was, however, unable to accompany me. I therefore went alone, regretting this the more on account of my ignorance of architecture, dates, etc. I walked about admiring it from different points; and on going into the south transept I became aware of a difference in the “atmosphere”; the devotional sense which pervaded the rest of the church was there absent. I left it and tried other parts; everywhere else the sense of its sacred character was quite perceptible. Stepping back into the south transept it was again lost. I tried again and again, always with the same result. It was as if I had gone out of the church straight into the street; it had not even the feeling of a churchyard. I could only think of one explanation: Was it possible that that part was unconsecrated? When I saw the Vicar I told him my experiences, and put the question. He seemed surprised, and asked at what point I perceived the change? Having told him exactly, he said I was perfectly right, that that part of the church had been originally a dwelling place for the priest, and had been thrown into the church at a later date, but had never been consecrated. This was not generally known, and he had only come upon the fact in his study of the history of the building, but had omitted all mention of it from what he had written of the church. No one, so far as he was aware, had ever perceived it before.

A TERRIFIED SENSE OF HORROR.

There was a haunted spot in the plantation at Z. H. Being a nervous child, and liable to “fancied” apparitions, I was not allowed to hear ghost stories, and consequently one about a lady in white, who walked up and down the wall which supported the terrace of the plantation, wringing her hands, had never reached me. When staying at the manor house I used often to go alone into the plantation, and I always felt a terrified sense of horror come over me when I went to this part of it. Disliking cowardice, I used to dare myself to go to the end of the wall along the top, and from there jump down into the field below the terrace and walk back along side it, passing the place of my terror a second time at this lower level. But I am bound to confess that when I had finished my self-appointed programme I took to my heels, thankful to leave the eerie place behind! I was far too much ashamed of my fears to mention the matter till I grew up. Besides, the lady of the manor was an utter disbeliever in all such things, and allusion to them made her really angry. All the same, I learned that that spot had long been known to be haunted.

WE cannot return “borrowed trouble,” hence it is not wise to borrow trouble.

The God Idea.

W. H. Evans.

TO THE Spiritualist, using that term as meaning one who realises in the depths of his inner consciousness the all-pervading Presence throughout Nature, the existence of God is an ever-present reality. For such, the existence of God is not, and, in the nature of things due to his own spiritual experiences, cannot be doubted. He will declare that he knows God exists, but the ever-questioning intellect will demand evidence in support of belief in the existence of God. We must recognise right at the start that it is useless to merely affirm that God is, unless we are prepared to give reasons in support of our contention. Let me be plain. The affirmation that God exists is an hypothesis, a supposition put forward in an attempt to render intelligible the reason for the existence of the universe, and bound up with this hypothesis is the idea that the whole of creative effort presupposes purpose, some end to be achieved.

Starting on this premise we shall do well to consider the origin and development of the God-idea from the earliest times up to the present, and our first question is, "Is the idea of God native to the soul, or is it the result of the operation of reason?" Now it is a singular fact that all evidence points to man having conceived a future life before he conceived of a God. Tribes have been found who had no idea of a god, but there has never been discovered a tribe without some belief in a future life. From this it would seem that the idea of God is not an intuitive perception, but is due to the operation of reason attempting to discover the whys and wherefores of natural phenomena. The same may be said by many in regard to belief in a future life, but no one acquainted with psychic science could accept it in its entirety. And doubtless if we could get at all the causes of these primal beliefs we should find that the psychic element plays an important part in originating the idea of God; and we shall see later that these two conceptions are linked together.

The belief in God falls under three headings. Fetishism, or animism, the belief in particular gods in specific localities; gods who dwell in sticks, stones, rivers and trees, etc., Polytheism, the belief in many separate gods who together form one divine polity or pantheon. Monotheism, the belief in one God.

Fetishism is by some regarded as a degenerate polytheism, though it seems more logical to regard the lower as preceding the higher form of worship. Grant Allen considers that belief in gods arise from "corpse worship." Some idea of the origin of Fetishism may be gleaned from observation of the unfolding mind of the child. It is customary for children to regard all things as alive; to endow everything with their own sentiments and feelings, and will often testify to the primitive belief by kicking anything that hurts them. Even adults will curse anything that happens to be in their way, thus unconsciously testifying to the survival of savage beliefs. If we reflect for a moment on the wonder of motion in the inanimate world, we shall see or at least gain a hint, of how the idea of gods gradually arose.

