

LITERATURE AND LOGIC OF "THE INTERIOR."

A LITTLE while ago, the heading of this article would have conveyed no definite idea to the mind of the reader. By "*the interior*" he might have understood that department of the general government now in charge of Mr. Stewart, of Virginia; if of a bilious habit, "the interior" would have suggested thoughts of the digestive organs; and if sanguine in temperament, it might have indicated the space within the crust of our globe, as demonstrated in the theory of the half-crazy Symmes. Now, however, the phraseology is well understood. "The interior" is the expressive phrase by which is designated the abode of departed spirits. Its localities have been described, its boundaries marked out, its various "spheres" explained. In fact, there is more dogmatic teaching relative to "the interior," and those who believe have more positive information about it than can possibly be gathered from the pages of geographers relative to the surface of this little planet on which we dwell. We have, moreover, abundant specimens of the literature of that well-described realm. Its logic is transferred to material types. Not only prose, but poetry, professedly therefrom, may be had in quantities equal to the demand. There are papers and periodicals devoted to nothing else,—weekly, semi-weekly, and quarterly,—terms two to three dollars per annum, payable in advance. For those whose appetites cannot be satisfied with less than a full meal at once, there are also bound volumes, goodly in size, and closely printed. The price, of course, is considerably more than you pay for books of the same size on mere mundane topics, and the typographical errors are rather more numerous.

The growth of this species of literature has been rapid in the extreme. We know nothing in the natural world with which to compare it. The *Victoria regia*, which, by its amazing developments, drove the Duke of Devonshire's gardener to the invention which resulted in the Crystal Palace, grew at a snail's pace in comparison. Indeed, by those who forget the Millerite excitement, and are ignorant of Mormon statistics, the extension of this species of literature, and the greediness with which it is swallowed, will appear almost incredible.

In tracing it from its origin to its present gigantic developments, we confine ourselves to the publications of professed "mediums,"—a word employed to designate individuals who are used by the spirits to convey their sentiments, their poetry and prose, to those yet in the body.

About four years ago, in the house of a Mr. Michael Weekman, in the town of Arcadia, in Wayne County, New-York, were heard, at intervals, sundry mysterious noises. Mr. Weekman was at first terribly frightened. He and his family, however, soon became accustomed to the rappings, which were followed by sundry fantastic tricks, such as the moving of tables, the displacing of chairs, and the breaking of crockery by some invisible power. This was the germ from which has grown this gigantic tree. Other accounts of its origin have been given, but they are entitled to no credit. A work entitled "Explanation and History of Mysterious Communion with Spirits," by E. W. Capron and H. D. Barrow, published at Auburn, establishes this fact, and will satisfy the reader that the thing did really emanate from Mr. Weekman. In process of time, this same house was occupied by a Mr. J. D. Fox, who had two daughters, cunning girls, just verging upon womanhood. Their names were Catharine and Margaretta. To them belongs the glory of making the knockings available. Weekman, in his weakness, never dreamed of turning them to personal or pecuniary profit; but the Foxes discovered the method of rendering intelligible the knockings which had hitherto been "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." By raps, made of course only in their presence, questions were answered on subjects of which the girls were ignorant. These answers were frequently incorrect; but then they were sometimes right, which of course was deemed conclusive evidence that a communication with "the interior" had been opened. In a short time other persons, in different parts of the country, entered upon the same line of business; in fact, mediums sprang up like mushrooms. The old freaks of making pokers dance, and smashing looking glasses, and frightening children,—a very mean employment for denizens of any sphere,—went out of fashion. The letters of the alphabet—our English alphabet; for all the spirits, Greek, German, and Hindoo, seem

to understand English—came into use. The "medium," beginning with A, points to the letters successively. When the right one is touched, a rap is heard, and so on until the word is complete, and thus information from the interior is communicated.

As in the method of the Fox girls, however, erroneous answers are frequently given even by the alphabetic process. The faith of the true disciple is not at all shaken thereby, for nothing is easier than to account for mistakes; as, for instance, the spirit who gave the reply was an ignoramus from a lower sphere, or his rap was not rightly interpreted, or he did not understand the question. A Mr. A. Munson published at Auburn what he entitled, with admirable propriety, a "Simple Narration." He visited a Mrs. Cooper, and after witnessing several strange sights, such as the poisoning of a table on two castors at an elevation of fifteen or twenty degrees, the moving of that table toward him, the said Munson, and its moving back again, of course by spiritual agency, for he says, "Mrs. Cooper and myself were the only persons in the room that tabernacled in the flesh," a call for the alphabet was made. It was accordingly produced, and Mr. Munson informs us, "Among other questions asked and responded to were the following:—Be you my guardian spirit? Answered affirmatively. How long have you been my guardian spirit? Answer. *Five years.* Are you the spirit of my mother? Answered in the affirmative by a single rap, which was the sign agreed upon for an affirmative response to my questions." Now Mr. Munson's mother had not been dead *one year*. Of course there was a mistake somewhere. It might have been accounted for by supposing they measure time differently in "the interior;" but Mr. Munson says that although "it was beyond controversy that a falsehood had been communicated," and he told Mrs. Cooper that it was a falsehood, "I returned to my home under a strong impression that the dark side of this investigation would be made luminous, and that the apparent jargon would be made plain." And so it was. Some months afterward, Mr. Munson, as a reward for his desperate docility, was favored with another interview with a medium. After a few preliminary questions, "I said," continues this simple narrative,

"I understood you to say you had been my guardian spirit five years. She replied: I did not answer that question. It was answered by a spirit in the second sphere. He did it to deceive you and prevent you from believing in spirit manifestations." Mr. Munson was of course abundantly satisfied.

