

TWO EVENTFUL NIGHTS,

OR, THE

FALLIBILITY OF "SPIRITUALISM"

EXPOSED.

BY F. C. EWER.



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N O T I C E .

I HAVE thought the following pages of sufficient interest to warrant their issue in the present form. This publication has been made without the knowledge of the AUTHOR, who has no opportunity to revise or add to it, even if he wished to do so.

If the editors to whom this pamphlet (by one of the fraternity) is sent will give it a *perusal*, and such notice as they may then deem proper, they will add another to the many favors already extended to their obedient servant,

THE PUBLISHER.

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P R E F A T O R Y .

As introductory to the matter which forms the body of this publication, and which appeared originally a part in *The Pioneer*, a California monthly, published at San Francisco, and edited by F. C. Ewer, and a part in the New-York *Herald*, we feel it to be not inappropriate to review, briefly, the phases, philosophy, and moral of "modern spiritualism." This phenomenal development, originating in its first tangible form with the Fox and Fish families, at Rochester, N. Y., not more than four or five years ago, has already won votaries, and made lunatics in every section of the Union, and like many other delusions, long since perished, has passed far beyond the boundaries of the country and continent that gave it birth. We are not of those who think such delusions unworthy of refutation or notice. If they were submitted only, and appealed only to men and women of sound reason and reflection, we might leave these delusions to die the speedy natural death to which they would surely be doomed. But they are,

unfortunately for the peace of the world, in this age of the universality of newspapers and cheap publications, scattered broadcast, and brought to bear upon thousands of weak, disordered minds, which, attracted by their novelty and mystery, abandon all old faiths, and bow to the new idols with the devotion that distinguishes changelings and fanatics.

“Modern spiritualism,” of all modern religious delusions, has culminated most rapidly, spread most widely, and, we must confess, gained most notable adherents during the same period of time. Its leaders claim that it already numbers more than a million believers; it has organized itself, established presses for the publication of books, magazines, tracts, and newspapers; it boasts a special literature, interspersed with and fortified by all the ghostology of the past; it has called scientific men to investigate it, and learned and pious men to combat it; it has mounted the pulpit, entered the concert-room, tried its hand at the drama, and on every hand inspired, seriously or for “the fun of the thing,” *circles*, in which the ghosts of the dead—from Adam’s time to ours—have been made to re-visit the earth, teaching of the life that is, and the life that is to come; or rather pretending to reveal those things which God has wisely ordered that man shall not know, save by imagination, hope, and faith.

But the rapidity with which this delusion has spread has not surprised us. With all its intelligence and pure religious zeal, this age is peculiarly an age of speculation,

diverse creeds, skepticism, and disbelief in religious faith that demands, as the good old faiths of our fathers did, humiliation or mortification of the flesh. It is an age, also, abundant, to an unparalleled extent, in men who would be "prophets, priests, and kings," or sect-founders of some sort, rather than apply their idle hands and addled brains to any humble, practical good work. The materialistic spirit of the age, wanting some religion, seized upon this new "spiritual" development, as most realizing the materialist's idea of God and the spiritual world. It divided the spiritual domain between God and man, making it as easy for the latter to penetrate the secrets of Heaven, as for the former to hold cognizance of the things of earth. Besides, it transposed God, or rather inverted him, so that man could examine and sit in judgment on the Supreme Being, as well as the Supreme Being on Man—and gave to God a character and attributes just about such as the materialist desires; God, nearly always, being only an infinite reflection of the "medium's" normal opinions and faith. And still further, it so materialized the spiritual that the grossest realist could *see* the angel, or the "ghost of his grandmother," and be satisfied. And thus it "took," because it dragged heaven down to earth in palpable form, and men and women rushed into its sensually fascinating embrace. All the odds and ends of the religious, social, and political world looked to it as a new excitement, on the tide of which, by skillful management, they might ride to place, profit, or importance of some kind. Anchored to

nothing else, dropt or cast out from all other useful circles, they rushed or were drawn naturally into the "modern spiritualism" speculation.

Here was room for prophets and priests, with no need of anointing or consecration; for the dogma or delusion which holds that all religious revelation is alike divine inspiration, and that the rant and imbecility of whatever "medium" is as much from God as the utterance of "Moses and the prophets"—that A. Jackson Davis's "Nature's Divine Revelations" is good as the Bible, and Davis himself as much a God-chosen seer as Elisha; or Harris, with his rambling, amatory "Epics," as God-inspired as David or Isaiah—such a delusion knows and cares for no authority but the impulse of its votaries, and has no standard of truth or morality, but such as is derived from its "mediums"—each medium having peculiar crotchets of faith and morality of his own. As set forth in the parable, in the Word of God, when Dives asked that Lazarus might be sent back to earth to warn the living, the reply was: "They have Moses and the prophets; if they believe not these, neither would they believe though one arose from the dead." But "modern spiritualism" ignores Moses and the prophets, and the whole Bible, as circumstance or convenience requires.

But, with all its momentary success—with its long list of ex-judges, ex-senators, ex-priests, and other eccentric and extraordinary converts, this spiritualism is as baseless in truth, as the thousand and one lesser delusions that have,

from time to time, through the entire history of the human race, excited fractions of mankind, and, living their brief day, died out and been forgotten, save as a matter of curious record. In our own age, "Mormonism" has sprung forth as one of these developments—more triumphant, even, than "spiritualism," in that it has taken concrete form, and canonized its prophet, placing him and his revelation high above his sect, making them authoritative in all spiritual and temporal affairs; and also in that its followers are a unit in their faith, and have founded a powerful, isolate community, already clamoring to become a State and a political power in Christendom. "Modern spiritualism" believes not in Mormonism, nor the latter in the former, yet the basis of one is as good as that of the other, and both are utterly bad, as outraging Scripture revelation, sound reason, and common sense. The ambitious craft of Mohammed was fired and tempered by a far nobler inspiration, and was consequently crowned with far mightier results. Any one who will take the time and trouble to investigate the history of religious delusions, will find record in every age of something parallel, in fanaticism, pretension, and absurdity, to the spiritualism of our day.

Just in proportion as the human mind is unsettled from the basis of truth in the matter of religion—whether through ignorance or skepticism—society is distracted, astonished, and amused by turns at the antics of "new-religion"-ists. But in contemplating "modern spiritualism," standing apart from the delusion, one finds more

cause for indignation and sorrow than for astonishment or amusement. Indignation at the designing dupers, and sorrow for the ignorant dupes. It is a sad picture, indeed, to see moral and religious charlatans, in such an age as this, leading multitudes to a wreck of all substantial faith, to say nothing of thousands driven to lunatic asylums or impelled to suicide. The serious question arises, is there aught that is tolerable, or entitled to a moment's respect, in such a system of imposture. What have been its visible, practical results? It has relaxed among its followers, or beaten down altogether, the bonds of preservative social morality. Individual sovereignty, free-love-ism, spiritual-wife-ism; that is, the casting off of the legal wife for whoever inspires a stronger lust—for that which, for earthly gratification, absolves the marriage tie, is not worthy the name of love, or passion even,—sundered families, and wrecked individuality—these are some of the practical fruits of “modern spiritualism.” And what is its revelation as regards God, man, and the spiritual world? In just so far as it is coherent, and has a spark of reason or common sense, it is all borrowed from the Scriptures. Yet the little good it utters has no effect for good, but is lost in the mass of blasphemy and absurdity which constitute the bulk and genius of the new religion. A few cunning men and women drive a profitable trade by pandering to the delusion. It enables them to print and sell books, to their own monetary advantage; to successfully set up as doctors and doctresses, whether they kill or cure; to

open "paying" circles, where the curious and credulous are filched of their money, and often of their reason; it gives notoriety to men and women, who, failing to figure to their hearts' desire in any other sphere, mount up on "spiritual" wings into the eye of the community.

We have watched the operations, studied the so-called philosophy, witnessed the "manifestations," and, for experiment's sake, consulted the most notable "mediums"—having had access to "choice" circles at our pleasure—of the "modern spiritualists," and every experience and reflection has only the more convinced us of the utter worthlessness of their whole pretensions and teachings—nay, more, of their arrant wickedness and immorality. Judge Edmonds's story, furnished by himself to the public press, of the spirits of those who were lost in the steamer *Arctic* coming to him from the spiritual world for information and advice touching that world, would have inspired contempt for such a bare-faced presumption of the public's utter credulity, had not a feeling of pity that one holding such a position in society could become so influenced by a delusion as to evidently have lost his logical senses, risen up and plead for him. The intelligent public well said: "Poor man! he is on the high road to idiocy or madness." Some laughed at the mingled blasphemy and absurdity of the Judge's revelation, but the judicious only grieved. Yet Judge Edmonds is the oracle and high-priest of "modern spiritualism." He has furnished to the world two octavos claiming to have been dictated from the spirit-world

by the ghosts of Lord Bacon, and others erst equally notable on earth. It is not necessary for us to say that Lord Bacon, Franklin, and all the intellectual spirit-communicants fall infinitely short in their spirit-world talk, of the excellence and good sense they uttered while on earth. It is characteristic of the "spiritual" literature, that it is a "weak, washy, everlasting flood"—mainly of fantasies and nonsense. Judge Edmonds is deferred to, and looked up to, perhaps more than any half-dozen other spiritualist leaders combined. His word is accepted as gospel by the mass of believers in the delusion. Yet, in this matter, his word has been proved worthless, utterly worthless. His testimony, claimed by him to have been inspired from the spirit-world, and deliberately published, has been invalidated in the most decided manner. If false once, may he not be false always? And if the testimony of Judge Edmonds fails, is it not a fair inference that the testimony of the whole set or sect may be a fallacy? It is a remarkable fact, that, with all their revelations, the whole fraternity of "mediums" combined are not capable of directly answering, correctly, any three of the simplest consecutive questions that could be put to them in the form they challenge—mentally or in enveloped writing. On all such practical tests, involving absolute knowledge and mentality, they fail. Or if, by a rare chance, they do not fail, it is the result of lucky guess-work.

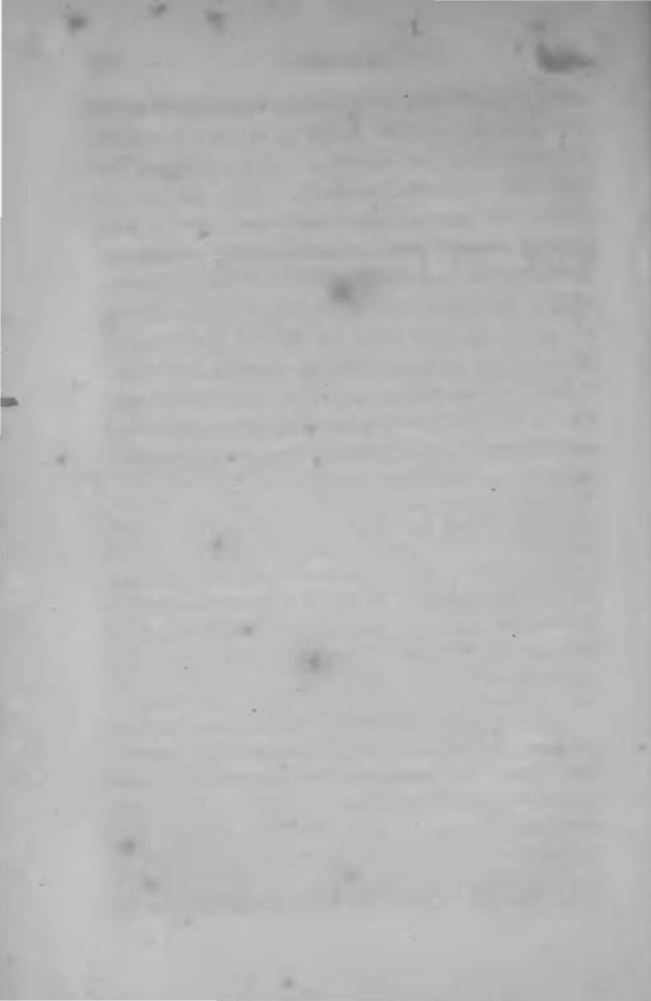
In the body of this publication will be found a remarkable case in which Judge Edmonds's spiritual prevision was put

on trial, and found wanting. In so far as the Judge revealed, it was only a *concurrent* revelation, but it weighs against him perhaps more strongly than would the disapproval of one of his own *original* revelations. Mr. Ewer, editor of *The Pioneer*—alluded to at the beginning of these remarks—and a gentleman of no little intellectual ability, being moved by a literary and fanciful—some may say mischievous inspiration, sat down in his sanctum in San Francisco, sometime in the month of August, 1854, and very much after the manner of Edgar A. Poe, in some of his weird sketches, composed a most remarkable spiritual experience—startling and thrilling as a narrative far beyond any “real” experience that we have read or heard of in the history of “modern spiritualism.” Mr. Ewer had to do with spirit, then with “flesh and blood,” and then again with spirit; the spirit in the second instance being that of the aforesaid “flesh and blood”—named on earth “John F. Lane”—which had given up the ghost in the mean time. It is a marvellous story—none the less so for being a fiction—as the reader will find. Well, when Mr. Ewer had fully conjured this fanciful “spiritual” experience, entitled, “The Eventful Nights of August 20th and 21st,” he published it in his magazine, *The Pioneer*. It was an adroit and plausible conception, and not difficult to be swallowed by any devout spiritualist. In due time a number of *The Pioneer*, containing the experience, reached Judge Edmonds through the mails, and he was greatly exercised thereby—so much so, that he copied Mr.

Ewer's revelation in his (Edmonds's) magazine, *The Sacred Circle*, then published in New-York, and wrote to Mr. Ewer, stating that he had thus copied, and adding that he (Edmonds) *had had several interviews with the* (defunct fictitious) *hero of the narrative*, "John F. Lane." Thereupon Mr. Ewer wrote to the New-York *Herald*, giving an *exposé* of the manner in which Judge Edmonds had been duped by him, (Ewer,) or rather, showing that the Judge's pretended visions, like all the other pretensions of "modern spiritualism," were worthless of belief.

The truth is, there was no John F. Lane, (except in Mr. Ewer's fancy,) and, of course, no John F. Lane's ghost. The public laughed prodigiously at Judge Edmonds's predicament, which made him flounder into the newspapers, where, at every turn, he only made his case more ludicrous and pitiable. There is various interesting correspondence appended to the "Experience," and a letter of request for publication of the whole matter preceding it—addressed to Mr. Ewer by a number of the most eminent citizens of San Francisco. We have thought—not only on account of the strong evidence this case furnishes of the fallibility, fallacy, and falsehood of modern spiritualistic pretensions, but also for the exceedingly interesting intrinsic character of Mr. Ewer's "Experience," that the matter entire would not be unattractive, nor without good influence issued in a more permanent form. Hence this publication. We might prefatorily have entered into a much more extended and serious argument against "spiritualism," the daily

development of which accumulates evidence of its grossness as an imposture, its immorality as a system of faith and practice, and its wickedness as a machinery in the hands of the designing, to delude, corrupt, and use the weak-minded, ignorant, and superstitious. But we have preferred rather to glance at the monstrosity in a general way, leaving its elaborate discussion and its exposure in detail, to the caustic and powerful pens of Professor Mahan and others, who have flayed and scarified it in volumes that are before the public. We feel certain that no reader of the "Eventful Nights" will regret the money or time spent in the perusal, or will rise from the reading with a more favorable impression of the "modern spiritualism" delusion.