The primitive mind would not draw any nice distinctions between that which is dead and that which is alive. It would speedily observe that life and motion were associated, and may even come to think of them as synonymous, and so everything that moved, or was moved, would come to be regarded as having life. The wind would be regarded as a mysterious thing, felt but not seen. Something that breathed gently upon one, or rushed with resistless force, sweeping everything in its path. What more natural than that the wind should be regarded as a spirit which, when it breathed gently upon the earth, seemed to be in a good mood; but which had fits of anger, sudden gusts of passion such as primitive minds are subject to, when it blew with resistless fury? The wind, too, would move things, the clouds in the sky, the branches of the trees, and bushes, the tall rushes by river banks, and grasses, water too was in motion, and that was considered to be alive. Then there was the never-ceasing wonder of sun and stars, with their movements through the heavens, the changing of the seasons, when the stars would be in different positions in

the heavens, what more natural than that the different positions of the stars and the change of the seasons should come to be associated? Would not the starry worlds come to be regarded as the abodes of the gods?

Then light and shade would excite curiosity. What was a shadow? A man walked in the shade and there was no shadow, he stepped into the sunlight and lo! it was there close to him; in the morning elongated, at noon dwarfed, and at eventide elongated again. Was this another part of him which was revealed only in bright light? This, coupled with his dreams when he again went over the events of the day, and hunted with his companions who were dead, would give him the idea of a separate existence. And doubtless he would get actual visions, or as we should say, veridical hallucinations, there would be premonitions, warnings, and all the inter-play of psychic forces upon his psychic organism, this in fact being the thread which would bind together many of the diverse experiences of his life, a unifying force which made the whole world to be peopled with ghosts and gods.

Unfortunately those who have so patiently traced the evolution of the idea of God have had no experience of psychic science and have missed one of the most valuable threads of research into the origin of such beliefs. To those of us who have had psychic experiences, it is no wonder that primitive man came to believe in gods, the greater wonder would have been for him with his complex consciousness and power to endow all things in imagination with his own powers, if he had not conceived of gods. For him the whole world was peopled with unseen beings, who could affect him for weal or woe, and every object came to be regarded as the residence of some deity. Thus witchcraft and sorcery would be a natural concomitant of such belief, and propitiatory sacrifices, charms, amulets, mascots, etc., would be a natural flowering of such ideas.

To the primitive man the human body is of great importance. Death is not regarded as something inevitable, because in the majority of cases the cause of death is known, such a thing as natural death being comparatively rare. Death in primitive communities is nearly always violent, and when any member of the tribe did die from natural causes the body was kept, as it was thought the breath or spirit had temporarily left it, and would return. The keeping of the corpse would by gradual processes lead to mummification, and we have here the probable origin of the Christian idea of bodily resurrection. At this stage of development gods as such are unknown, it is ancestor worship, the ghosts of the dead who are worshipped. For example Ellis says of the corpse of a Tahitian chief that it was placed in a sitting posture under a projecting shed; "a small altar was erected before it, and offerings of fruit, food, and flowers were daily presented by the relatives, or the priest appointed to attend the body." "The Central Americans again, as Mr. Spencer notes, performed similar rites before bodies dried by artificial heat. The New Guinea people, as D'Albertis found, worship the dried mummies of their fathers and husbands. A little higher in the scale we get the developed mummy worship of Egypt and Peru, which survives even after the evolution of greater gods, from powerful kings or chieftains. Wherever the actual bodies of the dead are preserved, there also worship and offerings are paid to them." (Grant Allen's "Evolution of the Idea of God.")