The mode of communicating by "rappings" was found, at length, to be liable to many objections, especially on the part of those more skeptical than Mr. Munson. A Mr. H. R. Park, of the town of Scott, in Cortland County, N. Y., undertook to answer these objections. We give the whole of his reply to the assertion that the Bible nowhere talks of this knocking. "It says," Mr. Park tells us, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock;" and "whosoever cometh and knocketh, open to him immediately." This latter "quotation" appears to have been manufactured for the purpose; the former savors of blasphemy in this connection. The residents in "the interior" were ashamed of their apologist, and by the better informed among them rapping has been voted vulgar.

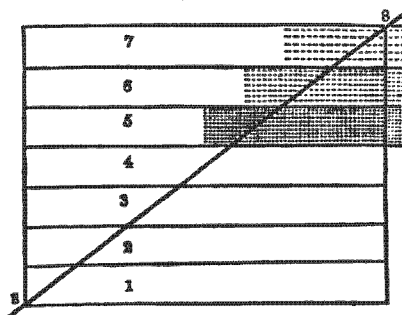
Now the new era dawns upon us. It was not a very great stretch of intellectual capacity that revealed the fact that by the same power by which spirits can rap and cause material things to dance at their pleasure, they might be able to take a man's hand and write. The invention, however, is attributed to Dr. Franklin, who, it seems, pursues his philosophical inquiries in "the interior." Thus it is written in the "New Leaf" for February, 1852, a periodical published in the city of New-York:—"Franklin seems to have had much to do in the work of originating and operating the new Spiritual Telegraph. He still appears to exercise the functions of his old office, (Postmaster General,) having, however, instead of assistants and deputies, numerous friends, who conform to his wishes so far as their wills and perceptions coincide with his—such being the basis of all spiritual co-operation." Well, according to this we shall never know how much the world is yet to be indebted to the good old doctor. He is now, according to the last advices, only in the third sphere. If he ever reaches the *seventh*, of which there is no more reason to doubt than that he is now in the *third*, there is absolutely no telling what

he will do, for it must be observed that progression from a lower to a higher sphere gives an immense accession of knowledge and power. It is only fair to tell the reader, however, that the reports relative to Franklin's *locale* are somewhat contradictory. Which sphere he is really in is a disputed point. From the periodical already quoted we make an extract, which gives an insight into the geography of "the interior," and explains the reason why the old philosopher may have contradicted himself in the numerous revelations he has made. The editor says, "*This article was dictated by a spirit, Feb. 8, 1852.*"

"When we tell you that yet very few who once inhabited earth have attained the third sphere—undergone the third phenomenon of birth—you may think that the inhabitants of this sphere are most of them either ignorant in regard to spheregnostics, or have willfully deceived you in regard to this matter. There are many here who know little or nothing respecting spheres, and who suppose, from no promptings of vanity, that they have attained the highest or nearly the highest human elevation possible—the spheres which they so minutely have depicted being a distinction of grades, or classes in *this sphere*, which possess no more distinct lines of demarkation than do the different societies of your sphere.

"Reflection and every-day experience can but evince to your minds, that in your sphere there is no absolute number of societies. A certain number may, perhaps, seem to delineate the number of societies which would be most readily and generally perceptible. One may make forty or a hundred classifications or societies in one sphere, and be as much right as he who makes but three or seven. A diagram will illustrate to you more fully and forcibly this idea.

SPHERE.



"Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 are in the spaces, which are intended as a representation of a sevenfold division of a sphere—8-8 is the line of progress. The dotted lines represent a more minute division, which may be, in truth, intramultiplied until it leaves a separate society for each individual; for no two individuals ever at one time inhabited precisely one plane of de-

velopment, as such an event can but result in the coalescence or unity of the two into one."

This ought to satisfy a reasonable inquirer, and is as conclusive as anything could be that the contradictory statements to which we have alluded must have come from persons "ignorant in regard to *spheregnostics*," which seems to be a very difficult science. In fact, these circles are so "*intramultiplied*" that very few of the inhabitants of "the interior" can describe their "*plane of development*," which, in our vernacular, means—they don't know where they are.

The process whereby individuals become "*mediums*,"—by which, in this advanced stage of progress, you are not to understand mere rappers, but links in Franklin's Spiritual Telegraph,—is very simple. It is described in the books with minute accuracy. Even a fool may comprehend and practice the directions, as has been made manifest in all parts of the country, there being now "not less than a thousand mediums in these United States," some of them of the first water.