THE EVENTFUL NIGHTS

OF

AUGUST 20TH AND 21ST.

I AM about to undertake a task,—here in the silence of this room,—to which I feel impelled by a combination of circumstances, such as I believe never surrounded mortal man before. I am hurried to its accomplishment, to the unburdening of my mind, from certain strange intelligence, not only on account of an express order, which I have received, the nature and particulars of which will more fully appear below, but because I feel that I can only relieve my mind from its insufferable weight by laying before the public the occurrences of the last two nights.

I am in a house on McAllister street, between Hyde and Larkin. The room in which I am seated contains little furniture, save a poor bed, a large pine table, one of smaller dimensions, and a chair. The paper I write on—this is the second night I have been here—I was compelled to bring with me, together with the pen, ink, and candle. At every whisper of the breeze, as it sighs among the bushes outside, I shudder and look around me, where lies

the body of a man whom I knew not until yesterday—yet to whom I feel bound by a spell such as I never experienced before. And yet I know that all is over and quiet now. The hush of silent death is in this room; and I can distinctly hear my own breathing and that of a little child—she tells me her name is Jane—who is sitting on a box at the foot of the bed, and who, although young, is just old enough to realize that she is stricken by an awful calamity, and yet knows not whether the more to be amazed or grieved. At times she will come to my side, and the tears will rise into her eyes; but at a word from me, she will check them, return to the dead body of her parent, and there gaze into the cold, still face, silently and with a mingled expression of awe and uncertainty. She, too, has been a witness of the events of the past forty-eight hours, and now that she is at last left alone, she clings to me instinctively for protection—she knows not from what, nor why. May God give me health and strength to support her, and guide her in the uncertain ways of the dark future.

She had just stolen quietly to me, put her little arms about my neck, and said:

“What are you writing, sir? Come with me. I am *very* lonesome. Come with me to father and make him talk.”

I kissed her upon her fair white forehead, and said:

“Hush, child! Father will not speak to us any more to-night. You shall go with me to-morrow, and we’ll take father with us.”

I led her back to her seat, and turned quickly, for the tears were gushing to my eyes. But I must hasten to my recital.

I shall endeavor to state the plain facts, as they occurred,

as briefly and in as simple a style as possible. For I find that it is already half-past two in the morning, and I feel quite exhausted from the excitement I have passed through. In bringing these facts before the public, I am aware that I shall subject myself to the taunts of the street, and be pointed at by the world as one of the "insane dupes of the spiritual rappers,"—and nothing but an imperative sense of duty (mistaken, it may be thought by some) urges me to submit myself to such an ordeal.

I will not (at least upon this occasion) go into the *rationale* of "spiritualism." The public are already sufficiently acquainted with the modes in which the "manifestations" are given, to understand thoroughly all I shall have to say. I will not speak of the singular facts of "odism," which have been established by Reichenbach and Liebig, with a clearness only less satisfactory than that with which the truths of electricity are proven. I will not state that no evidence of the odic fluid can be discovered in paralyzed limbs; I will not speak of the supposition, therefore, of the above-named physicists, that as mind can not act directly on matter, and as it is impossible by an effort of mind to move a paralyzed limb, the odic fluid may be the condition necessary to lie between the mind and the arm or foot (which are matter) to account for the mysterious effect of the will in moving our bodies. The relation of these facts and suppositions is not at all necessary to a clear understanding of my story.

Night before last, (the nineteenth of August,) after I had retired and extinguished my candle, I was surprised, on laying my head upon my pillow, at discovering a pale, bluish brush of light at the other side of the room, apparently hovering over a portion of a tea-poy, on which is a Parian statuette of Venus, one or two daguerreotypes, a

small pearl cross, and several other little matters of ornament. I was struck by the suddenness with which the light ceased to waver as I directed my attention to it. I started up, but immediately came to the conclusion that the strange appearance resulted from a diseased retina—(my eyes have been affected for the past six months.) I looked away, supposing, of course, that if the apparition could be traced to the cause mentioned, it would display itself wherever I gazed. This, however, I found not to be the case. And as I looked again towards the tea-poy, I thought I heard a series of faint tickings. Determined to have my curiosity satisfied, I arose and advanced towards the apparition. The tickings here grew more active. I re-lighted the candle; there was, however, no unusual appearance about the stand. But I soon found that the sounds proceeded from a small pocket-compass that was lying thereon. I opened it, and the needle was trembling and vibrating quite violently over N. Soon the north pole moved round to the south-west, and back again; and so on, three distinct times—each time pausing a moment at N., trembling violently, then sweeping round and reaching the S. W. point with a jerk. Thinking this a very singular circumstance, I hurriedly threw on some clothes, and sat down to watch it. After a pause, and while my eyes were directed intently upon the needle, it moved slowly round again, reaching the south-west point with a jerk,—repeating this three times, and then stopping. It seemed to me to act almost with *intelligence*; and I involuntarily uttered,—“What *does* this mean?” To my surprise—for I was a firm disbeliever in any thing like “spiritualism”—the needle, as though in answer to my ejaculation, made a rapid circuit entirely round the card, passed the north point, and resting for an instant at south

west, or rather over the fifty-first degree point, returned slowly and steadily to its place at north.

I now (half ashamed of myself) commenced a series of questions in whisper. Yet, although the needle seemed to act intelligently, I could not discover what was the nature of the information (if any) intended to be conveyed, and why, after each series of unsuccessful questions and answers, it swept with more and more vigor to south, fifty-one degrees west; and at length I reluctantly retired.

Last evening, about ten o'clock, I received a note, written in pencil, which, I was told, had been left for me by a little girl. It was brief, but exceedingly urgent in a request—nay, it was almost a command—that I should go out to the house of the writer, Mr. John F. Lane. It stated that I need fear nothing, but should start immediately upon its reception, bringing with me paper, a pen, and candles.

I learned that the little girl could not read, but by showing the superscription of the note containing only my name, had at last succeeded in finding the *locale* of my apartment on Kearny street. But she had gone, and I could therefore learn nothing of the nature of the riddle from her.

I can not tell how, but by some strange intuition, I associated unconsciously the note, with its singular request, its lack of any cue by which I could discover why my presence was required in a desolate and lonely part of the city at the dead hour of night, with the singular occurrence of the compass the night before. The only bond of connection between them, it is true, was the unexplained mystery that hung around both. But the human mind often finds itself at conclusions without any known steps

by which it could have arrived at them, whose subsequently ascertained correctness staggers reason, and leads to the belief that there are mental processes and strange sympathies and connections in nature whose character and depths are to be sought for in the Infinite God alone. At length, however, I became convinced that some villain was working upon my curiosity, to intrap me among the sand-hills and rob me; and I determined not to go, and to pay no heed to the affair at all. But I could not drive the subject from my mind, and at last I deliberately resolved, come what would, to go out to the spot designated, and solve the mystery. For precaution's sake, I relieved myself of my watch and purse, put my pistol in my pocket, and procured a lantern, before sallying forth.

At the corner of Kearny and Sacramento streets I met two of my friends—Mr. H. and Dr. L. Mr. H. asked me where I was going in that Diogenes style. In response, I related the circumstance of the note, and my determination to see the end of the affair. The two expressed their willingness to accompany me, and we proceeded together. It was then half-past eleven o'clock. We passed without molestation to the corner of Sutter and Mason streets, and thence struck off in a diagonal direction over the sand-hills toward Yerba Buena Cemetery. Contrary to our expectations, our devious walk to McAllister street was undisturbed, save by the occasional barking of a dog. When we reached the corner of what we found on inquiry at a neighboring house to be Hyde and McAllister streets, one of my friends called my attention to a noise that sounded like a faint groan. We approached in the direction whence it came, and found ourselves nearing a small house that stands on the north side of the road, just before you come to Larkin street. This was the house designated

in the note. I rapped at the door, and the little girl, who answered the call immediately, said:

"Father wants you to come in."

Mr. Lane, who was lying upon the bed, reached forth his hand in welcome; but was evidently surprised on seeing Mr. H. and the Doctor following me into the room. After apologizing for not having chairs enough for us, he called me to the bed-side and stated that he knew I must have been surprised at receiving his note; that he was too weak to write more; that he had told Jane to see me in person, but that she, becoming alarmed at her long absence from him and at the lateness of the hour, had hastened back without obeying his instruction. He said that it was very kind of me to take so much trouble, but that he was a dying man, and had information of importance to impart to me.

"But, my dear sir," said I, "something must be done for you. Fortunately, one of my friends is a physician,"—and I called Doctor L. to the bed-side.

Mr. Lane was evidently in the last stages of consumption. In fact, the Doctor told me in a whisper, that it was too late; that nothing could be done, and that his end was very near.

He overheard us and said that he knew all; that nothing remained for him but to fulfill a duty to me and to the world. Before proceeding to the business before us, he told me briefly, his previous circumstances; his early education, which was liberal; his poverty, and the fact that his little child—this patient, sweet little Jane, who, exhausted with watching, has laid her head in my lap and sunk, at last, into a slumber—would by his death be left alone in the world. He besought me, with tears in his eyes, to watch over her when he was gone, and see that

she did not suffer. He did not care about her being poor. He expected she would have to work. He did not wish her to be a burden to me. But, oh! he prayed that I would guide her footsteps away from sin and its influences; that I would instill into her a love of purity, and so guard her, that she would grow to womanhood, an honor to herself and a blessing to those around her. I drew little Jane to me, kissed her, and satisfied the dying man by promising solemnly that I would do my utmost to comply with his last wish.

His mind was then apparently relieved from its only care, and he turned his attention to the business before us.

"My friend," said he, "I must premise my remarks by stating that I am a firm believer in the great doctrine of the present century; that we have at last reached that momentous period, when the spirits of the departed can, through the medium of a principle newly discovered, communicate their thoughts and wishes to mortals upon earth. I have been led to this belief by the surest of all processes—personal experience. When I am alone and find a table moving under my passive hands—moving intelligently—moving in such a manner as to give me information of events which are happening in the distant East, and which I subsequently find to have occurred exactly as stated through this mysterious agency,—nay more, when I feel a nameless sensation—half chill, half tremor—running through my whole body, apparently penetrating to the innermost recesses of my brain, and find my arm and hand moved over the paper beneath it by some influence which I can not convince myself is not foreign,—when I find my hand writing strange, grand thoughts, such as I never conceived of before—such as at times it takes me

days thoroughly to understand,—when I close my eyes and so divest myself of attention, that I know nothing, except that my hand is moving, and when I find afterwards thoughts worthy of the angels, penned, I can not but believe we are upon the threshold of one of the most eventful changes that ever occurred upon the surface of the earth. Geology has told us of mighty epochs in the far past history of the world. Look back, my friends. Remember that whole races of the animal and vegetable kingdoms have been swept away—that whole periods of the world have moved into the still past, leaving their history legible to the mind of a subsequent period on the everlasting rocks and strata. Remember that whole continents have gone grandly down and been swallowed up in the depths of ocean; that whole oceans have swayed in volumes around the earth—from pole to pole, from the Orient to the Occident. If we stand amazed, as we contemplate the mighty changes that rest entombed in the past, ever receding from us, is it unreasonable to suppose that other changes equally momentous are approaching the world from the future? Oh! deceive yourselves not; for mankind tread toppling upon the verge of a tremendous epoch; that in which Finitude can speak to Infinity,—that in which the greatest seal shall be broken, and the secrets of hereafter whispered from strange intelligences to man! I know it—I know—know.”

Mr. Lane here sank back upon his pillow, exhausted.

I had stood rapt in wonder and admiration, as I listened to such sentences coming from a man apparently so humble in life. The shadow of death stretching up to meet him seemed almost to inspire him. The deliberate enunciation with which the remarks were uttered, coupled with the soul-felt earnestness with which he spoke, im-

pressed us all ; and for a moment we stood at the bed-side, gazing with rapt attention at that pale face, with its spiritual expression and its closed eyes. The eyelids seemed to me so thin, as to be powerless to conceal the large jet-black eyes within, which almost appeared to be displayed *through* them.

I know not how long our silence would have lasted, had not the Doctor called my attention to the fact, that the last struggle of mind had hastened the dying man towards his dissolution ; and that if he had any important information to communicate, we must be brief.

I looked again, and the large, black eyes were upon us ; they seemed larger and blacker than any I had ever beheld before ; and Mr. Lane continued :

"I wish this conversation recorded. At first, I regretted that you had brought your friends with you ; but I am glad that you have done so, as one of them can be of service to us."

I then took the writing materials which I had brought, and after recording, as nearly as I could recollect, the remarks set down above, I delivered them to Mr. H., who moved the large table into the centre of the room, and proceeded to take the notes which now lie before me, without whose assistance I should have great difficulty in preparing these remarks for the press.

Mr. Lane resumed :

"As I have told you, I am not only a believer in spiritualism, but am a medium myself. Four days ago, I was informed, by one of the spirits, that he desired me to procure some gentleman either connected with the press, or to whom the columns of some paper were open, to be with me during my last moments—that what should occur at our interview would be of importance. I knew

none of the editors. I had heard, however, that you had devoted several months to the investigation of spiritualism, previously to which time you were atheistically inclined. The fact that an atheist should have looked into this matter, with any degree of assiduity, convinced me that you were a candid man, open to conviction. Was I rightly informed with regard to your previous tenets, and your investigations?"

I answered in the affirmative.

"I am surprised, then, that you have not exercised your advantages, by publishing some of the extraordinary proofs of the science. I suppose you have recovered from your atheism, and that you are somewhat of a believer in spiritualism?"

I responded that, with regard to the former, I was still quite skeptical, and inclined to a belief in materialism; and as for the latter, that my earnest investigations had only led me to the conclusion that it was an unmitigated humbug, so far as any *spiritual* agency was concerned.

Mr. Lane appeared astonished, and after a pause, asked me if I had any objection to remaining with him, and awaiting the result. I told him that I certainly had none.