The probable origin of the idol and the temple is indicated in the following: "Mr. H. O. Forbes says of the people of Buru, the dead are buried in the forest in some secluded spot marked often by a merang, or grave pole, over which at certain intervals the relatives place tobacco, cigarettes and various offerings. When the body is decomposed, the son or nearest relative disinters the head, wraps a new cloth about it, and places it in the Matakau at the back of his house or in a little hut erected for it near the grave. It is the representative of his forefathers, whose behests he holds in the greatest respect." (Ibid) Here the grave pole indicates the beginning of the idol and the hut the beginning of the "praying house or temple." This preservation of the skull shows that primitive man still regarded it as the residence of the spirit.

"In the private fetish-hut of King Adolee, at Badogry, the skull of that monarch's father is preserved in a clay vessel placed in the earth. He gently rebukes it if his

success does not happen to answer his expectations. Similarly among the Mandaus who place the skulls of their dead in a circle, each wife knows the skull of her former husband or child, and there seldom passes a day that she does not visit it with a dish of the best cooked food. There is scarcely an hour in a pleasant day but more or less of these women may be seen sitting or lying by the skull of their child or husband, talking to it in the most pleasant and endearing language that they can use (as they were wont to do in former days), and seemingly getting an answer." (Ibid.)

It will be seen that there is an entire absence of fear of the corpse, and it is not until burial becomes more common that the feelings towards the corpse become loathsome and repugnant, and also tinged with fear. We must not conclude that because primitive peoples talked to the skulls of their dead and apparently got answers that they actually did get them. It only needs a little observation of children to see how in their games they endow all kinds of objects with their own powers and will talk to them and seem to get a response, while the girl will credit her doll with being able to respond to her affections. The primitive mind is on a level with the child, and is as easily able to play at make believe.

Burial of the dead arose probably through fear that the ghost would return to torment the living. But nature is strong and even at this stage "the desire to ensure" the goodwill of the dead would still carry the idea to further unfolment, and in time the very stones rolled upon the graves to keep the dead from coming out would become the altars of sacrifice.

Another influence contributing to the evolution of the God idea would be the gradual rise in power and distinction of the chief of the tribe and the mergence of the chief into the king. In early stages of civilisation a great king nearly always became a god. He still ruled the people from the invisible world, and sacrifices would be offered to him. His influence on behalf of his people would be sought, and in process of time various gods would lose their distinction and become merged into one overmastering deity. Says Grant Allen, "In these two later stages of thought, with regard to the dead which accompany burial and cremation, the gods, indeed, grow more and more distinct from minor ghosts with an accelerated rapidity of evolution. They grow greater in proportion to the rise of temples and hierarchies. Furthermore, the very indefiniteness of the bodiless ghost tells in favour of an enlarged godship. The gods are thought of as more and more aerial and immaterial, less definitely human in form and nature; they are clothed with mighty attributes; they assume colossal size; they are even identified with the sun, the moon, the great powers of nature. But they are never quite omnipotent during the polytheistic stage, because in a pantheon they are necessarily mutually limiting. Even in the Greek and Roman civilisation it is clear that the gods were not commonly envisaged by ordinary minds as much more than human. It is only quite late, under the influence of monotheism that the exalted conceptions of deity now prevalent began to form themselves in Judaism and Christianity."

We see, then, the important part which the bodies of the dead have played in originating the idea of God; how the cave which the primitive man used to dwell in became his sacred house at his death, being vacated by those who were alive; or how the body was later deposited in some sacred cave or grotto, and at length was placed in a small hut. We thus see how religious influences operated, and how from the cave, the grotto, or the small hut, the church and temple gradually arose. And even at this day we see the burial of the dead in the churches of our land, the highest honour which can be afforded our great dead being burial in Westminster Abbey. How many are there who reflect upon the connection between that and the primitive cave burial?

We are familiar with the fact that it is customary to mark the place of the burial of our dead with a stone, and this is a survival of a custom originating in the dim recesses of antiquity. Originally a stone was placed upon the grave to keep the ghost of the dead man within it, so that he should not come out and annoy his friends. Later the stone became to be associated with the dead man and became an object of reverence, an altar of sacrifice around

which the tribe congregated at certain festivals. Sacred stones have played their part in the evolution of religion, and the world is studded with ancient remains, showing how wide-spread such worship was, Stonehenge being the most classic remains in this country. "Theophrastus tells us one of the characteristics of the superstitious man, that he anoints with oil the sacred stones at street corners and from an ancient tradition embedded in the Hebrew scriptures we learn how the patriarch Jacob set up a stone at Bethel 'for a pillar' and 'poured oil upon it,' as a like act of worship. Even in our day there is a certain English hundred where the old open air court of the Manor is inaugurated by the ceremony of breaking a bottle of wine over a standing stone which tops a tumulus; and the sovereigns of the United Kingdoms are still crowned in a chair which encloses under the seat the ancestral sacred stone of their heathen Scottish and Irish predecessors."