A man by the name of *Hammond* ranks among the most highly favored. We incline to give him the first place; at any rate, he has made most money by publications to which he has the shrewdness to give most startling and *ad captandum* titles. Of course everybody would like to see, when satisfied of its being the real thing, "The Pilgrimage of THOMAS PAINE to the Sixth Circle in the Spirit-World, by Rev. Charles Hammond, Medium.—Written by the Spirit of Thomas Paine." The price, "bound in muslin, is seventy-five cents." It is a dingy, shabbily-printed little volume; dear, were it on mere mundane topics, at a quarter of a dollar. It had a most extensive sale, and was soon followed by another book, similar in size and appearance, price also "seventy-five cents in muslin." We copy the title-page entire:—"LIGHT FROM THE SPIRIT-WORLD, comprising a series of articles on the Condition of Spirits, and the Development of Mind in the Rudimental and Second Spheres. Written wholly by the control of Spirits, without any volition or will by the medium, or any thought or care in regard to the matter presented by his hand.—C. HAMMOND, Medium." In his introduction, bearing date Rochester, October 31st, 1851, he advises the reader

that the spirits have suggested a desire to use him in the preparation of another volume, which is to go still deeper into the abyss. "When it is written," he says, "it will be published,"—of which we have no doubt.

This Mr. Hammond was, we understand, a clergyman of the Universalist persuasion. He is yet, for aught we know, although in later publications he has the grace to drop his reverend prefix. We have his own testimony to his perfect honesty of purpose, and staunch fidelity to his employers, who are, he says, four spirits, with two of whom he was acquainted while they were in the exterior, and the others belonged to a former generation. But the reader shall have Mr. Hammond's own declarations. "The book," *Light from the Spirit-World*, "was written without any will or volition, except that I consented to sit, and let my hand write as it was controlled by spirits; and as it was written by them, so I have caused it to be published. Not a word or sentence have I changed from the manuscript as they prepared it for the printer. The writers of this book are well satisfied, as they inform me; and what satisfies spirits I have no reason to complain of myself."

But for this declaration on the part of the medium, we should have had no hesitation in giving it as our opinion, from internal evidence, that the entire volume proceeded from one and the same mind. There is, throughout, a wonderful similarity of style; and the reputed authors, if not in the "same plane of development," are certainly very equally matched in intellectual calibre. This refers to the volume entitled "*Light from the Spirit-World*." As to "*Paine's Pilgrimage*," it puzzles us still more. The author of "*The Age of Reason*," whatever may have been his faults, knew how to write the English language. His style was nervous and concise. He was not only intelligible, but his readers could not misunderstand him. If he had written in the style, slip shod, ungrammatical, confused, in which the medium gives us his productions from "the interior," his books would have done no mischief. They would never have had a second perusal. A worthless, drunken scoundrel as he was, there was a time when Tom Paine would have blushed at the thought of being the author of such a farrago: and how it is

possible that he could have thus dictated to the Rev. Charles Hammond, utterly passes our comprehension.

We copy a few rays of "Light" from the "*Spirit-World*," as a specimen of its style, and of the information to be obtained from Mr. Hammond's book. We make our extract at random; for the volume is pervaded by such a sameness, such a dead level of flatness and inanity, that there is no room for ingenuity in the selection. After reading the few sentences which follow, you will come to the same conclusion we did after wading through the entire volume: "There needs no ghost come from the grave to tell us this." Our extract is from the chapter or section on "Wisdom:"—

"Wisdom is wisdom. All is not wisdom. All is not folly. Wisdom wills good. Folly wills otherwise. One is right. One is wrong. Wisdom will do right. Folly will do wrong. He, that is wise, let him take heed. He who is unwise, let him get wisdom. And let him get it where it is to be found. Let him not seek for it in the folly of fools, but in men of understanding, in spirits commissioned by God, to give light to those who grope in darkness. Let him cast off the shackles, tear asunder the false robes, rend the galling chains, and burst the bonds that enslave his captive soul. Let him launch his mind into the stream of wisdom flowing from the mountain of God, and bathe in the limpid waters, that he may be healed.

"Wisdom is not selfish. Wisdom is not partial. Human wisdom is both. Men are considered wise, but their wisdom is comparatively foolishness. Men are wise only as they gain knowledge. Men are unwise when they neglect what they need to make them wise. Men are wise when they do good—unwise when they do evil. Men are wise in what they know—unwise in what they do not know. Knowledge of God is wisdom. Knowledge is power. Knowledge is good. Knowledge will save. Knowledge will cure. Knowledge will do what ignorance can not do. Hence knowledge of God is the wisdom of God, the power of God, and the goodness of God. Neither could wisdom exist without God."—*Light from the Spirit-World*, pp. 39, 40.

Space is not allowed us, in the present article, to notice other bound volumes of the literature of "the interior." It is peculiarly rich in *periodicals*, to which we must pay a little attention. The place of honor among those before us is due to a quarto sheet, the first number of which bears date Auburn, N. Y., June 5th, 1851. It is issued semi-monthly, and is called "*The Spiritual and Moral Instructor*." The editor is J. S. Hyatt; but the principal contributor is the Rev. J. L. Scott, a

clergyman of very liberal views, an ultra-universalist. He has no *church* yet, but preaches in the City Hall at Auburn, and wherever else he can get an opportunity. His sermons, the editor says, "are *inspired* at the time of their delivery, and are not a subject of premeditation, the texts being communicated to him by Paul, through the rappings immediately before or at their commencement." They are taken down by one of his hearers from his lips, and published in the "Instructor." The sermons, those of them we have had the patience to read, are such as might be expected under the circumstances,—illogical, bombastical, and at times blasphemous. The suggestion of the texts, the reader will observe, is said to be by Paul. The preacher does not venture to charge the sentiments of his discourses upon the Apostle, in which, as we shall see presently, he is far in the rear of some others of his kidney. To very little purpose, as it seems to us, are the *texts* given; that of almost any one of the sermons might as well be prefixed to another, and any passage from Genesis to Revelation would be just as applicable to the majority. We give the introductory passages of one of these published discourses from No. 5 of the *Spiritual and Moral Instructor* :—

"The noble powers of mind, how much debased to the production of thought bemeaning to its purposed dignity!