At his request the small table was then drawn quite near the head of the bed. Mr. Lane, who was lying upon his back, stretched forth his thin, white hand, placed it, with the palm downwards, upon the side nearest to him, and then closed his eyes as though he were settling himself for death. I sat at the end towards the foot of the bed, and was in such a position that I could see his face distinctly. The Doctor and Jane were at the opposite side of the bed, while Mr. H. was seated at the table in the centre of the room. After a pause the table tipped

toward me, lifting Mr. Lane's hand. We all remained in silence, during which the dying man appeared to be putting mental questions; to which the table answered. At length, he stated that the spirit desired to transmit a written communication. Paper and a pencil were procured. The sick man's hand was moved very gently, but the paper moved with it. I then secured the sheet with my hand, and the first communication was as follows, namely :

"The time is ripe. The great truth has entered into the circle of the world silently, and powerfully,—as the 'still small voice.' There is sublimity in its silence. And thus it appeals to man. We can not trumpet forth the truth. For voice is not to us, as hearing is to you. We appeal to you through sublimity, and silence, and an unheard, though felt power. Behold, how the great change has manifested itself in every city, and town, and hamlet in America ! This is one of the great voices of your great country. She announces the glad tidings, crying : *'The gates of death are open, the ladder of Jacob is reared, and angel voices are ascending—descending—from us to them—from them to us !'* We are hovering above and around and among your republic of *thought*. It was the fitting field. Had the seed dropped too early, or upon the unenlightened, it would not have fructified. Years were to roll. Years have rolled. The intellectual soil was at last prepared, and the sowers joyfully went forth. At first, the great change broke slowly upon man. It was right. There must have been doubters. But the truth is mighty and prevails. The spiritualists are numbered by hundreds of thousands. And thus as it is, that the seed has taken root sufficiently for permanence and ever-growth, spite of all calamity of skepticism and ridicule,

it is right that you should advance one step further. Attend! The meaning of death is the mission of this interview. Then mayst thou indeed exclaim, 'Where is thy sting, and O grave, where is thy victory!' Attend, while the passing spirit performs his privilege and his high duty."

Mr. Lane's hand then ceased moving. The whole was calculated to render us breathless. After a pause I remarked, that the solemnity of this time would not, I freely confessed, permit me to doubt the honesty of the dying man. But I ventured to ask the spirit, if spirit it was, whether he would not give us some certain proof of the genuineness of the communication as a *spiritual message*.

Mr. Lane's hand immediately traced the following:

"Willingly. The whole shall be in itself a test. For true it is, that one of the first elements of success in this new movement is, that you believe. *Mr. Lane shall hold a conversation with you prior to, during and after death*, in which he will give you his experience of death, and the facts and scenes, so to speak, to which he first awakes, after the heart has ceased to beat. Farewell."

I willingly dispelled doubt from my mind, and was for a time lost in thought at the solemn import of the spirit's message. The silence was only broken by the low sobbing of this dear little creature, exhausted, and pale, and scantily clad, who, thank Heaven, has forgotten her affliction for a time in sweet slumber. Her dreamy eyes have seized upon my heart. Ah! what a shadow within them lies! Will she live to womanhood? Oh! will she always love and trust me, with all my faults? Well-a-day! At length, as I gazed into the emaciated face upon the pillow before me, the lids opened—the large black eyes turned upon me, and with a faint voice he said:

"I am sinking—sinking—"

His eyes then turned upon Jane with a gaze of sadness, then rolled slowly round to me again. The look was enough. I leaned toward him, and assured him with a low voice that henceforth she should be my daughter. The little thing ran round to me and fell upon my breast, sobbing violently.

"And now," said he, faintly, and with pauses between his sentences, "I am ready to die. I feel that it is good. It grows dim—dim—dim. I am losing earth—losing you all. I know that I live. It—it is a solemn passage—but what, I know not. Are you here? Touch me—touch me—that I may know that I live."

I pressed my hand gently upon his as it lay upon the table before me. It was cold.

"Are you—are you here? *Can* you not touch me?"

I stooped over him and whispered into his ear that his hand was in mine.

"In mine?—in mine? There is no angel here. What was it whispered? I am in no one's keeping. I am passing—Oh!" said he, making a faint effort to rise, "Oh! that I could stay! Janie—Janie—that—that this solemn journey were but over."

Exhaustion succeeded, and for a moment he ceased breathing. I quietly re-spread his hand upon the table, and resumed my seat.

"I seem hovering—I know not where. No one is around me—no one comes to me to lift me on through this solemn gloom. I hear nothing—solitary—solitary in this fearful way. This is—indeed—the valley—of the shadow of death. Where are they, my friends of the future? Is this *death*? Is this the future? *Is the spirit theory then untrue?*" at last he cried in despair.

"And am I—am I to live thus—*thus*? Oh! the fearful *hell* of an eternal existence *alone*!—no sight—no hearing—no God—no heaven—(as I had been told)—no light—Great God! *no darkness*! all thought! My soul is consuming—*consuming itself*! Can I live thus for ever?—Oh! for annihilation! for any thing but this solitude! Why can I not peer through this gloom? Horror! horror!—where are these limbs of mine?—*I feel not my body around me*! Oh! lost at length—lost to the green earth—and to my Janie—lost to the sweet harmony of companionship! The past, *gone*,—the future, a *blank*!—Great eternity, am I a God?—am I creative?—will a world spring at my thought? Yes, I create—but it is *thought* alone—for that is of my own essence. I *must* be dead. If you are here and I am not yet dead—tell Janie I will *try* and seek her,—I know not how. Tell the world that in death the spirit is fearfully and for ever *alone*!—Tell the world that death is *terrib*—"

The nervous twitching about the under jaw stopped; and from the very instant when he ceased to articulate, I was startled by finding the table slowly rising and leaning toward the bed. And as the jaw dropped and the strange shadow of death swept down like a curtain over his face, the table rose quickly and pressed firmly and steadily against the bed-side, as though it were attracted towards the dead body by an immense power.

We were all now around him. The Doctor, who was on the side opposite to us, slowly laid the right hand, which he had been holding during the dying scene, upon the breast, and we remained gazing awe-struck at this strange death. I believe that, for a moment, my heart actually ceased beating. There was an oppressive pause, which must have lasted at least five minutes. During

all this time the table maintained its inclined position, and we still stood speechless—almost breathless. At length we were awakened from our trance by finding the table quietly descending to the floor. It then commenced tipping on two of its legs with a gentle rocking motion. I know not why, but I shuddered at the thought of breaking the death-like silence, so I took up the pencil and wrote :

“Will you finish what you were saying?”

Imagine our terror at seeing the dead arm and hand which had been lying on the table, strike into rigidity, as though it were a piece of mechanism pulled by wires, rise slowly from the table and move toward me. When it had reached within a few inches of me, like lightning it darted forth and down upon my hand in which I was still holding the pencil. Its fingers grasped suddenly and tightly around mine. The touch was as of an icicle. A nameless thrill and terror seized me. Mr. H. fell back ;—and slowly the locked hands before me moved across the paper. The dead hand was so tracing the words that *I* could read them. *They were upside down to itself.* The following was the

RESPONSE.

“No,—not that death is *terrible*. The silence and the solitude were *the dying*—not *death*! Tell them that it was a fearful, silent passage to me and those before me. But that it shall be so no longer *in secula seculorum*! Silent and strange—yes. But fearful—no. It was terrible, and has been terrible from its *uncertainty*. Every spirit hath known not, when it feels that it has at length lost earth, but it was doomed to silence and solitude *for ever*! The struggle to know what it is, the futile efforts to see—to

hear,—followed by the great, all-absorbing consciousness and conviction, that it is simply an *existence*, are fearful! But let the living listen! Hereafter, let those that die be content to pause through the change;—for the solitude lasts but a moment, when the dormant spirit gradually develops. *Then*, there was nothing around it;—*now* it knows itself and that into which it enters.”

“Are you in the midst of spirits?” I asked aloud; and my voice seemed to resound unnaturally through the felt silence of the room.

RESPONSE.

“I had lost you for a time. I could see and hear nothing. I almost forgot the circumstances of my death. But then, I was not dead. Slowly a sensation of lightness came over me, and I remembered all. I knew you all. I felt calm. I saw your motions as of something apart from me—very much as you look down through clear water and watch the motions of the strange monsters of the deep, whose element is different from yours,—whose actions are sometimes strange and unaccountable,—with whom you have nothing in common.”

Here was a pause again for about five minutes, during which the cold, dead hand relaxed from around mine. At length, I asked again:

“Are you in the midst of spirits?”

The strange, invisible wires were pulled again,—for the blue death-fingers tightened around my own, and the locked hands traced the following

RESPONSE.

“I found myself gradually taking *form*—and *moving* through a long, grand, misty, undulating arch-way, to

wards a *harmony*, as it were, of far-off music. All was indefinite. I felt the intense consciousness of my own existence—nothing more. At length, clearer and clearer I understood the new universe into which I was entering, and a part of which I formed. I was alone. I heard no voice. But as I swept through the arch, I said as it were distinctly to myself this strange word, ‘FORMS.’ At length it changed to ‘FORMS—MOTION.’ After I had swept on still farther, it changed to ‘FORMS—MOTION—HARMONY.’ And then after a pause, to ‘FORMS—MOTION—HARMONY—THE ARCH.’ Why I repeated them I know not. Soon I was, as it were, uttering ‘FORMS—MOTION—HARMONY—THE ARCH—CONNECTION.’ At length the word ‘BEAUTY’ was added; and finally I found myself repeating over and over again:

“‘FORMS—MOTION—HARMONY—THE ARCH—CONNECTION—BEAUTY—ETERNITY—ETERNITY—ETERNITY!’

“I knew not what it could mean. I know now. I will tell you more to-morrow night. I thought, and those in the flesh think, that all they conceive of, is every thing that exists, save God and the disembodied spirits. Hence they call it the ‘universe.’ I find myself now forming a part of a second universe; as I have formed unknown through all ages. All have lived and shall live for ever. I know it in the dim distance. You are immortal as truly in the past, as you shall be in the future. Finitude at the beginning must lead to finitude at the end, and as you shall live for ever, so *have* you lived for ever: for your life is *infinite*. I will explain to-morrow night. Your first stage was non-self-sentient. Peer not into the past. It will not advance His GREAT LIVING. Look to the future. You are wearied. Remember Janie—see, she sits weeping. Farewell.”

"But are you in the midst of spirits?" cried I.

RESPONSE.

"Oh, wonderful—wonderful!—Oh, altogether inexplicable! As you may suppose the rose unto her leaves,—as you may suppose music unto the consciousness of man,—as you may suppose the harmonies, and ever crossing, and unheard, and dimly understood converse always going on between the elements of a landscape—the cascade and the rocks—the liquid water-ripples and the shore—the forest and the sunbeams,—so do the hosts of the new universe around me hold communion with each other. Direct, not impeded—silent, and dreamily beautiful and sublime! As different from the converse of man with man, as is color from weight. Remember Janie—see, she sits weeping. Adieu!"

"But I am *not* weary—I am *not* weary," cried I, quickly. "More—*more!*"

We asked and asked again for one more response—but one. The spirit had, however, left us. I wished to know if they experienced the passage of time in the other world. But not one word could we obtain. At the word "adieu," the dead hand fell off from mine. The clock struck three,—and, bewildered with the strange occurrences of the night, and intoxicated with excitement, I staggered out into the air. My friends soon joined me.

I will not say—I need not say—that for us there was no sleep that night. As I have remarked above, I staggered, bewildered, from the room into the open air, where I was followed by the Doctor and Mr. H. Not a word was uttered. In the awfulness of the occasion each seemed to respect the other's feelings. Great, silent

waves of thought had rolled upon us out of profound death. And the majesty of the new universe, from whose solemn depths a soul had just now whispered to us, as it pressed down and around me with painful reality and grandeur, overwhelmed and stupefied me. Where was the invisible spirit, upon whom its sublimity had just burst? The great liquid eyes, forth from which he had looked upon us, were glazed now, and set. Where was the *soul*?—could it be here, standing, silent, at my side, and gazing serenely upon me? Whence had issued those strange whispers—those fragments of knowledge? There, in the room, were the arm and the hand that had traced the thoughts, relaxed, and left by us in our bewilderment outstretched upon the table. But where was the *spirit*, that had stirred it from *without*? Where was the spirit? Fled—fled into those unknown, strange regions, whither we all shall go! Fled! Yet coëxistent, co-knowing, co-working with us. I burned to learn of the NEW UNIVERSE.

While we stood in the still, dark night, thus rapt in thought,—with the stars looking down from afar,—with the invisible wind sighing around us—we knew not where,—with the great city of the dead before us, where glimmered faintly in the starlight the white tombstones of the unnumbered departed,—and with the lowly, silent hall of death behind us, whence another spirit had just now lifted and sped,—as we stood thus rapt in thought, a soft hand stole into mine, and I felt upon my fingers the pressure of a gentle kiss. I looked, and it was Jane. She was kneeling at my feet—kneeling upon the damp ground, and weeping. In her desolation, sweet child, she had left the dead, to cling to the living. She had

silently singled me out from the rest, with an instinct that knows no premeditation.

"Janie, my dear child," said I, "let us return to father."

I lifted her into my arms, and she clasped her little hands around my neck, and laid her head upon my breast, and wept—wept bitterly. I need not say that my own tears were flowing full and fast, and dropping and mingling with hers.

We moved slowly along towards the silent room, and, as we entered, Mr. H. passed noiselessly to the mysterious bed-side, and disposed the body decently.

We stood gazing upon it for a time in silence; and then, recollecting ourselves, consulted in a low voice upon our position.

For us to inform our acquaintances with what had passed, was not to be thought of. We should have had the town upon us in an hour. We had received no instructions, but the sentence, "I will tell you more to-morrow night," clearly indicated what was expected from us. At last, it was decided that Mr. H. should remain with the body during the day, (it was now nearly four o'clock in the morning,) while the Doctor and myself should return to our respective duties in the city. To prevent inquiry, it was thought best that Jane should stay with Mr. H. And we agreed to meet here to-night—or rather, last night, (for it is now nearly daylight of the 22d,) at eight o'clock, punctually. The preliminaries being arranged, the Doctor and myself took our silent way across the hills toward the city, while Mr. H. bowed farewell to us from the door, with little Janie in his arms looking tearfully after us.

Oh! the long, weary hours, that dragged, leaden-footed, until night! It seemed to me that sunset would

never come. Need I say that the Doctor and myself, although we separated at six in the morning, could not remain apart? The imperative call of duty summoned me at ten to my desk in the Custom-House; and when I went in, I found him there waiting for me. Our eyes met, but not one allusion was made to the occurrences of the previous night. Each felt intensely the other's knowledge. A mysterious spell bound us together. I dared not have him stay, lest remark should be excited; and yet I could not *bear* to have him leave. And so, he lingered all day. Now and then we would steal a word together. But, oh! need I say, what an effort it caused me to attend to the details of my desk, and to talk cheerfully and carelessly of the trivial events of the morning?—oh! so trivial they seemed to me, beneath the shadow of the great event that had towered about me in a night! No, I will pass all this. Suffice it to say, evening came. And at half-past seven we were at the threshold of the darkened chamber. I entered—with Janie in my arms;—for she had watched for us from the edge of the window-curtain, and had run out to meet us, chiding me sweetly and artlessly for my long delay.