Four well-remembered varieties of early tombstone are recognised in the eastern continent at least, and their distribution and nature is thus described by Major Condor:

"Rude stone monuments, bearing a strong family resemblance in their mode of construction and dimensions, have been found distributed over all parts of Europe and Western Asia, and occur also in India. . . . They include menhirs, or standing stones, which were erected as memorials, and worshipped as deities, with libations of blood, milk, honey or water poured upon the stones; dolmens, or stone tables, free standing (that is, not covered by any mound or superstructure), which may be considered without doubt to have been used as altars on which victims (often human) were immolated; cairns, also memorial, and sometimes surrounding menhirs. These were made by the contributions of numerous visitors or pilgrims, each adding a stone as witness of his presence; finally, cromlechs, or stone circles, used as sacred enclosures or early hyprethral temples, often with a central menhir or dolmen as statue or altar. . . .

"Each of these classes of monuments," Major Condor observes, "has its distinctive name in the Semitic languages, and is frequently mentioned in the early Hebrew literature. The menhir is the pillar of our Authorised Version of the Old Testament, the dolmen is the altar, the cairn is the heap, and the stone circle appears under the names Gilgal and Hazor."

We thus see how our sacred literature bears witness to the lowly origin of many of its rites. The transition from the rude stone to a rudely carved human figure indicates the beginning of the idol as an expression of the subconscious thought which has emerged into waking life, that the spirit of the dead man is resident in or around the stone. There is also the belief that the stone had once been human. Lot's wife being turned into a pillar of salt is one instance that will immediately come to mind. Niobe is another classical instance. Alkmene, the mother of Herakles, was said to have been changed into stone, and the effect which the Gorgon's head is said to have put upon those who looked upon it is another example. There was also the belief that stones could become men, as we see in the myth of Decaulion, the son of Prometheus. It is said that owing to the depravity of the human race, Jupiter determined to destroy it, and sent a flood, all being swept away except Decaulion and his wife, Pyrrha. When the flood subsided they landed upon Mount Parnassus, and being lonely, consulted the oracle of Themis, which told them that they must dig up the bones of their Great Mother, and cast them behind them. This puzzled them, until they remembered that their Great Mother was the earth. So they gathered stones and cast them behind them, and those which were thrown by Decaulion became men, and those thrown by Pyrrha became women. It is also recorded that Prometheus, who it will be remembered stole the sacred fire from heaven, made men out of stones, and the legend that the human race sprang from stones is widespread. Thus we see how the god idea, ghosts, and the creation of men, are closely interwoven.

Sacred stakes, planted over graves, and sacred trees, have also played a by no means unimportant part in the evolution of the god idea, while the sacred groves of the Druids are quite familiar ideas to us. It would take us too far to go into more detail, what has been given us set the student upon the track of an interesting study.

It is indeed wonderful to reflect how from such lowly beginnings there gradually grew up the idea of one Omnipresent Deity. But we see that the growth of the god-idea is commensurate with the evolving consciousness of mankind. The more refined men became, the more sublime became their religious conceptions, the crude ideas of former times becoming sublimated, until purged of their gross we have the lofty and pure concept of an Omnipresent God who is the creative power operative in the universe. Let it be clearly understood that all religious ideas are the outcome of man's growing consciousness, plus the inspiration that comes to him from the other world. And it will be noted that the inspiration that comes is always proportioned to the intellectual capacity of the recipient. Not that the recipient may always realise the significance of what he receives, but there must be in him some correspondence with the inspiration he gets. That is why men fashion their gods like unto themselves. Man creates God in his own image, clothes him with his own attributes, and endows him with his own qualities. God as generally conceived is divinised man.