"Mind, the quickening principle of which originates in God, and is designed to range the majestic universe, to gather strength from every dropping sand within its sphere, from the contemplation of every moving atom in the vastness of unmeasured space, from the animating principle of every living thing, from the lot and mollusca, through the ascending degree of higher life and expanding intellectuality, to the flaming seraph who attends the Creator at his throne, in man is wounded by the deadly and demoralizing nature of sin against goodness, and is thus prevented its lofty ascent, and being impelled in pursuit of fancy pearl, by the motive force of evil is rendered a penal slave to vice, prejudice, and vain ambitious life. Hence from its secret chambers is poured forth a chaotic mass of garbled vindictive imprecations, terminating in oppressions, ambitious cruelties, and the catalogue indicative of a mind in perfect wreck, driven and dashed against the fatal rocks that rend in sunder the noble form, and despoil the garnished palace of the human soul.

"Mind, designed to harmonize in its own movements, and in ascension wing its way through portals of wisdom, bearing along by attraction the weaker elements around, is crushed and welters in gore at the base of the mountain of sin, and tending to the dark abyss,

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drags with it that embraced by the power of its influence."

This is a fair specimen of the style of this reverend gentleman, and of the important truths of which he claims to be the medium of communication. To us, notwithstanding the editor's assertion relative to the suggestion of texts and the inspiration of the preacher, Mr. Scott seems always foggy, frequently bewildered, and at times maudlin. By the way, as we learn from a letter in "The New-York Tribune," there is another gentleman who professes occasionally to receive "texts" from departed spirits. His name is BALLOU. The account is given in a letter signed E. A. Lukens, dated June 17th, 1851, and has been copied extensively by periodicals devoted to the literature of "the interior." It seems from the narrative that Mr. Ballou was in a "circle." By means of the alphabet, the spirit asked him, "Have you a subject for next Sunday?" Curious, was it not, that the spirit instead of *answering* should *ask* questions—should become, instead of a rapper, a rappee. Mr. Ballou replied that he had no subject for the next Sunday. The spirit then said, "I want you to preach from 1 Cor. ii, 12, 13." Mr. Ballou thanked the spirit, and prepared the sermon. But the most wonderful part of the story remains. The spirit had requested a light table to be placed in front of the preacher, that during the sermon he might give evidence to Mr. Ballou's entire congregation of his presence and agency. By some means this reasonable request was forgotten; but, says Mr. Lukens, who was an eye-witness :—"A large desk stood there, where the books, slates, &c., used in school during the week, were stowed for the Sabbath, and several times it was lifted and moved by an invisible power. The good spirit, whose reasonable request to have a light table to move had not been attended to, lifted the heavy desk in pure desperation of earnestness and love."

Of course Mr. Lukens had not the most remote suspicion that Ballou had any agency, direct or indirect, in these fantastic desecrations of the Sabbath; and in the simplicity of his heart he adds, much in the style of a greenhorn, after witnessing the feats performed by Anderson the magician,—"*It was a rare and impressive scene; I shall not soon forget it.*"

"*The Spiritual Telegraph*" is the name of a weekly paper published in this city. The first number was issued on the 8th of May last. Its typography is unexceptionable, and it is printed on good paper. It obtained a subscription list of over six thousand in three weeks, and affords a handsome revenue to the publisher and to the Rev. S. B. Brittan, of Bridgeport, who exercises the functions of editor. It is the organ of "the New-York Conference for the Investigation of Spiritual Phenomena," and contains reports of their sayings and doings. This conference is composed of men and women, most of them, so far as we know, of fair standing in the community, but evidently credulous in the extreme, with the bump of marvelousness largely developed. It is just as clear that there are among them two or three consummate knaves, who pull the wires and render the meetings interesting. The publisher of "*The Spiritual Telegraph*" is of course always present, and so is a Dr. Hallock, who acts as secretary.

More and more astounding are the developments from "the interior," as discussed in this Conference, and published in the "*Telegraph*" from week to week. At the first meeting of which we have an account, Dr. Hallock read a letter from a namesake of his, a Quaker, who went into "the interior" some thirty years since. Dr. Hallock said the medium by whom this communication was made was a girl about fifteen, who knew nothing about Quakers or Quakerism. We quote the concluding sentences:—"The Bible, a great part of it, would be right, if people would only give it the right construction. When the Bible was translated into English, it was misconstrued; then I judge great mistakes were made in that operation. There is, I think, a great many good things in it; so I *think* part of it must have been translated wrong."

Most sapient spirit! You "think" there is a great many good things in the Bible; and therefore, O most logical spirit,—therefore, because a great many good things is in it,—you *think* part of it must have been translated wrong! Verily, your logic is on a par with your grammar!