With the exception of a little more neatness in the arrangement of the simple furniture of the room, every thing was as we had left it, even to the small pine table at the head of the bed.

Well, the momentous hour had arrived. The solemn arcana of hereafter were to transpire. I know not why, but we hesitated at meeting the great intelligence, and we lingered in conversation at least an hour, before we prepared to receive those communications, which we knew were in store for us. We re-read those we had already received :

"Mr. Lane shall hold a conversation with you prior to, during, and after death,—*in which he will give you his experience of death, and the facts and scenes, so to speak, to which he first awakes, after the heart shall cease to beat.*"

He had only given us a part of his experience of death, and to-night, then, he would finish the recounting of his solemn, solitary passage through the shadowy valley, and open to your view, in language, the structure and appearance of the NEW UNIVERSE. Where *was* this universe? What manner of beings were the spirits? What was their form—their destiny? Did they increase in knowledge? That *must* be so, for the soul had declared it. How then was the paradox to be explained, of a spirit living on for ever—for ever increasing in knowledge—for ever—for ever—and yet never equalling the changeless God!

At length we took our seats around the table at the head of the bed, and placed our hands upon it. For fifteen minutes we remained in silent expectation, but received no manifestations of the spirit's presence. This was strange. It was, however, suggested, that Mr. Lane's hand was not upon the table; and that possibly this might be the reason of our want of success. But the body had become stiff, and the hand, when outstretched, slowly arose from the table, and returned to its place upon the breast. We then held it down; and soon found that the odic fluid (if fluid it be) was penetrating it: or, at any rate, that the arm and hand were becoming limber. Another fifteen minutes elapsed without result. The table neither tipped, nor manifested any disposition to slide, or even stir. The only indication we had received thus far was a single rap, which startled us by its loudness and brevity. Finally, in the silence of almost hopeless

expectation, and as a last resort, I resumed the pencil, and, without saying any thing to my friends, lifted the dead hand, placed it around my own in the position it had assumed of itself last night, and held it there to keep it from dropping off. Another anxious pause ensued, when, what was my delight at feeling the cold fore-finger pressing gently, but very perceptibly upon the back of my hand. I ejaculated with almost profane gleefulness :

"It is clutching me!"

"Hark!" said the Doctor, quickly, while both leaned forward with painful anxiety for the result.

Slowly the middle finger commenced to press down. Then the third finger. Then the little finger. And at last, the spell of death seemed to break, for the arm violently stiffened, and the whole hand grasped mine with a suddenness that startled us, notwithstanding we were so anxiously hoping for some such result.

We breathed freely again. And I could not but contrast our feelings of placid joy with those of terror which filled us last night, when first we beheld the hand and arm rising mysteriously from the table.

But, if the reader is as anxious to learn the tenor of the communications as were we to procure them, he will wish me to come to them without more delay. In short, I must hasten to the conclusion of my task, for I have been writing since two this morning, and the dawn has already broken.

To proceed, then: My first question was, "Are you happy?"

No response.

QUESTION, again—"Are you happy?"

After a pause :

RESPONSE.

"That is a singular interrogatory for this occasion, and one, for obvious reasons, I am not able to answer."

QUESTION.

"Why are you not able to satisfy your friends on so important a point?"

RESPONSE.

"If those who are happy could communicate the fact to their friends—*those who are unhappy* could do the same.

"But I do not see the point," said I.

RESPONSE.

"Silence is the best answer."

QUESTION.

"Perhaps if I put the question in an abstract form, the difficulty will be removed. Is there happiness and misery in your universe?"

No response.

After a pause, Mr. H. remarked as follows, namely:

"But I am anxious to have you finish your experience of death. You told us last night that you found yourself repeating the words—'FORMS, MOTION, HARMONY, THE ARCH,' etc., and that you would tell us more to-night."

RESPONSE.

"While moving in the midst of your universe, I had been blinded by the glare of particularities. Numberless individuals and species were around me. I saw not that which underlay and ran up through all things.

"Motion, in all its infinite varieties, is sublime. Whether I watch it flitting in the butterfly, curling gracefully in the rising smoke, or darting in the lightning—whether I contemplate it in the majestically wheeling worlds—or grasp it with far-reaching conception in the slow decay of an abbey ruin—it is the same mysterious condition of nature. The boy passes into the man. It is motion. Nations rise and sink. It is motion. 'Rest' is a relative word. As the word ghost sprang from man's fear, and expresses something which never had existence, so does the word 'rest' spring from man's egotism, and expresses what never had existence. That which moves faster than man's knowledge is as much rest to man as that which moves slower, and that which moves without his knowledge is as much rest as either. The landscape appears at rest, while silently grow the trees, fabricating their slender tissues from the earths, the air and the water, with magic fingers; slowly, unseen by mortal eye, unheard by mortal ear, are the chemical and mechanical forces of nature tapping at the life-essence of the rocks and strata; shine on the stars in the heavens unseen by you—move on the worlds of the universe unfelt—flows on the eternal circle, of vapor, clouds and the rain-storm. So, could you enter more minutely into nature, would you find that *all* is motion. Rest is not life. Rest is death—is non-existence. And your universe lives. It is all working—working—*God can not rest!* Rest means that thou movest faster than some things, and slower than others. Motion is not merely a fact in your universe, here and there. It is a condition pervading your entire universe, running down to every, even the minutest part. Motion underlies and runs up through all things.

"Your universe exists by entering into forms. In its present phase it has entered as a whole into the form of revolving suns and earths, with all the forms that on and in them are. All things around you are in forms—FORMS—MOVING.

"Come now to the 'Arch.' How do the forms of your universe move? The seed drops into the ground. The plant springs up. Watch the arching of the flower. First the tender embryo upon the stem—the unshaped silky chaos. This is soon a bud. The bud swells. It bursts. The ripe flower opens to the full its fragrant form, and the sunbeams come there, and nestle in the warm beauty. The maturity is on. The key-stone is reached. But not one instant does the motion stop. Less and less grows the fragrance. Duller and duller is the blushing white—the yellow—the crimson; petal and sepal and stamen and pistil drop away; and what was a flower is nothing. And what of the plant? Certain particles have married into that form. But in the course of the months, or the years, or the centuries, the form dissolves and disappears. The *particles* are eternal. But the *form* is no more. The arching of the flower is typical of that of every form, and all the arching forms make up your universe. All forms come into being—pass, however slowly, however rapidly, up to maturity—and so—however slowly, however rapidly, down to dissolution. Where is hundred gated Thebes? The small makes up the great. This is the answer to the autumn leaf, that flits across your pathway, and to the dying girl. The great motion, which pervades your universe, is its flowering to culmination. And hearken! When it shall have reached its acme, it will descend along a bright pathway, and en-

tering into, be lost in another grand form into which it will expand. FORMS—MOVING—in ARCHES.

“Why wonder at the fitness of things? The horse’s head and neck are just long enough to enable him to reach the ground, and crop the grass which is his food. And you lift your eyes and admire the harmony, and say it was so designed. Designing is a process of mind, requiring more or less time, and arguing imperfection. Forget thee, great man, who is thy God. God weigheth not, nor doth he consider. God resteth not, but liveth out his nature of necessity. For he can not be any one else, as a square can not be a circle. Men wonder at the fitness of the horse’s head and neck for the purposes for which they are used. They do not consider that were his neck and head too short to reach his food, the whole race of horses would die. Discord would defeat itself. And they are astonished, because they discover only a part of the harmony of nature. Harmony prevails everywhere from the necessity of the case. It pervades your universe. FORMS—MOVING—HARMONIOUSLY—in ARCHES.

“There is action and reäction around you. Who was he that said, ‘Each grain of sand is the centre of all things?’ This is truth. Each form acts upon every other, and is reäcted upon, in turn, by every other. Mind, even, works upon your universe. Your universe works upon mind. CONNECTED — FORMS — MOVING — HARMONIOUSLY — IN ARCHES.

“Beauty is universal. To the mind of man a part is free. The rest is latent. This, too, is well. For mind must build, first a hut—then a house—then a temple. Mind upon earth must search out beauty—must be educated for higher works in the future. God is not dis-

cordant ; so is he all beautiful. CONNECTED—and BEAUTIFUL FORMS—MOVING—HARMONIOUSLY—IN ARCHES.

“Therefore is your universe not a heterogeneous mass of disjointed parts. It is a homogeneity. It is distinct and different from our universe.

“Rise now for a moment to a contemplation of Deity. To gain a conception of him, conceive of any form around you—a golden goblet. It has certain qualities—color, hardness, extension, weight—by which you know it. So has God essential qualities, which constitute him the being he is. He is an infinite being, therefore are each of his qualities infinite. Your universe is the expression of one of those qualities—mine, of another. Both are, therefore, infinite ; infinite in extent,—infinite in duration, from the past and into the future. But as God, too, is an infinite being, he has not a *finite* number of qualities, as has the golden goblet ; but an infinite number of qualities, each of which expresses itself in an infinite universe. The soul has within itself a germ of every universe, and it sinketh on ever from one to another. The universes are infinite in number, therefore is the soul everlasting ; ever growing in knowledge, yet never exhausting that through which it passes. For it would require an infinity of years to exhaust the secrets of one single infinite universe, how much more, then, to exhaust those of an infinite number of universes, each of which is infinite in itself ! Glorious art thou, O man, the everlasting ! Glorious art thou, O man, that ever sinketh through the universes ! Glorious art thou, O infinitely greater—exhaustless God !

“Thus then do I describe to you your universe.

“CONNECTED AND BEAUTIFUL FORMS
MOVING HARMONIOUSLY IN ARCHES THROUGH ALL
ETERNITY.”

This extraordinary communication was followed by a long, thoughtful pause on our part. What subjects for contemplation did it not open up! the connection between universe and universe; the connection between God and his universes; the meaning of death; its necessity, as a link, between universe and universe, etc. At length, I broke the silence by the following remark, namely: "But in all this—for which we are truly grateful to you—you have not given us what we so anxiously wait for, to wit, the remainder of your experience of death. What of the arch in which you found yourself? And what species of place is the new universe, into which the soul passed at death?"

RESPONSE.

"The spirit frees itself from the cloudy arch by reasoning and testing. It finds itself *alone*. The solitude is oppressive. At first it knows not what manner of being it is. It struggles, in the solitude, to bring into existence something besides itself, that it may not be alone. But tell those that shall die, to pause patiently, until the dying has ceased. Each soul will then involuntarily test itself. At first, it supposes that all its faculties were suited to its condition and surroundings upon the earth alone. Its eyes and ears, with their corresponding mental faculties, seemed fitted alone to enable it to act in the world. Love bound it to its fellows. Sublimity and ideality enabled it to enjoy the beauty and grandeur of nature. But it knows that it has dropped nature. What use then for these mental faculties?—for benevolence, since the sick and suffering and needy are left behind; for its moral faculties, since mankind is gone; yes, even for its pious faculties, for it finds no God. Thus does it eliminate *itself* from

every condition of earth. But forthwith I realized that I was *reasoning*. I recognized the action of *selfish faculties*; for I was alone, and yearned for companionship. I remembered that I had been *observing* the long archway, with its gentle wavering, its form, its vast length, its soft, variegated opal colors. I realized that I was appreciating the surpassing beauty and the grandeur of this my passage. I noticed that I was *remembering*; and when I reached where I now am, I knew within myself an ardent desire for knowledge; I was charmed with the new scenes around me; I found new companions to love, new grandeurs to enjoy, new duties before me, new works to accomplish. I see no God. But I know that he exists. Thus did I learn myself, discovering that I still possessed all the mental faculties I had on earth."

QUESTION.

"And when you looked around you, what species of place did you find yourself in?"

RESPONSE.

"There is no 'passage' with me, as you move on earth. There is no 'place,' as you speak of 'locality' on earth. There is no 'form,' as you speak of shape on earth. The archway of death was but a condition in which I remained while testing myself, and becoming prepared to enter into my present state. Our condition here is such, that that by which each soul seems surrounded, is an out-creation from itself. When you are in a grove, the grove actually exists; and would exist were you not there. Not so here. We can not speak of 'locality,' for there is no such thing in this life; and therein consists the difficulty of making you comprehend our condition. But that, here, which is

analogous to your 'locality,' I must express by using your word. The locality, in which is each soul from time to time, does not exist outside of itself, as, for instance, does your grove, or street, or habitation; but it is an out-creation of the soul itself; and I appear to live in the midst of my out-creations; they are all in effect as actual to me, as are your surroundings to you."

"But this being the condition of affairs," remarked I, after a pause, "your universe must be very heterogeneous in appearance.

RESPONSE.

"Beware of materialism,—for its hand-maiden is atheism. The landscapes of earth 'appear' to the vision—and the dark blue vault of the heavens with its stars! I comprehend your difficulty, however, and will explain as best I may.

True, each soul lives in the midst of its out-creations; and you might suppose our universe heterogeneous in its character. But consider the various localities of earth, how they differ from each other. Where is there similarity between a room and a river flowing between its leafy banks? Bear in memory, that no two persons on earth can occupy, at the same time, the same space, and witness their surroundings from precisely the same angles, else would they be one person. So, no two souls live in the same out-creations, else would they be one soul. But, as all the different spirits—which, with their ever-varying, ingenious and beautiful out-creations, compose this universe—have, nevertheless, that something in common, which throws them together into the one class—'souls,'—our universe has a general effect of unity in itself, analo-

gous to that unity which is possessed by the universe you have not yet left.

"Motion pervades this universe also. All the souls are continually varying their out-creations. Therefore is it like a vast kaleidoscope—heaving itself into new, grand forms of beauty, for ever and ever!

"Thus can I dimly only tell you of that to which I awoke."

QUESTION.

"But how can your universe be infinite, when the number of spirits who have left earth is finite?"

RESPONSE.

"Look into thy heavens. Thou beholdest but a thousand of the infinite lights!"

"But *where* are you?" asked I.

RESPONSE.

"Is color above extension? Is weight above, or beneath or even among color? And yet each is different from the other, while all are qualities of the same golden goblet. Neither can I say, that we are above, or beneath, or even among your universe:—and yet each universe—yours and mine—is a part of God."

Well, we were at length satisfied with regard to the general character of the abode of the departed, and our conversation about it was long and rambling. I will not detail what we said, as no notes were taken of it, but will leave the reader to his own reflections.

At length I asked the spirit, if he could give us any information in relation to the appearance of the soul—its form, its structure.

RESPONSE.