Having outlined the evolution of the God Idea, we now turn and ask that more important question, does God exist? For we must not suppose that because the idea is old that it necessarily corresponds to an essential fact. The critical mind will demand other grounds for belief in God than those we have covered.

One writer has said, that if God did not exist we should have to invent him. He meant that the phenomena of the universe was not understandable without such a postulate. This brings us back to the question, is the universe the result of blind unmindful law, or of conscious and directed effort? Now, whatever opinions men may have relative to this question, they all concede that we dwell in a universe of law. At its lowest law may be defined as an expression of the nature of matter. It is the nature of matter to act in certain ways and it does so. So consistent is this that we unhesitatingly shape our lives accordingly. And wherever we turn we find that law ramifies every part of the universe.

Now some will say that if there is a law there must be a law maker. Not necessarily so, we must not reason from the analogy of the arbitrary laws man makes for his government and apply it to the universe. The laws of the universe are inherent in it; the laws of man are enactments imposed from without. And we find that the laws of nature act with absolute impartiality, the earthquake makes no distinctions and swallows the just and the unjust alike. A snake will as soon bite the heel of a good man as of a bad man, given the provocation; good morals will not save a man from the jaws of a shark if he fall into the sea and such be there. The law of gravity will smash the good man equally with the bad one. Laws in nature are relentless, and make no distinctions between good and bad. And they act with a regularity and precision which is the marvel of mankind. The universe is our time-piece and man sets his clock by the sun.

Another argument urged against the existence of God is that of the vastness of the universe. Now the galactic universe to which we belong is not infinite, and is said to be of determinable magnitude. But that magnitude is so vast that it is to the average mind inconceivable. Some idea of its magnitude may be gained when we reflect that it takes the light from the ring nebula in Lyra, travelling at the velocity of over 12,000,000 miles a minute, 30,000 years to reach us. It may even be more, and the atheist cannot conceive of any mind controlling such a vast machine. The error arises from a false analogy due to our anthropomorphic ideas of God. We cannot conceive of a human mind governing and controlling such a universe and when God is conceived of in human terms, the argument that God is outside the universe governing it is absurd. We see the necessity for recasting our ideas of God.

Then again there is the existence of evil. How, asks the critic, can we believe in God who Religion says is Love, who yet permits all the sin, misery and sorrow which we see around us? Would not a loving God destroy the source of sin and sorrow, and do all possible to make his children happy? And, if he is almighty, and can therefore do it, if he wished, yet does not, what can we think of a being who is so callous that he allows sin and suffering to riot in the

world? It must be admitted that the ordinary religious conceptions of God fail us here. There is no means of reconciling the existence of evil in the world with the conception of an infinitely loving God. Let us then seek deeper and ask, are the usual religious conceptions correct? or are there other ways of looking at this question which will clear the mists from our eyes?

Having glanced at the conception of law and order in the universe, its vastness, and the existence of evil in our world, let us now inquire further respecting the nature of matter, its origin, and the manifestation of consciousness as expressed in the higher forms of life.

These researches of science have revealed to us that, wonderful as is the vastness of the universe, the infinitesimals are equally wonderful. From the time of Leucippus who taught a very complete theory of atoms, and after him Democritus (460 B.C.) down to the time of John Dalton (1804-8), who established the atomic hypothesis upon an experimental basis, it was considered that all matter was made up of atoms, which was thought to be the limit of divisibility. Some idea of the size of the atom may be gleaned by the following description. If a drop of water were magnified to the size of the earth, the atoms composing it would appear of a size somewhere between a small shot and a cricket ball. An atom is matter in the sense that although not visible, it partook of all those qualities which we are acquainted with in the mass. To-day the atom is no longer regarded as indivisible, but is split up into electrons and ions, and matter is by some regarded as being electrical in origin. Whether or no, the discovery of radium has led the scientific world nearer to the confines of the invisible, and the ether which enwraps every orb and fills all space is considered the primal stuff out of which worlds are made. So convinced was Haeckel of the existence of the ether that he makes positive assertions relative to it, though he does not give up his belief in spirit. "You cannot have spirit without matter," he says, "or matter without spirit. Matter is infinitely extended substance, and spirit is sensitive and thinking substance, these are the two fundamental attributes or principal properties of the all-embracing divine essence of the world, the universal substance." It requires no stretch of imagination nor is it difficult to conceive of consciousness inherent in this substance. "God is substance," says Dr. A. J. Davis, and we have to postulate that motion, energy, life, consciousness, and all form are inherent in that substance. Conceived of in this way, God becomes the essential and basic fact of the universe; the primal and original cause of all things. We cannot regard him in the anthropomorphic sense, yet as Spencer wrote, "Though the attributes of personality as we know it cannot be conceived by us as attributes of the Unknown Cause of things, yet duty requires us neither to affirm nor to deny personality, but to submit ourselves in all humility to the established limits of our intelligence, in the conviction that the choice is not between personality and something lower than personality, but between personality and something higher; and that the ultimate Power is no more representable in terms of human consciousness than human consciousness is representable in terms of a plant's functions."