From the pages of "*The Spiritual Telegraph*" we might quote a multitude of similar illustrations of the most greedily-

swallowed absurdities. There is a letter, purporting to come from John Calvin, of which the Genevan Reformer would have been utterly ashamed; and John Wesley is represented as the author of some of the veriest trash, ungrammatical and illogical, to say nothing now of the doctrines, that ever came from the brain or the pen of a demented transcendentalist. We may not occupy space, nor tax the reader's patience with illustrations. A specimen, said to be from Dr. Adam Clarke, through W. Boynton, who calls himself a writing-medium, will illustrate the transparency of the hoax and the grossness of the delusion. The article is headed, "*The Doctrine of Affinity*," and bears in full the signature of the learned commentator. It begins thus:—

"When we consider the doctrine of affinities, we are led, at once, to account for what we behold in the world of nature. We see why one substance adheres to another; why one form of matter becomes blended and assimilated with another. The doctrine is worthy the thought of the profoundest philosopher.

"We behold why there exists so much discord, uneasiness, and such differences among different species of animals, and different kinds of matter; why some plants cannot grow and flourish in the vicinity of others; why some animals cannot dwell together; and also why a higher order of animals cannot enjoy each other's society. This is all explained by the laws of affinities, as seen in nature.

"It is a fact, beyond successful contradiction, that all pairs are not mates. Because a man or woman is a parent, there is not of necessity an affinity with the children; because two persons are brothers or sisters, there is not, necessarily, an affinity between them; but observation proves, that though there is the same blood coursing through their veins, it does not follow that there is an affinity of mind or feeling. Neither must we infer, because two are wedded according to law, that they have an affinity for each other. Facts are in the way of such an idea.

"There are two kinds of affinities: first, natural, or such as are found in the kingdom of nature; second, spiritual, or such as are found in the spirit-world.

"It is erroneous to suppose that because a man is the husband of a woman in this world, that he will be so in the spirit-world; that children whom he has begotten here, will be necessarily his in a future state."

This is very small talk; and, admitting for a moment the honesty of the medium, we are half inclined to be vexed with the good old doctor that he should waste our time—*his*, on the supposition, is of no consequence—with such puerile inanities, when he might have solved for us mysteries that perplexed *him* while in the

body, and which, he must know, still perplex us. "All pairs are not mates:" that is a fact beyond successful contradiction! There is, nevertheless, an inkling of something we did not know before in the latter part of our quotation, but only an inkling: if a man's children are not *his*, whose are they?

Decidedly the richest number of "The Spiritual Telegraph" is that issued on the third of July last. Nearly one entire page of it is covered with fac-similes of the handwriting of forty-three spirits in "the interior." They take hold of material pens, and dip them in material ink now. There will be no more need of "mediums." Mr. Boynton and Mr. Hammond, and the nine hundred and ninety-eight others, may seek some other employment. Their occupation's gone. This wonderful event originated on this wise:—At a meeting of the New-York Circle, held at the house of the publisher of the *Telegraph*, a Mr. Edward P. Fowler was directed by the spirits then present to place a piece of paper on the table in his bed-room, with a good pen and ink. He did so, of course; and in the morning found the paper all covered with the signatures of persons long since dead. Could anything be more convincing? Fortunately, too, there is opportunity for verifying these signatures; for it so happens that every one of these denizens of "the interior" left behind him, in this world, a specimen of his penmanship, and they all sign their names now just as they did then. We have the bold autograph of "John Hancock" and "B. Franklin," with the same flourish he made when in the body. Then follow G. Washington, and Adams, father and son, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Jackson, and Polk. Harrison's name is there also; but Taylor, it seems, wouldn't sign. The fact is, as would occur at once to any sane mind, the knave who perpetrated this contemptible hoax did not happen to have with him a copy of Taylor's signature. The "circle," upon receiving the precious document from Mr. Fowler, with the assurance that thus he found it upon his table, were in a perfect frenzy of astonishment and delight. Those who were present signed a certificate, testifying to their full belief "*that these are the signatures of the spirits themselves*;" and the whole account is published for the astonishment and delight of the thousands whose appetite for the mar-

velous grows by what it feeds upon, and whose deglutition dilates just in proportion to the demands made upon their gullets. Whether Mr. E. P. Fowler prepared this document himself, or whether it was written by another member of the "circle" who had access to his room, we are unable to say. If the former, he is a knave; if the latter, a fool—a dilemma from which we cannot extricate him.

As in mere telluric publications, so in the periodicals devoted to the "literature of the interior," we have occasionally *poetical* contributions: not, indeed, such as ordinary mortals write, but the avowed productions of the great masters of the lyre, written in "the interior," and sent up, through mediums, to the editors. Wordsworth, and Coleridge, and Southey, and Shelley, and Edgar A. Poe, figure in their columns. He was a bold villain who first conceived the idea of palming off his school-boy imitations as the veritable inspiration of the departed. But his success was equal to his audacity, although not a verse has yet appeared that could be imposed upon any one who does not wish to be imposed upon as the genuine production of the poet to whom it is attributed. "*Populus vult decipi, et decipitur.*"

Of necessity, we must pass over several other publications of a similar character, including "*The Shekinah*," a quarterly magazine, under the editorial care of the aforesaid S. B. Brittan. This is confessedly the *great* organ of the believers in this wide-spread delusion. Among the contributors, the editor enumerates the honorable Horace Greeley and the honorable J. W. Edmonds—men whose names we do not find in the list of members present at any of the "New-York Conferences," but who may be included among the "others," with which expressive word the secretary is wont to close his list. For purposes best known to themselves, however, they have allowed Mr. Brittan to use their names, and we will not do them the injustice to believe that they have not really swallowed the humbug entire. It is more to their credit to suppose them deceived than deceivers—imposed upon rather than impostors.