"Mankind are wrong. The earth and their senses clog them. Every man, when he thinks of a spirit, attains to a conception of it by passing through an unnoticed, subtle series of rapid steps. He thinks of some material object—water; he passes thence to steam; thence to air, and finally, by a further etherealization, he reaches a conception of spirit. This unremembered but invariable process leads inevitably to a conception tinged with materiality. To gain an idea of spirit, think of a single thought. It has no shape—it occupies no space;—and yet it is distinct and different from every other thought. Pass thence to a spirit, which has no shape—which occupies no space, and yet is distinct and different from every other spirit. A tree is a material unit—non-self-conscious. A thought is a spiritual unit—non-self-conscious. A soul is a spiritual unit—self-conscious."

This was a new process—to me a simple and reasonable one,—and I wondered that it had not struck me before.

QUESTION.

"Do the relationships of earth—the friendships, the filial loves—last beyond the grave?"

No response.

"Have you friendships in the other world?"

RESPONSE.

"By how much the better was the spirit at death, by so much the more lovely are his out-creations as he sweeps hither-among. Thus there are grades among us, as there are among you. Thus there are similarities and dissimi-

larities of disposition. Free intercourse exists among the souls—free-will. Thus are there opportunities for advance and improvement, or for the reverse. Could you pass to a contemplation of the other universes—which do exist, although I see them not—then would you feel how important is improvement at every step. Awaken to a conception of a life for ever! For each universe which the soul has passed through is lost to it for ever with all the means of advance contained therein. And, as capacity for enjoyment widens and deepens the farther we sink along the universes, so does the disadvantage of a single unimproved universe in the past increase in awful, irremediable proportion, the farther we advance through the future. An unimproved universe is a clog for ever! Beware, beware! oh! beware! Act purely,—speak purely,—but, above all, *think* purely and with dignity. For in two universes, at least, selfishness is the mainspring of the spirit's life."

QUESTION.

"But how do you converse, having left the organs of articulation upon earth?"

RESPONSE.

"As it is with you, neither can soul here pierce the depth of the soul. Each recognizes the other's out-creations, but can not pass within them into the motives and thoughts of the soul with which he is communicating. The conversation of the pure in heart on earth is truthful; that of the vast intellect embodies great thoughts; the words of the vile are either vile or deceitful. Thus is it here. Our out-creations each arranges at will. The noble, the great, the improved, can and do naturally surround themselves with corresponding out-creations. They bear an influence

among us. There are souls that originate, and souls that copy. And truth and deceit is mingled here as it is with you. You can judge of a man's motives, notwithstanding his remarks;—we can judge of a soul's motives notwithstanding his out-creations. Thus, as it were, do we communicate with each other—originating and improving, or retrograding, as you do on earth. Death will necessarily make no one happy—free no one from cares—release no one from labors. Our condition is no happier than yours. Not only does the individual have duties to perform here, as you suppose, for which he should prepare himself on earth by purity and a strengthening of the mind, but races have also grand works to perform.”

QUESTION.

“Must the souls advance to a definite point of perfection before they can pass from your universe to the next?”

RESPONSE.

“Why do you ask this, when it is not so with you?”

“It is generally supposed to be the fact,” said I.

RESPONSE.

“No soul knoweth when it shall be summoned away—we know not whither. Our out-creations are to us here, as are your bodies on earth. When the soul is no longer able to surround itself with out-creations, it becomes unfit for duties in this universe; it can not act among us, any more than can a corpse among you. And the soul—the ‘me’—when its out-creations die from around it, remains for an instant a torpid entity, and vanishes, ere we can think, we know not whither. *This is death with us.*”

QUESTION

"Do the friendships of earth continue beyond death?"

RESPONSE.

"Lift yourself to a contemplation of an *eternal existence*, and think of the fleeting friendships of earth and their uses. Is not the useless cast away?"

"It is sad to think of parting for ever from a loved mother or sister," said I. "It is sad to think, that when we stand by the death-bed of a dear father, we shall see him no more."

No response.

"I say, it is sad to feel that at death we leave our friends for ever."

RESPONSE.

"The useful remaineth. God is great."

"Can you not answer us more definitely?"

RESPONSE.

"Would you have me say, that the soul of a vile son shall for ever pollute the purity of a sainted mother, or that a loving sister shall for ever be separated from a kind brother?"

"I would have you tell us the truth."

No response.

QUESTION.

From the Doctor. "Is the doctrine of transmigration of souls correct in whole, or even in part?" At this moment I noticed the other hand and arm of the corpse moving slightly. The odic fluid had evidently penetrated the entire body.

RESPONSE.

"Can the tree call back its leaves? We press ever onward. Death is a barrier, across which we may look back, but over which we may not pass again."

QUESTION.

"Is there communication between your universe and the one beyond you?"

No response.

QUESTION.

"Can you tell us of the universe beyond you?"

RESPONSE.

"Did you know aught of this, until now, save that it existed?"

"It is true," said I; "but what, what of the next?"

RESPONSE.

"Knowing 'color' and 'extension' only, how could you judge what manner of quality 'weight' might be? Neither can we conceive what manner of universe the next is, for we have nothing to judge from. We only know it to be as different in its character from ours as ours is from yours, as color is from weight."

We had scarcely received the response, when I was amazed at finding the entire body strangely agitated. The odic fluid, passing through the arm, had indeed penetrated it throughout. But before I could speak, the hand dropped away from mine, and I was stupefied at seeing the corpse rise slowly to a sitting posture—evidently without any internal muscular action, but as though it were willed up from without by its disembodied soul. It was stiff and

stark. The lids opened, the black eyes—they were the glazed, soulless eyes of death—stared forth into vacuity, and, to our horror, the chin dropped, the organs of articulation were moved—*the corpse spoke!*

“Great Heavens!—I am—I am—*leaving my universe!*—my out-creations die from around me!—I am passing to the next—Oh! where!—*where!*—I am DYING—dy—Fare—”

And the body fell relaxed upon the bed, the right arm bounding as it struck.

When we had recovered partially from our stupefaction, we looked around us, and could scarcely believe what we had seen and heard. Could it indeed be possible, that the corpse had moved—*had uttered words?* Yes—we were all awake—all dismayed—terror-stricken; and in the ears of each of us still rang those words of awful import: “I am leaving my universe!—my out-creations die from around me! I am passing to the next!” Could our senses have deceived us? And yet, if the disembodied spirit could, through the medium of the odic fluid, move the table, or the arm and hand that once were his, why, indeed, could it not will the inhaling muscles and the organs of articulation into action? Yes, strange though it seemed, the one was no more unreasonable than the other.

We laid the body into a proper position again, re-closed its eyes, and resumed our seats.

But the spirit—the spirit—whither had it flown? It was now not even within *our* reach! A whole universe was between us!

What more is there for me to say? My task is done. I have related the strange occurrences to which I have been witness during the past forty-eight hours, as faith-

fully as lies in my power,—and my duty to the world is performed.

The Doctor and Mr. H. left me at two this morning, promising to return at noon. The reader knows the rest. Stealthily, hour by hour, has the night stolen away, the silence only broken by the rustling of my papers. Janie still sleeps sweetly and confidingly. One lock of hair must I clip from the marble forehead—one single memento of the departed for her who is left alone.

Five days afterwards, two passed over the hills toward that silent city, beneath the shade of whose trees and among whose winding paths all eyes are closed—all hands are peacefully crossed for ever. And as they left the city of the living behind them, and the din of its crowded streets died away in the distance, peace fell upon their hearts, and I knew they drew closer together, as they walked hand in hand. It was the blessed Sabbath morning. Nearer and nearer sounded the solemn, mournful roar of the great Pacific. To the elder, it seemed like the far-heard, commingled converse of the innumerable departed!

Thus they moved in silence, and entered the broad avenue, with sunny hearts. Path after path they threaded, and at last they stood before a new-made grave. Flowers were freshly planted around it, and on the headstone were graven these simple words:

“ Farewell — Father. ”

And as the elder threw himself upon the grass, he knew not which was the fairer—the younger or the flowers she tripped among.

FLOWN: A REVERIE.

A SEQUEL TO "THE EVENTFUL NIGHTS," ETC.

"When she had passed, it seemed like the ceasing of exquisite music."

SHE lies in the little chamber. All is hushed around her. The crimson cords are loosed, and the curtains hang heavily to the floor. They speak in whispers around me; the doors are closed noiselessly, and footsteps in the hall are softened; for they could not but love my orphaned one—my sweet, my playful, gentle sister. The light falls crimson around her. Her arms lie folded upon her breast—as soft and snowy as the pillow where rests her head. And outflowing is the wealth of her chestnut ringlets—how rich, oh! how soft and warm and rich—upon her marble shoulders, how beautiful in their light and shade, how graceful in their negligence! Her lids are closed—they do not even tremble. Her lips are parted. And she lies so still—so fair, and pale, and still—that I can not think but she is dead. And I have just passed noiselessly to the bed-side, and I have just leaned forward and listened for her breath, and I have just placed a single white rose upon her breast, that she may know I have watched her, and am near. Oh! how beautiful is sleep!

Why do they whisper around me! Why do they look at me so mournfully—so mournfully and silently! And

why did they move her little stand away,—and why—*why* does she not come? Did he not say there were hopes? She is very—very still!

How gracefully the tassels fall! How beautiful the colors of her room! The crimson and the gold! Ah, she rests richly! She shall suffer no more. Never again shall she ask for bread—for a single crust from the neighbors, because her father is sick, and she is hungry. Never again shall she wander, obediently and patiently, in the dark night, for a stranger to come to her lonely home. Never again shall the tear-drops melt in her mournful eyes; for I shall kiss them all away. Never again in the chill winter shall her fragile limbs lack raiment. For God will give me strength for her sweet sake. God *shall* give me life and health and strength; and her little room shall always be next to mine,—shall always be beautiful as she is beautiful. The crimson and the gold; and the white lace canopy above her,—and her little book-case,—and her play-things,—and, by and by, her little work-table in the corner. Yes, she must not—*can not* die! God shall spare her, even for my guilty, guilty sake! Has he not already taken father and mother,—and shall he take the child? She is *not* left alone,—oh, she is not alone! She need not go. Has he not reared for her a protector—a brother? Yes, I shall never ask again, Why have I lived? I see it—know it, now. And God has spared me, that she may be happy.

In the little chamber; so statue-like and still! The door is open between us. And they have all gone, and left us alone in the night. And every thing is hushed. She has begun to smile again. And she would clap her little hands as I came in, and run to me for a kiss,—and many a happy hour would I spend with her among

her play-things. And now she lies so quiet; and her face, and neck, and shoulders are so like marble; and her ringlets lie so peacefully,—that I can not think but she is dead. It was a gentle hand that laid them; I know it was no mother's hand,—but it was a gentle, loving hand that laid them,—and she kissed it, and said :

"Dear brother, why are you weeping? Have I not been a good little girl? The Doctor told me I should be well soon. And, then, you shall play with me again; shan't you? and read to me again—about Joseph and his brethren." O God! God! Whither shall I turn!

It seems but a se'nnight ago, that the mournful rites were over, and, after they had borne him to his grave, that we stood together in the silent room. She knew nothing but that he was gone now, and that she was left alone; and so, with the instinct of helplessness and innocence, she looked at *me*, she scarce knew why; I felt that she was clinging to me. And as I moved around the room, she watched me, or hovered near me, knowing not what was to be done, nor whither she was to go. Oh, that sweet face, with its silent expression of uncertainty and mournfulness!

When all was ready, I could not leave, but sat down for a moment, and took her into my lap. And as the tears rose, and I leaned forward and wept, she looked into my face with sympathizing gaze, and almost wept, too, because *I* was sad. At length, as I arose, and looked for the last time upon the bed, now empty, she stood silently by my side,—looked where I looked,—put her little hand in mine, and with the same mournful, uncertain expression in her eyes, followed, yielding, whithersoever I led her.

And then she grew cheerful again. Her little room was *very* pleasant,—and it was next to mine,—and Mrs.

B. was very, very kind to her. And her little chair was next to mine at the table. And, when the sun-light fell upon the corner of my book-case, she knew it was time for me to come,—and she would watch for me along the street,—and she would run down to meet me at the door, and tell me she had been a good girl. And at last her little dresses came, and her hat; and she was very happy, and light, and fairy-like: for I had left all these to Mrs. B. And then, in the evening, I would stay with her. And when Margaret came for her, she would kneel by my side, and say her little prayers, and kiss me, and bid me good night. Ah! she was very sweet and sunny to me,—and I know she loved me,—and I believe I grew to be a better man.

And then they told me one day, that Janie was sick, and had asked for me; and they had sent for the Doctor. And she was so glad to see me as I came in. And then, the windows were darkened; and they were all so kind to her: and she was very—very grateful. And then, she sank lower and lower. Oh! how I have watched her these last five nights! And as her voice grew weaker and weaker, how have I fallen upon my knees in anguish, and prayed God, that he would but spare her! But, alas! they have moved away her little stand; and they have opened the window; and they are all weeping around me; and she will never—*never* take the rose from her breast, and know that I have watched her and am near!

EXPLANATORY SEQUEL

DURING several months subsequent to the publication of the above paper in *The Pioneer*, so much had been said and written concerning the article,—so many letters had been addressed to me on the subject, from strangers in different parts of the Union,—so gross a blunder had been committed by one or two of the leading "spiritualist" editors in re-publishing the fiction as a narrative of facts, that I decided to write an explanatory communication on the subject to Mr. James Gordon Bennett.

The communication was published in the *New-York Morning Herald* of March 12, accompanied by the following brief notice from the editor, namely :

"ASTOUNDING REVELATION FROM THE SPIRIT WORLD.—We publish to-day a curious communication from San Francisco, which will fall like a bomb-shell into the camp of the spiritualists. It appears that some months since, the writer, Mr. F. C. Ewer, of San Francisco, took it into his head to prepare for the *California Pioneer Magazine* a fiction of rather a bold and original conception, undertaking to describe the sensations of a dying man during the moment of dissolution, and sketching the scene which opens to the soul as it enters upon its second existence. Some two or three months after it was published, the writer was surprised by receiving a letter from Judge Edmonds, stating that he had copied the first part of it into the November number of the *Sacred Circle*, and adding the astounding fact that he (the Judge) had had seve-

ral spiritual interviews with the defunct fictitious hero of the narrative, 'John F. Lane!' The best part of the joke is, that the article contains assertions in physics which are impossible, and which, to minds less credulous than those of Judge Edmonds and his fellow dupes, would have at once suggested doubts as to the sincerity of the writer. The value attached to the Judge's adhesion to the new sect will, after this exposure, be considerably lessened. If his present convictions have been arrived at on such loose evidence as the above, we can only say that, however much we may admire the extent of his faith, we can have very little respect for his professional acumen."

Doubtless the *New-York Herald* of the 12th of March has already reached the eyes of nearly all that perused "The Eventful Nights" in *The Pioneer*. Nevertheless, I can not but regard it as proper, that the explanatory communication should appear in the same medium through which the article to which it relates was first presented to the public. I give it therefore below, merely remarking that the "heading" was prefixed to it by the editor of the *Herald*; namely:

"ANOTHER BOMBSHELL THROWN INTO THE CAMP OF THE SPIRITUALISTS. A NUT FOR JUDGE EDMONDS TO CRACK.