We can see by this that the moral problem is capable of solution, God is seen to be immanent, he lives in the universe. "At the roaring loom of time I ply, and weave for God the garment thou seest him by," says the Time Spirit in "Faust." The universe is the living mantle of God, and all its phenomena are due to His operations. The ever evolving and ever expanding consciousness of man is continually drawing contrasts between higher and lower conditions, and these contrasts are called the problem of evil. Actually speaking, apart from our human consciousness good and evil do not exist. It is our relationship to the universe and to each other which causes us to regard good and evil as a problem. The laws of the universe as we have seen act impartially, and freedom can only come by acting in accordance with them. Given absolute obedience to the laws of being, we have health, and all the joy which flows therefrom, disobedience brings disease and death, and this is true in all man's relationships. As the problem of evil is a human one, man must solve it.

Consciousness has been regarded as the "central mystery of psychology." One cannot regard it as having ori-

ginated, but as having always been. It is an inherent quality of the primal substance out of which the universe has evolved. It is the one great fact of human life which reveals more to us of the primitive power than any other. It sums up all intellectual developments, intuitions and instincts. It is the completed arc of all subsistence and existence. It holds within its depths wonders that we have not even dreamed of, and the revelations of the mysterious regions called the subliminal show how far it goes beyond our usual waking experiences. Without this quality there could have been no belief in gods, ghosts, or a future life, they would none of them have been needed. The universe would have been dead. It is this central fact of life which evolutionists in this realm of research have ignored. And when we add the psychic qualities with which we are now familiar, we begin to see something of the directivity in every operation of nature. It may be true that to say that God acts for a purpose or to achieve some end is the negation of his infinitude, for that must presuppose absolute completeness, yet we cannot shut our eyes to the facts which we see around us on every hand, how that every operation in Nature presupposes some given end or purpose. In fact purpose seems to be inherent in the universe, and when we regard the present evolving consciousness of man with all the wonderful powers that he is discovering, we cannot help but think that from the Universal substance down to the humblest thing that crawls there is a complete chain of being, each link in that chain being a specialised development of that Universal Substance. That through varying stages of growth and evolution they have developed, that in the ages before us there have been numberless universes which have been born, grown old, and died, and that out of them have evolved beings such as us who are now the agents, co-workers, with God, who are working towards a higher evolution. One may liken this process to progressive waves of evolution, each flowing higher than the preceding one. We thus have the Infinite One who is manifest in the many, inconceivable to us, but who is the origin and source of all that is, bearing to all a definite relationship and in this sense it may be regarded as the parent of all. But the term Fatherhood as referring to God the Absolute must be shorn of all anthropomorphic limitations.

The Radiation of Truth.

Re Messages from Professor Faraday.

THERE continues to be a wide spread and deep interest in Spiritualism in the North. All our meeting places are filled with attentive listeners, and the great difficulty is to find an adequate supply of qualified speakers. Seghill is near Newcastle-on-Tyne, and our adherents there have found it necessary to secure a hall; and recently Mr. W. H. Robinson opened it. There was a large and appreciative audience.