We should do injustice to our subject not to notice what, after all, is the *chef-d'œuvre* in this species of literature, the very cap-sheaf in this mass of absurdities and blasphemies. It is a quarto publica-

tion, entitled "*Disclosures from the Interior, and Superior Care for Mortals.*" It was issued semi-monthly at Auburn, N. Y., in a style of really beautiful typography, and on elegant paper. We copy the Prospectus entire :—

"This publication, is dictated by spirits out of the flesh, and by them edited, superintended and controlled.

"Its object is the disclosure of truth from Heaven, guiding mankind into open vision of Paradise, open communication with spirits redeemed, and proper and progressive understanding of the Holy Scriptures, and of the merits of Jesus CHRIST, from whom they originated in inspiration absolute, and of whom they teach, as the only Saviour of a dissevered and bewildered race.

"The circle of apostles and prophets are its conductors from the interior; holding control over its columns, and permitting no article to find place therein unless originated, dictated or admitted by them—they acting under direction of the Lord Supreme.

"James Congdon, Charles Coventry, Andrew L. Wilson and Lonson Bush are its publishers and proprietors; they having become, in full confidence of mind, disciples of the Lord; and being present external agents of the Circle Apostolic and Prophetic; acting under their direction, while faithful, as instruments for the distribution of truth."

In the first number of this publication we have an "Introduction dictated by Paul the Apostolic Messenger;" a "Salutation to Disciples of Jesus, by the Circle of Apostles and Prophets;" and a Poem dictated by—who would the reader suppose would have been selected by apostles and prophets as an associate in heralding their first number into the world? You would never guess. Even Percy Bysshe Shelley,—Shelley, the bosom friend of the licentious Byron,—the boldly-avowed champion of atheism. Bad as he was, however, he ranked among the foremost of what Southey calls the *Satanic* school of poets, and never wrote such trash as is here fathered upon him. We copy two stanzas :—

"The earth reels fast within the strong maelström,

Circling around the vortex of its doom:
Death grasps, with fleshless hand, the helm;
his lips

In mockery shout 'progression,' as she dips
Upon the marge of the abyss deep,
Where the coll'd serpents of the ocean sleep.

"Wake, wake, O, mortal!—ope thy slumberous
ears,

Charm'd by Circean melody of spheres.
The Vices, bred in Passion's burning cave,
Scream through the storm, the vultures of the
wave;

And ghoul's tartarean, wehr-wolves of the sea,
With eager jaws distended follow thee."

In successive numbers we have "Visions by the prophet Daniel;" "Outlines of the Interior, by John the Divine;" "A Poem, dictated by the Spirit Samuel Taylor Coleridge;" another, "dictated by the Spirit Robert Southey." The far greater portion of its absurdities is attributed, with the most unblushing impudence, to St. Paul, and are solemnly declared to have been veritably dictated by the great apostle. Such masses of meaningless verbiage, of unintelligible jargon, were certainly never before printed. At the risk of disgusting the reader, we must verify our remark by a quotation at random. Take this from No. 12, under date of July 24, 1851 :—

"The internal of all intellectuality hath its origin in God. The most glorified of all created existences capacitated to approach the throne of the Divine Effulgence, receive the breath of His Being as animating fire, and move in the divinity of its loveliness.

"Hence by adapted laws the spirit descendeth to proximity with the ascending focality of physical nature, when the elements affinitize, thence inchoating, cause that innovation which blendeth the majestic procedures, and by inversion infoldeth and thence ascendeth through spiritual unfoldings to the attractive source of all the intellectual and morally pure. Thus proceedeth the Self-Existent to unfold, purify and quicken anew, and ultimate in a heaven his works as purposed in His Divine Procedure. In this is epitomized the philosophic statement of that law, by which shall be unfolded to their consummation, the immensities of the terrestrial universes inhabited by spiritual intelligences, and also the infolding and ascension of these into immensities of the spiritual and thence immensities of the celestial and thence the immensity of the most glorious and divinely pure universe, the embodiment of all universes."

Are the men who palm this, and hundreds of pages in the same strain, upon their gaping, gullible fellow-men, as emanating from the spirit of Paul,—are they crazy? Certainly we have seen more rational productions, more sensible and more logical, from the inmates of a lunatic asylum. But these men are not mad. Cunning are they, on the contrary, and wide awake. They make money by their publications. For their books you must pay a good price, and all their periodicals must be settled for in advance. "The work will be sent to no one," says the Rev. Mr. Brittan, "*until the subscription is paid.*" In this they are perfectly right. Any one desirous of such fodder as they furnish certainly ought to pay for

it. There is, moreover, a remarkable uniformity on one point pervading all these pretended revelations,—a uniformity which precludes the supposition of disordered brains. No matter who is the rapper or the rappee—deist, infidel, or apostle; Mr. Brittan, Mr. Hammond, or Mr. Ballou—no matter whether the knockings be made upon a table, a looking-glass, or a pulpit,—whether the communications be made through a medium, or with a material pen and ink in the hands of a spirit—they all aim to teach, by implication and by direct assertion, that there is no punishment for sin in a future world. Thus Shelley is in the company of Paul and John; Napoleon associates with Calvin and John Wesley; and that loathsome blackguard, Tom Paine, has already journeyed, according to his own statement to the Rev. Mr. Hammond, away up to the *sixth* circle, where, ineffably happy, he looks down upon martyrs and apostles in spheres under his feet.