"*To the Editor of the New-York Herald:*

"I trust it is not asking too much to beg the favor of a short space in your columns for an explanation to which I find myself forced by Judge Edmonds and the editor of the *Christian Spiritualist*, in relation to a fiction prepared by me for *The Pioneer Magazine*, which, I must

say, singularly enough, they have seen fit to re-publish as fact, and as an evidence in proof of 'spiritualism,'—the former in his magazine and the latter in his newspaper.

"In order to render the matter clear to you, it is, perhaps, necessary for me to state that, in casting about for a subject, it struck me that no one had ever passed in imagination across the line of the solemn Shadow of Death, to record what may be the sensations of a dying man during the moment of dissolution, and to sketch a picture of the scenes, so to speak, which may open to the soul as it enters upon its second existence.

"Knowing that the subject would necessarily involve me in ideas somewhat metaphysical in their character, I determined, in order to render what I had to write the more attractive, to surround it with a story in the narrative style.

"My first difficulty was to account, apparently, for the manner in which the strange information concerning death and the *physique* of the future world was to reach the earth; and it occurred to me that the best mode of overcoming this difficulty would be to assume a fictitious character, describe his death, representing him as conversing up to the last moment, and then allow him to give the remainder of his experience of death, and a description of that which was opening to his gaze, by means of 'spiritual manifestations,' so called. I gave the name of 'John F. Lane' to my leading fictitious character, located the occurrences in San Francisco, and entitled the article, 'The Eventful Nights of August 20th and 21st.'

"Two or three months after it was published, I received a letter from Judge Edmonds, in which he stated that his attention had been called to the article by a friend in San Francisco, and that he had copied the first half of it into

the November number of *The Sacred Circle*. This was quite a surprise to me, but the surprise was as nothing to my astonishment on being made acquainted by him with the fact, that he had had several 'spiritual' interviews with my defunct fictitious character, 'John F. Lane.'

"I must confess I scarcely knew what step to take under the circumstances. At first I was about to write to Judge Edmonds; but on maturer thought, I decided, for several reasons, to adopt the course of addressing the public, with your liberty, through these columns. In the first place, if I am to judge any thing from the numerous letters on the subject of 'The Eventful Nights' which I have received from strangers, the article has gone broadcast over the Union. In fact, I know this to be the case, from the re-publications which are before me; and I can not but feel that the minds of many who have perused it, and believe it to be a narration of facts, should be disabused of their error. And in the second place, I am the more impelled to the step I am taking, inasmuch as the argument used by so many thousands—namely, that Judge Edmonds has for years been in the habit of weighing testimony, and that if there is enough in spiritualism to convince him, 'there must be something in it'—can now be easily refuted. The fact is made too evident for contradiction, that he has shown himself to the thousands who look for and implicitly believe his views on the subject, and to the world at large, as a man incapable of weighing testimony touching spiritualism, carefully; and not only one whose mind can be easily tossed about by the designing, but, as in this instance, to be one who is anxious to deceive himself.

"Had he merely re-published an imaginary case of 'spiritualism,' which contained no assertions in physics

impossible in themselves, or which, granting the correctness of the 'spiritualist' theory, might have occurred, the blunder would not have been so unfortunate for him as a leader in the new theory. He could only have been charged with indecent haste in accepting testimony.

"But how utterly incompetent he is to stand prominent among what has become a very numerous sect in America—how utterly unworthy he is of wielding the wide and increasing influence he unquestionably wields—will be plainly seen by any calm, thinking man, who may peruse 'The Eventful Nights of August 20th and 21st.'

"How stands the case? In the first place, the article contains assertions in physics which can not, in the nature of things, be true. For instance, a circumstance is recorded which, stripped of all surroundings, and reduced to plain English, amounts simply to this: that a magnetic needle turned away from its place at the north, and went round to the south-west point with a jerk, several times, and of its own accord. Why, it seems to me almost incredible that this fact alone should not have sufficed to stagger the Judge's credulity, great even as he has shown it to be.

"In the second place, any one who is not over-anxious to believe in spiritualism—who is not willingly blind—could hardly fail to see that the article, as a whole, is the argument *reductio ad absurdum*—to be applied to spiritualism. I assume the ground of the spiritualists, namely, that all matter conducts this mysterious 'odid fluid,' and that it is the necessary condition to interlie between mind and matter, to enable the disembodied soul to move matter, as the embodied mind moves the arm or foot; and, finally, at the close of the article, show to what an absurdity these positions will lead, namely, that the departed soul will have

a power over its dead body, which common sense and the universal experience of mankind teach it does not and can not have. For, while the 'circle' present at Lane's death are charging the table all night with the 'odetic fluid,' they unconsciously charge Lane's entire corpse, which, after his soul has given all the information promised, suddenly interrupts the conversation by rising bolt upright in the bed, opening its eyes, and announcing that the soul feels itself at that instant dying very suddenly in the next world, and passing into a third state of existence. And yet, instead of seeing this absurdity, Judge Edmonds, forsooth, clutching tightly his premises, moves placidly, like a sheep to the slaughter, into any ridiculous conclusion to which his assumptions may lead him.

"Nor is this all that should have arrested the attention of the Judge, of his collaborateur of the *Christian Spiritualist*, and of the spiritualists generally. The very communications purporting to come from Lane, present a theory with regard to the Creator, the soul, this world, the next, etc., utterly contrary to the theory maintained by the spiritualists. Lane, for instance, denies that the soul is etherealized matter, and that it has shape; he denies that the immaterial particle occupies time to pass through space—(that if it 'doesn't know,' forsooth, whether our absent friends are well or not, it can 'go and see,' and 'return and let us know.') He denies that one must become purer and better before he can advance from one state of existence to another hereafter, etc., etc. And yet Judge Edmonds, in his infatuation, and his brother editor of the *Spiritualist*, in his infatuation, have blindly republished as true, and corroborative of their theory, an article distinctly announcing a theory before which their own magnificent hierarchy of 'spheres' and 'circles,' and their

own fine-drawn materialism, must utterly fall. It really seems as if these astute investigators had adopted what the Frenchman called the Americans' motto, 'Go 'head—no mind.'

"I might allude to the ill-disguised differences of style between Lane's remarks, the remarks of another spirit, and the narrator's remarks, as well as to other internal evidences, going plainly to show that the article could not have been a narration of facts; but will only make one more statement in this connection.

"Not to go into minutiae, according to the theory developed in 'The Eventful Nights,' the soul, at death, passes into a second state of existence, as different from this as extension is from weight, and, in the process of time, dies there, and passes on to a third state, as different from the first and second as the color blue is from a mass meeting; and so on, there being no possible intercommunication between the spirits in the third state and men upon earth. And yet Judge Edmonds, while he publishes as true a statement, according to which he could have had no 'spiritual' intercourse whatever with Lane—even granting that such a character had ever existed—gives to the world a communication from him.

"That those who stand at the head of a class of religionists in America numbered by thousands—that those who are the Sir Oracles of 'spiritualists'—should have republished in their own journals, as a remarkable proof in favor of their theory, an article which, as a whole, is an argument against themselves; which, besides, contains statements in physics that could not be true, and which, in addition to this, propounds a theory before which their own must utterly fall; and, to crown all, should report a conversation which they have just announced could not

have taken place—seems almost too ridiculous for belief. The whole affair is too glaring an evidence—I will not say against 'spiritualism'—but of the blindness of its devotees, to justify my taking any other step than that of exposing it to the world.

"To complete this singular history, allow me to state that Judge Edmonds, in laying before his readers the first half of my article, publishes the letter from his friend, Mr. J. E. Austin, of this city, with a statement that he gives the article for what it is worth. In his December number, however, he publishes the conclusion, with a prefix, in which he says, that although some who have read the article doubt its truth, there is nothing in it too marvellous for him to believe; and, finally, settles the matter, so far as he is concerned, by an additional prefix, dated November 4, in which he publishes a report of a spiritual conversation about the affair between himself and Lane, containing, among other curious announcements from the latter, a promise to the effect that further communications were to come from him through me. I merely desire, by way of parenthesis, to inform Judge Edmonds and his friends that I said all I wished to say in 'The Eventful Nights'—that I consider Mr. John F. Lane exceedingly dead, and that I do not intend to write another fiction in which he shall figure.

"I find also, that after the second half had been re-published in the *Sacred Circle*, the editor of the *Christian Spiritualist*, for fear it should not be thoroughly placed before the believers in the new doctrines, and those who were wavering, re-published it again, and, to settle all cavil, writes an article nearly a column long, to prove that it is utter folly to disbelieve in 'The Eventful Nights' as a narration of facts.

"I fear that I am encroaching on your space, but the position in which I find myself demands a word or two more of explanation from me.

"Mr. A. states in his letter that there is 'much doubt existing in the minds of some of our community as to whether said article is fiction or fact;' that he knows me, and believes me to be 'entirely incapable of giving publication to so important a falsehood as this would be were it not true, and one calculated to do so much injury.' I find myself, therefore, reduced by this either to the necessity of remaining silent, and thereby implying that 'The Eventful Nights' is a narration of facts, or to the disagreeable necessity of obtruding myself upon the public with the announcement that the article is a fiction, and with an explanation, to clear up my character for veracity. I conceive that I have a perfect right, as a truthful man, to propound a theory which I have never seen in print before, and which I believe may not be without interest to some—to hold up (even at a charge of arrogance) the result of an unaided mind on earth, in contrast with a theory purporting to come from a world beyond the grave—to contrast a theory which is, as I think, consistent in all its parts, and, to say the least, not impossible, with a theory which contradicts itself, and therefore can not possibly be true. I believe that I have a perfect right to weave this theory into a fiction which, as a whole, is the argument *reductio ad absurdum*, to be applied against spiritualism, without subjecting myself to the charge of being a man regardless of the high dictates of truth. I shall say no more on this point here; but propose, now that I have become interwoven with the spiritualists, to treat the matter more at length, through the pages of my own periodical.

"Mr. Austin also writes that the little girl—alluding to

'Little Janie,' another character in the tale—was living at the house where I resided, and that I am a 'writing medium.' This reminds me very forcibly of the story of the 'Three Black Crows,' and only shows how eager spiritualists are to believe what they wish to be true. It is but another evidence that their investigations are searches, not after truth, but after proofs for their theory. It may not be irrelevant for me to say that after the article was published, if I happened to be in a ball-room where there was a little girl, or was anywhere in the neighborhood of a little girl, the question was frequently asked, 'Is that little Jane Lane?' And it is probable that Mr. Austin's story originated from the fact that at the house where I occupied a room there was a little girl, an adopted daughter of the landlady. With regard to my being a 'writing medium,' I had never had any hesitancy in saying that my hand was at times moved in a very singular manner, without any direct volition on my part, to my knowledge. And I may also take this occasion to say that, after months of calm investigation, I could and can discover no evidence of the interposition of disembodied souls. My hand has never given me information of any importance whatever, although I have given it a fair chance, and has never answered any test question correctly. On the contrary, by careful introspection and delicate memory, I have been able to trace every answer which it has penned while in this abnormal condition to the indirect action of my own mind. I can not, of course, state this with the same positiveness with which I can state that this paper is before me; but I state it with the same positiveness with which I can assert any fact of memory.

"If Mr. Austin had made inquiries—as he should have done—he would have found as others did, that there was

no house in the locality designated as the spot where Lane died.

"But all this is as naught. Whatever confidence Judge Edmonds may have had in the coolness and judgment of his friend, the latter gentleman's statement regarding the doubt existing here, should have sufficed to lead him to caution. But, this out of the question, I can not conceive how any thing could have weighed an iota against the glaring internal evidences in 'The Eventful Nights' noted above, as so plainly indicating that it could not be a narration of facts—that 'the wayfaring men, though fools, could not err therein.'

"The grammatical errors that have crept into the article during the last six months, I propose to say nothing about; but I conceive it to be proper to remark, that the title which I gave to the article was not 'Wonderful Revelations—The Eventful Nights,' etc., nor 'Wonderful but True; or, The Eventful Nights,' etc., into which it has been variously altered by other hands, but simply, 'The Eventful Nights of August 20th and 21st.' F. C. EWER.

"*San Francisco*, Feb. 7, 1855."

That the above letter should enter quite fully into particulars, and appear to some unnecessarily long, seemed to be proper from the fact that it would probably be read by many, who had never seen nor heard of "The Eventful Nights," and who knew nothing of the circumstances connected with the fiction. With regard to a few repetitions, which will doubtless meet the eye of the reader below, it should be borne in mind, also, that the several

papers which make up this article were penned at different times, and addressed to different sets of readers.

I understand that the fiction, to which the above letter relates, has been considered, by some, as bearing a close similarity to "Facts in the case of M. Valdemar," by Edgar Allan Poe. Indeed, after I had published a fiction entitled "The Great Order of The Cave," as a handmaiden to "The Eventful Nights," (the latter taking in its range the whole heavens, and the former the whole earth,) an ably edited journal of this city, *The Wide West*, intimated that I was evidently aspiring to be the "Poe of the Pacific."

It is proper for me to state, that after I had prepared the first part of the fiction and a portion of the second, a friend, to whom I read what I had written, remarked to me, that it bore resemblance, in some respects, to one of Poe's papers. I was rather surprised, but requested her to say nothing more, since I preferred to finish the fiction before I heard or read any thing which might influence me, even unconsciously to myself. It is a melancholy admission for me to make, perhaps, but the truth is, I had never read any thing of Poe's, save "The Raven" and "The Bells." So soon as I had completed "The Eventful Nights," I purchased his entire works, and read the article to which allusion has been made above. There were some three or four points of similarity between Poe's "Valdemar" and "The Eventful Nights," it is true, but

any reader who has perused both can not but have seen, that the few respects in which the two bore resemblance to each other, were, so far as my article is concerned, of very slight moment, as compared with the important respects in which they utterly differed. The gist of Poe's article consisted in the fact that, through the process of Mesmerizing, which was attempted *in articulo mortis* as an experiment, Valdemar's soul still remained attached to the body after the latter was dead. In the case of "The Eventful Nights," on the contrary, Lane died a natural death, described his sensations through spiritualism, and announced to us the condition of the great Future.

Finding, however, that—although at a far distance in the rear of Poe's—my mind was apt to run in a similar train of thought, I considered it as absolutely essential for me to read all that he had ever written, in order not to meet him, even in unimportant particulars, in any fiction that I might write subsequently. The reader may therefore judge of my surprise, on finding myself charged with precisely that which I most desired to avoid.

So many interesting facts and letters had collected around "The Eventful Nights," that in order to preserve those which had not already been lost or destroyed, and to put them into a compact form, I gathered them into a private volume for my library, believing, moreover, that such a volume would be entertaining to my relatives and more intimate friends.