Mr. Robinson's subject was "The Radiation of Truth," and in the course of an admirable address in which, as illustrative of his topic, he reviewed at considerable length the Faraday spiritual messages, given through an American medium and published in tract form. At the onset he mentioned that Faraday was connected by marriage with a Newcastle family, and could often be met on their town moor enjoying the invigorating breezes. He was an elder in the Sandimanian church, and a devout and pious Christian, and it was related that when taunted by any scientific advocate for his adherence to such an out of date church, he replied that the teachings of the Nazarene transcended in importance and utility studies in external nature.

During 1866 Faraday attracted the world's attention by his experiments in relation to Spiritualism. He believed that unconscious pressure by those attending the seance accounted for the phenomena. The manifestations then were of a very elementary character, and Faraday's explanation was of no value whatever. In the messages Faraday had transmitted from spirit life, he admitted his former errors, and stated he was striving to make clear to mankind on earth the laws governing spiritual communication. The sensorium is the magnetic battery whereby the vital element

is obtained from air, food, and the so-called imponderables, and so refined as to be capable of subserving the highest powers of the mind.

Whenever two spirits were able to unite their thoughts, then the one who should be resident in the flesh reflected the will and ideas of the inspiring person, in proportion as the former was passive. This sensitiveness to spirit magnetism while lying at the root of "control," also often occasioned much irregular action and seeming contradiction in genuine operations. Thus failures were incident to all attempts in spirit intercourse. The medium to-day might be in perfect harmony, while to-morrow his organism might be utterly unable to transmit the thought desired.

Everyone should, therefore, be cautious in accepting any statement coming through a channel of this character; and legendary or sacred traditions demanded the keenest scrutiny. If the scripture consisted of views of a passage, recorded by the mediums of that age, it could not be of absolute authority unless the "word" dealt with basic spiritual principles which were eternally true. Opinions, dogmas and historic facts were of no enduring value. It might be asked of what practical benefit to humanity was it to seek truth through this very fallible channel? First, it opened the door to a comprehension of the law of immortality; second, it demonstrated this truth—that individuality was not altered by transition; and third, it gave to the mind dwelling in the earth sphere the true secret of the means of eternal progress.

Faraday proceeded in his message: "The wisdom circles of the spirit world are making great efforts to impress you with some knowledge of spirit life and of the true path of spiritual progress, while you are living in the earthly form. This task has been, but dimly comprehended by the most advanced minds upon earth at the present date. Knowledge of spirit life is best acquired by training the intellectual faculties to a high degree of perception and reflection, and by close observance of the laws of mental culture. Spiritual laws forbid excess of the animal impulses, and insist on strongly subordinating them to the mental powers, and it was true that the spiritual faculties are so cramped during earthly life that, in many instances, they never respond to the force of ideas of a spiritual nature.

"Myriads consequently live and die with the morbid bias of animal notions, and surpass but little the brutes in actual spiritual status, although the humans have capacity latent which in ages to come in spirit life will bring them out of that condition. Myriads, therefore, there are in the other life in quest of knowledge, while other myriads are yet bound by ignorance. They cannot emerge from the latter condition save by individual effort, which should have been exerted in earth life."

Thus, remarked Mr. Robinson, their ascended brother had given, in his communications, a fair criticism of the difficulties encountered in spirit intercourse, and the path was just being opened out. To-day as they saw by the correspondence in the "Daily News" on "The Fall," there was a quest for true knowledge. Many in the theological field, taking part in the discussion, "trimmed," that was, they were on both sides, or—as the Americans called it—were "sitting on the fence." With the "fall" went the scapegoat doctrine, and thereby made room for the formula of true salvation, which, in A. J. Davis's "Spiritual Philosophy," ran: "Absolute purity of the heart and life is the richest human possession; and perfect obedience to the highest attractions of the soul is the only means of its attainment." We all thus had "to work our passage." The view restored to man his moral faculties; gave him more stimulus to effort; bestowed on him the privilege to praise.

Who helped the evolution on, and who retarded it? They who helped it on helped everything on; every member felt the thrill, every particle tingled with the glow. They who retarded it kept everything back, caused depression in all parts of the system, and deadened the springs of life. The sect represented a jagged fragment of humanity, not a rounded whole, however small; and the moral ideal it held up was anything but beautiful.

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