Not only by inference is this their teaching. In a letter dated September 24, 1851, published in the New-York Tribune, in which the writer dwells upon "the peculiarly comforting nature" of the messages from the spirits, he says:—"They all agree in saying that all in the spirit-world are happy, though there are different degrees of happiness." The spirits who used Mr. Hammond's fingers, wrote:—"Spirits see spirits forgiven. Those who have been in the lowest circle of wisdom, in the lowest hell of which we have any knowledge, repent, reform, become better; and God removes the judgment which their condition required to discipline them into the path of true wisdom. The divine law of God, by which forgiveness is extended, is the same in both spheres."—*Light from the Spirit-World*, page 243. In the *Spiritual Telegraph* of May 29, 1852, a paper which the editor of the Tribune indorses as "the most rational and sensible of spiritual journals," it is stated that a revelation from *Lawrence Corbett* had been made, "in a circle," in the city of Brooklyn. This Corbett, in his lifetime, was an avowed infidel, several degrees lower in the scale of profligacy than Tom Paine, whose disciple he professed to be. When the "circle" were well satisfied that Larry, as he was called,

was really present, he was asked, among other questions, "Is there any hell, such as is mentioned in the Bible?" To which Larry responded, of course, "No!" Larry's reputation as a man of truth was bad while he was in the exterior; whether it has improved since is at best doubtful. So possibly Mr. Brittan, the editor, feared his readers might think, as he makes no flourish of trumpets in introducing his testimony. Not so with another of Mr. Brittan's witnesses, and this is the last with whom we shall trouble the reader. The following statement is preceded by an assurance from Horace Greeley, "that it is from a reliable source." It comes to Mr. Brittan from Cleveland, Ohio, and is deemed by that clever manager of vast importance. The writer, who gives us his name in full, says: "I asked a deceased relative, who on earth was a Methodist clergyman, what kind of religion was right? Answer. 'The religion of Christ.' I asked if there was any devil. Answer. 'No!' Are all spirits happy after death? 'Yes; measurably.' What Church is nearest right? Answer. 'Universalist doctrine is nearest right.'"

The reader will have little difficulty, with these facts and declarations before him, to account for the ready sale of Mr. Hammond's books; for the large list of subscribers to "the *Spiritual Telegraph*," and periodicals of a similar kind; and for the fact that multitudes try to persuade themselves that they really believe in the truth of these pretended disclosures. By these publications, the love for the marvelous, so strong among the ignorant and half-educated, is abundantly gratified; and satisfactory demonstration that there is no devil, no hell, no suffering beyond the grave, is, by many, a consummation devoutly to be wished. What matters it how a man lives—what he believes, or does, or leaves undone—if Poe, whose moral character was anything but pure; and Shelley, whose life was one scene of iniquity, and who was hurried to his dread account without space for repentance; and Larry Corbett, the reviler of his Maker and of all goodness; and Tom Paine, whose name is a synonym for whatever is vile and filthy; if they are all, all rejoicing in the beatitudes of the Redeemer, and in close companionship with apostles and prophets,—with Daniel, the man greatly beloved of his God; and

with John, who reclined upon the Saviour's bosom? All this is taught, and vouched for, and scattered among those "who have pleasure in unrighteousness;" and it is but in accordance with the prophetic scripture, that, under "the strong delusion sent upon them," many should believe the monstrous lie.

We will not allow ourselves to say what we think of the men who get up these exhibitions, and who put money in their pockets by these publications; neither is it in our line of business to take up their reiterated challenge, and show how the trick is done. We are free to admit that the statements of credible witnesses, relative to what they have seen and heard, are wonderful—rivaling, in some instances, the feats of the far-famed Signor Blitz, who swallows tow, sets it on fire in his stomach, and draws forth beautiful ribbons; and of Professor Anderson, whom for twenty-five cents you may see pour half-a-dozen different kinds of liquor from an empty bottle, and with a word restore to perfect soundness a score of gold watches that you have just seen him smash all to pieces. Let those who have no better employment devote their time to the elucidation of these mysteries. It would be far more harmlessly employed than in "sitting in a circle" night after night, and lending the sanction of their names, under the guise of being "friends of inquiry," to the dissemination of absurdities so abominably gross, that the ravings of Bœhm appear lucid by the contrast, and, in the comparison, the most blasphemous page in the book of Mormon is perfectly harmless!

ANECDOTE OF THE LATE SIR ANDREW AGNEW.