Among other things in the book is a paper showing the analytical and synthetical process of my mind during the writing of the article; which I prepared under the conviction that the volume would not be complete, unless it contained a recounting of the motives which led me to write the fiction, and a history, so to speak, of its conception and composition.

I have been advised by a number of friends—one or two of whom, on reading the paper, recognized the process of mind recounted, (having been kind enough to sit patiently through my "calls" and allow me to "talk at" them, before writing the fiction)—I have been advised, I say, by these and several others to extract the paper from the volume and lay it before the public. Members of that peculiar species of bores who can get along much better if they utter their thoughts aloud, half to themselves and half to some one else, while arranging an argument or conceiving a fiction, will understand well what I intend to imply by the somewhat colloquial phrase "*talk at.*"

The pronoun in the first person is necessarily repeated innumerable times in the paper. While there would be nothing objectionable in this, so long as the article remained private and open to the perusal of my relatives and friends only, I can not, of course, but feel that in presenting it to the world, I lay myself open to a charge of egotism. But recent events have called "The Eventful Nights" so prominently before the public, that I am not

sure but that it would be advisable for me to explain myself even more fully than I have done in the letter given above, particularly since it seems to be believed by many in the States, who did not credit "The Eventful Nights" as a narrative of facts, that I wrote it while in a trance, or under the influence of opium, or something of that sort. It is to satisfy such, as well as to explain myself fully, once and for all, that I have decided to undergo the opprobrium of a charge of egotism, and follow the advice of my friends, by giving extracts from the paper above alluded to, as contained among the manuscripts in my private volume. The article is entitled:

THE COMPOSITION

OF

THE EVENTFUL NIGHTS OF AUGUST 20 AND 21:

SHOWING THE ANALYTICAL AND SYNTHETICAL PROCESS DURING
THE WRITING OF THE ARTICLE.

I FREELY confess, that the idea of preparing the present paper was suggested by an article of Edgar A. Poe's, entitled "The Philosophy of Composition," in which he describes the *modus* of construction, which ended in the production of "The Raven."

I have for years—I may say from early boyhood—been in the habit of watching the operations and changes of my mind. I could sit down and trace most of the actions of my life—important as well as unimportant—to the motives and combinations of motives from which they

sprang, and the operations of my mind prior to and during the composition of "The Eventful Nights," having a bearing upon that article, are so vivid in my memory, that I can lay them bare to whomsoever the exposure may promise entertainment.

In his "Philosophy of Composition," Poe says:

"I have often thought how interesting a magazine paper might be written by any author who would—that is to say, who *could*—detail, step by step, the process by which any of his compositions attained its ultimate point of completion. Why such a paper has never been given to the world, I am much at a loss to say—but, perhaps, the authorial vanity has had more to do with the omission than any other cause. Most writers—poets in especial—prefer having it understood that they compose by a species of fine frenzy—an ecstatic intuition—and would positively shudder at letting the public take a peep behind the scenes, at the elaborate and vacillating crudities of thought—at the true purposes seized only at the last moment—at the innumerable glimpses of idea that arrived not at the maturity of full view—at the fully matured fancies discarded in despair as unmanageable—at the cautious selections and rejections—at the painful erasures and interpolations—in a word, at the wheels and pinions—the tackle for scene-shifting—the step-ladders and demon-traps—the cock's feathers, the red paint and black patches which, in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, constitute the properties of the literary *histrion*."

Although this was suggested by Poe's "Philosophy of Composition," the mental process which I used in the preparation of "The Eventful Nights" was by no means suggested by Poe, since (I am ashamed to confess) the article was entirely written before I read Poe's works. But the analogy which existed between Poe's process of mind in writing "The Raven," and my own in writing "The Eventful Nights," was so striking, and Poe's article interested me so much, that I determined for once wittingly to act upon his hint—follow in his footsteps and record

my own mental operations, as he had recorded his, in the belief that, as the "Philosophy of Composition" had been entertaining to me, this might not be without interest to some others.

* * * * *

In casting about for a subject, my great aim was originality. I determined to write *nothing*—rather than follow in the footsteps of another. I have no sympathy for those would-be authors who run about to ring the thousandth change where nine hundred and ninety-nine have been rung already. Give me vileness with originality rather than respectable triteness. The former has at least something to recommend it—the latter nothing.

While searching for a subject, I remembered a lecture which I had delivered before the Sacramento Mercantile Library Association in June, 1851—the subject of which was "The Universalities of Nature." In it I had stated that there were certain conditions in nature underlying it and running up through all things. There were Motion—Forms—Harmony—Connection—Beauty—The Arch—and Eternity. So that the sentence by which we may describe the universe is "Connected and beautiful forms moving harmoniously in arches through all eternity." I could not but feel that there was some originality in the lecture—at least, I had never seen the same thoughts in print nor heard them from the lips of others. It suggested itself to me that what I had said in the lecture was but a part of the system which I had believed, and which I might develop clearly by a little thought. And at first I had an idea of presenting that system to the public. It would be new, and might at least satisfy some who were in doubt as to what they should believe. But although I much

desired to publish it, I could not but feel that it was of too metaphysical and dry a character to attract the attention of the general reader.

For the most complete success I should adopt some subject which was very prominently before the community as a matter of discussion, and combine originality with that.

At the same time it struck me that no writer had ever carried a soul through the gates of death and into the regions beyond—that no one had ever described what may be the sensations and thoughts of a dying man from the time when he ceases to speak—his experience immediately after death, and the strange condition of affairs to which the departed spirit may first awake. Here, at least, was an attractive and—what was of all importance—untrodden field before me, with all the breadth that I could desire. I determined in an instant to enter upon it, but at the same time I did not wish to give up the idea of presenting my system of former belief to the public, for the good of whom it might concern; and I immediately saw that I could combine the two, and at the same time gain another point, by interweaving a subject which was agitating men's minds to a remarkable degree—the subject of spiritualism.

These thoughts passed through my mind in about one fiftieth of the time it has taken the reader to peruse them.

I determined, therefore, to write an article, in which I would describe a dying man, who should converse with me up to the time when his tongue should cease to act, and give me the remainder of his experience of death, together with a description of that to which he was awakening, by means of spiritual manifestations. My lecture and former system of belief could then come from him as communications, with a temporary effect upon the reader's mind,

arising from the fact of its having apparently all the authority of an announcement from the mighty spirit land. I foresaw that my great difficulty would be to create in imagination a state of things—a *physique*, so to speak—for the world after death, which should be entirely original, *totally* different from the condition of affairs surrounding us here—as totally different as is the spirit from the body—but which at the same time would not be impossible. Feeling confident, however, that when it should become necessary for me to describe such a state of things, I could in some way, I knew not how, accomplish the *desideratum* to my satisfaction, I gave little thought to it at the time.

The article would depend for its success upon the excellence of two distinct effects—first, that to be produced from a description of death; second, that to be produced by the development of a new and complete theory of the Infinite God, his works, and the connection between his works and himself. The latter was somewhat metaphysical, and I foresaw that it would be necessary for me to bring to bear what of ability was within me so to attract the interest of the general reader to the first half, as to induce him to read the last half, which would not otherwise be perused by him. At the same time I felt that however much the first half might attract for the moment, the real value of the article would depend almost entirely upon the originality and consistency of the last half.

Meanwhile, I had enough to do to succeed in bringing about the effect of the article by carrying the man through death; and I approached with determination the more minute portions of my work.

The first point that arose was, what should be the character of the recital?—should it bear about it the fictitious air, or not? The answer was clear. For effect's sake, it

should by all means be written as a narrative. The great point that I was to bear in mind was, therefore, a combination of probability with originality. The next question was, should the party whose dying is to be described, be an acquaintance of mine or a stranger to me? For obvious reasons, which will appear from a perusal of "The Eventful Nights," I decided that the effect would be heightened were the fictitious character represented as a stranger to me. How then was I to know that he was in a dying condition? The most probable way was through a note sent to me by him. At first, I thought the note should be brought by a little boy; but it struck me the reader would be apt to be rather more interested in a little girl, as the more delicate of the two, and I promptly adopted the latter. It was at this point that I determined to relieve the article from its sombre cast, and to add interest to it, by weaving a thread of pathos through its entire length. The father must be in indigent circumstances. The little girl must be in want. A wife would be in the way, and would complicate matters too much. The little daughter would be the sole companion of the dying man. Although poor, he must be educated, for he had important truths to acquaint me with. He must live in some cheap tenement on the outskirts of the city.

But as the article opened before me in this condition, I did not fail to see that it would be little else than an enormous lie. And for a day or two I gave up all thoughts of writing it. It struck me, however, that it might be made the means of good, provided I could make spiritualism a very prominent element in it, and so write it as to deceive at first, but to appear very evidently, on a second and more careful perusal, to be the argument *reductio ad absurdum*, to be applied to spiritualism. It

might awaken the eyes of some to the fact that they had been in the habit of accepting testimony touching the new doctrines, with too little thought. It might show them to how great a degree they were anxious to believe, rather than properly to search for the truth.

I resumed the matter again, and decided not only to make the whole paper the *reductio ad absurdum*, but to leave concealed improbabilities in the article which would be so great as to amount very nearly, if not quite, to impossibilities.

This suggested to me the self-moving compass, an account of which appears in the early part of the story. The house, too, where the scene occurred, should be near others, and yet no neighbors should visit the dying man to furnish him with any thing to eat, or in fact to offer the slightest humane attention. It would not be proper to locate the scene upon a lot where a tenement stood, lest the owner or occupant should object. I thought of selecting my own lot, south-west corner of Sacramento and Hyde streets. But it was too near town, and many might remember that there was no house there. For while keeping in mind the necessity of improbabilities, I did not wish to sacrifice the verisimilitude of the article, upon which in no small degree depended its success. I then decided upon a location in the vicinity of Yerba Buena Cemetery, believing that if I could conceal any appearance of effort in locating the scene there, the solemnity of the place would have a slight effect upon the mind of the reader, the cause of which would not be noted by him at the time. For success, I depended in no small degree upon the *number*, rather than the *intensity* of the effects, which I should thus seek to produce prior to the climax of the fiction. I consulted a map at Wainwright & Ran-

dall's office, and selected a lot on McAllister street, (facing the cemetery,) upon which there was no tenement.

The question then arose—Why should Lane send for *me*, rather than any one else? It now struck me, that, from the importance of the information to be gained from him, the reader would think it natural that the spirits should desire its publication, that they should acquaint Lane (who of course must be a believer in spiritualism) with the fact that he was to be the medium of presenting to the world important information, and instruct him to send for an editor, or some one who had access to the columns of a paper. As I have said, I had been the subject of some little remark in 1852 from my connection with the spiritualists, having been considered as weak-headed enough to believe in the new doctrines. It would not be improbable that he, being a spiritualist, had heard of me, and if he were represented as unacquainted personally with any editor, it would be the most natural thing in the world for him to send for me. Here the idea that the spirits would know of his decision, and that they might be represented to use the compass to endeavor to communicate to me the fact I was to go out in a south-west direction to Lane's house, occurred to me.

The sympathies of the reader must be gradually awakened for the little girl by slight circumstances, and must be made eventually to cluster strongly around her. To begin with, she must hunt me up in this great city. She must be old enough to be able to go upon such an errand, and yet too young to render her father any material assistance in his sickness. She must persevere in the search for me, but not find my whereabouts until about dusk, when the little one must hasten back, through the darkness, over the lonesome hills, to her poor dying father

—to her far-away home. There would be no apparent effort in this—it was natural, and at the same time it would tend gradually to awaken the sympathies of the reader.

The next thought that I had about the matter was, that it would by no means be proper for me to go out to the house, and allow the man to die like a dog, without assistance. Besides, I should have witnesses, and one of these should clearly be a physician. Some little skill was to be exercised in keeping from the reader the object of my visit to Lane's house, and at the same time letting drop casually a sufficient motive for my being accompanied while there with friends. The necessity of witnesses seemed, however, to be clear. Accordingly, I opened the matter to —, and —, told them the plan of my article, and asked them if they had any objection to my using their names in it. They said that they had none, and I determined to make them my companions in the fictitious adventures. Subsequently, however, while writing the article, I changed my mind with regard to this, as I saw that it would give the paper too near an approach to a lie. I rejected real characters for companions, and selected the fictitious titles of "Mr. H." and "Dr. L.," believing that the reader would say, "Well, if this were true—if Mr. E. were sincere in this matter, of course he would have given the names in full of parties to whom we could refer."

My next point was—How should the whole article be planned, to be the *argumentum reductio ad absurdum*? Brief thought enabled me to decide upon adopting the grounds of the spiritualists—that the "odie fluid" is generated in the human system—that all things conduct it—that it is the necessary condition to interlie between mind and matter to enable the former to will the latter into

motion—and then show to what an absurdity this theory would lead, by representing Lane's corpse, which of course is matter, as thoroughly charged by us with the fluid, during our final experiments; as bursting open the top of the coffin while we were bearing him in the midst of a crowd (attracted to the spot) towards his grave in Yerba Buena; as rising (of course by means of the willing of hosts of departed spirits)—as rising slowly in a horizontal position, while we stood with the coffin in our arms gazing upward at it; as changing gradually in its upward course from the horizontal to a perpendicular position; and as finally (its grave-clothes fluttering in the wind) entering a small white cloud, which in its course from the east across the heavens bears it out of our sight into the western horizon. This plan I adhered to without a thought of changing it, until the second part was nearly written, when I became convinced that it would not be an appropriate and dignified conclusion to that which preceded—that with it the paper, as a work of art, would not be considered as successful. Acting upon this belief I drew my pen through that portion of the conclusion which I had already written, and wrote that conclusion which appeared in print—giving (in accordance with the theory of the spiritualists) Lane's soul that power of motion over his dead body, which, from what preceded, would not strike the reader as being equally ridiculous as impossible, while at the same time it was a power which common sense and the universal experience of mankind teach the soul does not and can not have. This conclusion was also selected, from the fact that it would put a natural and complete close to the article. For if Lane were represented as still having the power to commune with us, the close of the article would have the appearance of depend-

ing entirely upon my will, and the reader might still desire and expect further communications at some subsequent time.

But to resume. I now reviewed the work I had gone over. The climax of the fiction was to be the announcement that Lane, during the process of dying and entering the other world, should, through spiritual "tippings," give us his sensations, and describe to us that to which he was awakening. The article must be toned gradually up until this point was gained. The nature of the climax was to be entirely concealed prior to its announcement, while at the same time such hints were to be dropped as would arouse the reader's wonder and curiosity. Although the climax would occur early in the fiction, comparatively, the reader would not be satisfied, as he would still wish to read on and learn what *was* the experience of Lane while dying, and what he saw after death. Had the article been different in this respect, I should not have attempted to write it, since I could have anticipated nothing else than failure. The article would be in two distinct parts, each complete in itself—the first containing the story of Lane's death, the second, the theory of Deity, Here and Hereafter. The latter would depend for its success upon originality of idea, strangeness, clearness, and beauty of diction. The whole was a hazardous experiment, and the least I could do was to try.