"I REMEMBER an anecdote of him," says an intimate friend, (James Balfour, jun., Esq., W. S.), "which I thought very touching. We were speaking one day of the difficulty of confessing Christ before the world. It was affecting to hear him acknowledge this difficulty, who had borne Christ's reproach so manfully and so meekly in all places. He told me, that when he first began to take up the cause of the Sabbath, there were many worldly men who disliked him so much that they seemed anxious to *stare* him out of their company; and that he had felt this partic-

ularly at the New Club. One honorable baronet, not satisfied with this species of annoyance, when he saw that Sir Andrew had courage enough to despise it, and to frequent the club regularly every day notwithstanding, began speaking *at* him, and acting as rudely as he well could toward him. One morning Sir Andrew was waiting for his breakfast at the club, when the baronet to whom I allude came in, apparently in great agitation. Sir Andrew, perceiving this, asked him if anything was wrong; to which he replied that his lady had last night had an attack of paralysis, and that she was dangerously ill. Sir Andrew said he felt for him sincerely, and expressed his sympathy warmly. Next morning he met him again, with his two sons, who had come to see their mother, and he asked for Lady ——— with much interest. The answer was, that he had been sitting up with her all night, and that she was no better. Ultimately, however, she did recover; and on one occasion afterward, the honorable baronet referred to came up to Sir Andrew, and, with feeling that did him great honor, said: 'Sir Andrew, there are many people who like to laugh at you, and abuse you, because of your Sabbath principles, and I confess that I have been among the number; but I trust I shall never so far forget myself again. A man gets a very different view of these subjects when standing beside what he thinks the dying bed of his wife.' Sir Andrew was much affected by this frank acknowledgment, and replied: 'I understand you perfectly; for I have experienced all the same feelings myself. I, too, was once opposed to religion. When I first proposed to bring my Sabbath Bill into Parliament, I felt the difficulty I had to encounter; and, after having given notice of the bill, I thought I should never have courage to proceed with it. The day was drawing near on which my motion was to come on. Every day I felt my courage growing less and less; when, just a day or two before, a messenger arrived from the country with intelligence that my mother had had a stroke of apoplexy, and I must hurry down to see her. I went accordingly, and it was while watching beside the bed of my dying mother that I got grace and strength to bring in my Sabbath Bill.' The conversation touched the feelings of both parties, and they ever afterward entertained much respect for one another."

PIERRE PITOIS.

(From the French.)

IN the year 1809, Pierre Pitois was sergeant in the twelfth regiment of the line, then quartered in Strasburg. He was a native of that half-savage, half-civilized, part of Burgundy known under the name of Morvan; and his comrades never spoke of him but as "a tough customer." Always the first and the last to fire, he had the reputation of liking but two things in the world—the smell of powder and the whistling of bullets.

Now, one fine day, our friend Pierre took it into his head to address a letter to his Colonel, in which he applied for leave of absence to go to see his aged mother, who was dangerously ill. He added that his father, being seventy-eight years of age, and suffering under a paralytic affection, could not be of any use in nursing the poor woman; and he pledged himself to return as soon as the health of his mother should be restored.

The Colonel's reply to Pierre's application was, "that, as the regiment might at any moment be ordered to take the field, no leave of absence could be obtained."

Pierre Pitois submitted. A fortnight elapsed; a second letter was received by the Colonel, in which Pierre informed him that his mother had died, without the consolation of giving her last blessing to her only child, and in which he again solicited leave of absence, saying that "he could not state his reasons for this request—it was a family secret,"—but earnestly implored his Colonel not to deny him this favor.

Pierre's second letter was as little successful as the first. The poor fellow's captain merely said: "Pierre, the Colonel has received your letter; he is sorry for the death of your old mother, but he cannot grant the leave of absence you require, as the regiment leaves Strasburg to-morrow."

"Ah! The regiment leaves Strasburg; and for what place, may I ask you?" said Pitois.

"For Austria," replied his officer. "We are to see Vienna, my brave Pitois; we are to fight the Austrians. Is not that good news for you? You will be in your element, my fine fellow!"

Pierre Pitois made no reply; he seemed

lost in deep thought; the Captain caught his hand, and shaking it heartily said—

"Why do you not speak, man? Are you deaf to-day? I am telling you that in less than a week you are to have the pleasure of a set-to with the Austrians, and you have not one word of thanks for the good news! Nay, I verily believe you have not even heard me."

"Indeed, Captain, I have heard every word, and I thank you with all my heart for your news, which I consider very good news."

"I thought you would," said his officer.

"But, Captain, is there no chance of obtaining the leave of absence?"

"Are you mad?" was the reply.

"Leave of absence?—the very day before taking the field!"

"I never thought of that," said Pierre.

"We are then on the point of taking the field; and at such a time, I suppose, leave is never given?"

"It is never even asked."

"It is quite right—it is never even asked. It would have the appearance of cowardice. Well, then, I will not press it any more; I will try and get on without it."

"And you will do well," replied the Captain.

The next day, the twelfth regiment entered Germany; and the next—Pierre Pitois deserted.

Three months after, when the twelfth regiment, having reaped in the field of battle an abundant harvest of glory, was making its triumphal entry into Strasburg, Pierre Pitois was ignominiously dragged back to his corps by a brigade of *gens d'armes*. A court-martial is immediately called. Pierre Pitois is accused of having deserted at the very moment when his regiment was about to meet the enemy face to face. The court presented a singular spectacle. On the one side stood forth the accuser, who cried,—

"Pierre Pitois, you, one of the bravest men in the army; you, on whose breast the star of honor yet glitters; you, who have never incurred either punishment or censure from your officers; you could not have quitted your regiment—quitted it almost on the eve of battle—without some powerful motive to impel you! This motive the court demands of you; for it would gladly have it in its power—if not to acquit you, which it ought not perhaps either