I had now proceeded sufficiently far to take pen in hand. But a difficulty met me at the threshold. Of course, I desired that the article should be read. It should be so commenced, therefore, as strongly to attract the reader's attention at the very outset. The first line should be such, that if any one glanced at it, he would be likely to read the whole sentence. This should be so written as to

entice him into reading the second, which should only awaken his attention the more ; so that the first paragraph would perhaps cause him to settle himself in his chair for at least a page or so.

Accordingly, for my opening sentence I penned the following, namely :

"I am about to undertake a task—here in the silence of this room—to which I feel impelled by a combination of circumstances, such as, I believe, never surrounded mortal man before."

Having satisfied myself that this would have the desired effect, I endeavored to awaken the reader the more to a wish to peruse what was to succeed, by the following, namely :

"I am hurried to its accomplishment—to the unburdening of my mind from certain strange intelligence—not only on account of an express order which I have received, the nature and particulars of which will more fully appear below, but because I feel that I can only relieve my mind from its insufferable weight by laying before the public the occurrences of the last two nights."

Thinking that these two sentences would accomplish my purpose—that I was perhaps sure of the reader's attention for at least a page or so, I decided so to write that page—to give the reader such glimmerings merely of some strange important matter that was to follow, as to induce him fairly to compose himself to accompany where I should lead him, even though it were through the drier parts of my recital.

I fancied myself, as the narrator, seated in Lane's room, the description of which sprang into my mind at once from I know not what source. I fancied myself as having just taken my pen after the occurrences, to write the very

article which I was about to write. I described my position and imagined sensations, keeping in view the fact that I was not to preëxpose any of the important points of the article. In this condition I wrote the page, (about three pages of manuscript.) I was, in fact, seated in my own room. But so vivid were my feelings, that I actually felt as though I had witnessed the occurrences I was about to describe. I heard my own loud breathings as I stated, and involuntarily turned round with a shudder towards my bed with a feeling which some may understand when I say it was akin to a mad wish that I might see the body of a man lying there, lifeless and grim. I should say that during this time, I kept in mind that I should so write as to lead the reader to suppose perhaps that a murder had been committed. I imagined the child seated on a box at the foot of my bed behind me, and as finally stealing to me, putting her arms around my neck, and saying, in simple tones and language :

"What are you writing, sir? Come with me; I am *very* lonesome. Come to father and make him talk."

I wrote on that—"I kissed her upon her fair white forehead and said: 'Hush child! Father will not speak to us any more to-night. You shall go with me to-morrow, and we'll take father with us'"—when I burst into tears myself. I wrote, that "I led her back to her seat and turned quickly—for the tears were gushing to my eyes," when I threw down the pen, unable from excitement to write any more that night. I could not but feel satisfied that I had attained the effect desired; for if I (foolishly enough, it must be confessed) had been moved to tears, it was reasonable to suppose that the reader's mere *interest* would be excited sufficiently to induce him to accompany

me over the commencement proper of the article, which was now about to follow, and so far beyond, that he would begin to rise towards the climax with me, and not leave me until he had finished at least the first half of the article.

The next evening I sat down to my work to pen the commencement proper of the fiction. The reader will see that there remains little else for me to say, save to record a few incidents that occurred during the writing of the paper, and to note one or two other changes in the minutiae of the plan at first decided upon, which occurred to me while composing.

I need not say why the dash at the scientific was made at the commencement proper of the recital. I need not say that the parenthesis occurring in the first sentence of that commencement, namely, "I will not (at least upon this occasion) go into the *rationale* of spiritualism," was inserted to gain a slight effect upon the reader's mind—as though I had said, "Well, I can not stop now to do this, but as I am thoroughly committed to the new doctrines, I may as well, after publishing one paper, undertake the matter seriously." Such facts will be sufficiently clear without a hint from me. In addition to the reasons given above for the insertion of the spirit-guided compass, I felt that it would act upon the sentiment of the superstitious in the reader, already prepared from what had gone before to be awakened, and would, at the same time, be to him, should he review the article carefully after reading it once, a most positive evidence of its fictitious character. The tea-poy, statuette, cross, etc., were actually in my room as I described them. The name of "Little Janie" was adopted principally from the fact that there was no straining for effect in it.

When the article was advanced to the point where the narrator and his friends had reached the house, a difficulty occurred to me which I had not thought of before. I saw that it was necessary for me to write in four different styles, namely, first, the style of the narrative, which from the fact that it was represented as written late at night and hastily, should have an air of simplicity and carelessness about it; second, the style of Lane while living, serious and impressive; third, the style of the spirit who announces what is to be done; and, fourth, the style of Lane while in the spirit land. For the style of the unknown spirit, I affected short disconnected sentences. For the style of Lane after death, I affected—if I may use that convenient and expressive term—the "hyfalutin'." But the first part of the paper succeeded so fully in permanently deceiving large numbers, that I became alarmed, and concluded to leave the internal evidence of the fictitious nature of the article more apparent in the last half, by attempting no disguises of style whatever. The difficulty of accounting for my exact repetition of Lane's words, was easily overcome by representing Lane—in view of the importance of our interview—as instructing us to note down upon the spot all that was said or done.

Lane's first conversation with me was inserted, that I might have an opportunity of showing the reader that the narrator, after investigation, had not been a victim of spiritualism—that therefore his narration was at least worthy of respectful consideration; and that I might also have an opportunity of preparing the disbelieving reader for what was to follow, by presenting what I thought a sensible argument, going to show that the spiritualist theory was not impossible in the nature of things, nay, that it might be considered as actually probable, since it

announced no greater change in the order of things than science shows has already occurred many a time upon the earth. My object, as will be remembered, was to make the reader believe the article was true until he reached the *denouement*, or until he had carefully looked over the fiction a second time.

Without wishing to reflect upon myself as inclined to the "hyfalutin'" style, I would state that by all means the most difficult part of the article for me to write, was the narrative, that portion which, in fact, would seem to be the simplest. This was written several times before I was satisfied with it. Next to the narrative in difficulty of composition, were the disconnected remarks of Lane just before the spirit parted from the body, which were re-written three or four times; and although I finally accepted the last version, I was by no means satisfied with it.

My aim in the death-scene was originality. And yet I saw, of course, that it would be folly for me to run counter to the knowledge and universal experience of mankind. I was *forced*, therefore, to represent Lane's senses as growing dimmer and dimmer, until he could not see and could scarcely hear. I felt that if I could once get him thoroughly dead, I could then enter upon a field where I could range at will in search of originality.

I would state that in order to write as effective a description of the dying of Lane as was possible for me, I lay down upon my bed one evening at eight o'clock, put out the light, and fancied myself going through the process of dying. My imagination became so excited, that in less than five minutes I sprang up alarmed, and had to light the lamp, feel my pulse, and look round a little to convince myself that I had not actually died. The next day I wrote the dying scene as it appeared in print.

Consumption was the disease which I selected for Lane, as being that around which Melancholy and Beauty hover as attendant angels.

When I had carried Lane through death, it struck me that the process of eliciting information by putting questions and receiving answers from him through "tips" of the table, would be so tedious as to be impracticable; and I decided to represent him as willing the hand of his corpse to grasp a pencil and write what he wished to communicate. For effect's sake, however, I so altered this, that his hand should grasp mine, which should be represented as holding the pencil and writing a question; and I therefore was further urged to endeavor to make the scene at the death sufficiently impressive to warrant, in the eyes of the reader, my *writing* the question, instead of uttering it aloud.

I was engaged in writing the first half during the leisure hours of about a month. I did not, at any time, advance more than a page a day.

The main difficulty in the last half, was so to commence it as to awaken the reader's attention once more after a month's delay, by suggesting to his mind what had preceded, without repeating myself—to awaken, again, his sympathy for "Little Janie," and to remind him of precisely what information had been promised from Lane, that he might not expect too much.

My lecture was altogether too long to be inserted as a communication, so I condensed it into two pages, and published it in that shape.

I was occupied but a brief space of time in conceiving what I was to write as a description of the condition of things in which Lane found himself after death. Several ideas suggested themselves to me, and the questions which

I put to myself, were: Has this been thought of or published before? If so, it was rejected. Would any one be likely to think of this? If so, I rejected it. When I struck upon something which I thought could not but be original, the remaining questions which I asked myself, were: Is this state of things as *utterly* different from this world as is spirit from body? Is it impossible, to say the least for it, to be *true*? Having satisfied myself on these points, I proceeded to write again. The spirit-land should be represented as composed of souls and their ever-varying out-creations. I endeavored to attack materialism by showing that it was possible to conceive of spirit as being without shape—as not occupying *time* to pass through *space*. I endeavored to analyze Infinity and show the reader what a vast difference there was between the Infinite God, and man, though his life were infinite in duration. I endeavored to show that it was folly for us to seek to learn (admitting the spiritualist theory to be true) whether or not the souls of our friends were happy. I endeavored to make my whole theory harmonious and consistent in all its parts—which can not be said of spiritualism. I endeavored to make the answers purporting to come from the spirit-land contain something of real moment, and not the insane generalities about progress, and the ridiculous materialisms of "spheres and circles," which we are in the habit of receiving through the instrumentality of the so-called mediums. In fact, I was determined to make Lane *say something* which, if true, would be of importance to the world.

I was occupied in writing the second half, about five or six evenings. The selection of a title gave me no little annoyance.

When the article was finished, I found that it was com-

plete in all respects, except the disposition of Little Janie.

To have represented her as growing up under my care, and as becoming a staid matron with six bouncing children, or any thing after that style, was impossible from the nature of things, and would have been simply ridiculous. What was there for me to do but to kill her and so put an entire completion to the fiction? Accordingly, for the November number I wrote "Flown." It was intended to be a reverie, in which my thoughts were traced as I sat in my room immediately after her death, while she was lying in her little bed in a room opening into mine. It may strike some readers as an ineffectual attempt at the pathetic. It may be so, but all that I can say is, it was written without effort, and was the dearest flower of my soul, torn up by the roots and offered to the world. If it is rejected of all, I shall still love it tenderly.

In the *New-York Herald* of the 14th March, appeared the following rejoinder from Judge J. W. Edmonds to my letter given above, namely :

"Letter From Judge Edmonds.

"No. 85 CHAMBERS STREET, March 14, 1854.

"*To the Editor of the Herald :*

"Your paper of the 12th contains a letter from San Francisco, with the signature of F. C. Ewer, from which it appears that I was fool enough to receive as true an article under his own name, published in the *Pioneer*, a monthly magaizne, edited by him, and which purported on its face to be the relation of facts within his own knowledge.

"It is true I did so receive it. But I also received a letter from a gentleman of San Francisco, assuring me of its truth. I learned on inquiry that Mr. E. had an office under the General Government. Mr. Lecount, one of the publishers of the *Pioneer*, at that time in this city, and one or two others who professed to know him, gave the assurance that Mr. Ewer was a gentleman utterly incapable of perpetrating such a fraud as that would be if not the truth. Mr. Ewer himself sent to me, by a gentleman direct from San Francisco, a copy of his magazine, without the slightest intimation on his part that the articles were otherwise than what they professed to be, namely, the relation of an actual fact; but that, on the contrary, he had said to his messenger, when interrogated by him, 'Do you think I would publish a lie under my own name?' And twice, through a medium in whose communications I had been in the habit of placing a good deal of confidence, I received messages which tended in the same direction.

"It was under these circumstances that I trusted in the truthfulness of Mr. Ewer; and now it would seem—if this letter to you is genuine—that I was gulled and imposed upon by a fabrication.

"If the object of the device, and all the pains taken to carry it out, was to impose on my confidence, it has been successful.

"If the object was to show me the dangers of spiritual intercourse, and how liable we are to be deceived by false or fabricated communications, it was quite unnecessary; for I long ago learned that, and have earnestly, once and again, given utterance to a warning against that danger.

"If the object was to give me the pain of learning that a gentleman occupying a public station, and appearing be

fore the world as the editor of a magazine having some pretension to a standing in our literature, was unworthy the confidence I had reposed in his word, it was equally unnecessary ; for I had already learned the public use he had made of a private letter which I had written him in the confidence which I hope will always obtain among gentlemen, and it was not demanded that he should super-add to it the humiliation of proclaiming his own fraud.

"If the purpose was to convince me that men having a fair exterior could still be otherwise than what they seemed, it was also unnecessary ; for I had not presided so long over a criminal court without learning something of the degradation to which the influence of evil passions, and a perverted education, may sink the fairest-seeming among us.

"But if the purpose was to induce me to withhold all confidence in my fellow man, or all reliance upon spirit communion, it has signally failed.

"I have been imposed upon many times in my life, and as I grow older, and the instances multiply around me, I am admonished to greater caution than was habitual with me in my more confiding years. But I can not yet withhold all confidence in my fellow man, or in the testimony, on any subject, which may reach me through his instrumentality.

J. W. EDMONDS."

The following letter from one W. J. BANER was also given immediately after Judge Edmonds', namely :

"*To the Editor of the Herald:*

"One or two facts in relation to F. C. Ewer's letter, published in Monday's *Herald*, should be stated, in justice to the spiritualists of this city.

"The first is, that with the exception of Judge Edmonds, and Mr. Toohey, the editor of the *Christian Spiritualist*, the fiction of Mr. Ewer was received with universal skepticism. This is shown by the fact that at a large conference of spiritualists, held a few evenings after Mr. Ewer's fiction was published in this city, there was but one man possessed of sufficient credulity to manifest the slightest faith in this story, and this man was Mr. Toohey.

"The next fact that should be mentioned is, that Judge Edmonds, though he has achieved a deservedly high position in this community, both as a man and a jurist, is by no means a Sir Oracle among spiritualists. Indeed, it is more true of spiritualists than of any other class of people in the world, that each individual is obliged, from the nature of the facts brought before him, to stand distinctly upon his own judgment, and to refuse positively to have his reputation for sanity or common sense placed upon the shoulders of any man, however high his reputation for sagacity or worldly wisdom.

"If you will allow the above statements to go to the world through the medium of the *Herald*, you will greatly oblige

Yours, truly,

"NEW YORK, March 14, 1855. W. J. BANER."

My response, sent to the *Herald*, was as follows, namely:

"Reply to Judge Edmonds.

"To the Editor of the *Herald* :

"With your liberty, I desire to say a few words in response to the letters of Judge J. W. Edmonds and one W. J. Baner, (published in *The Herald* of the 20th March), having reference to me and to 'The Eventful Nights of August 20th and 21st.'

"It is perhaps folly for me to state so evident a fact, as that the Judge's letter is utterly wide of the controversy. He does not make the slightest pretension to meet the real merits of the affair, at all. He incontinently packs up, without saying one word, and leaves the field.

"Yes, it is even so ;—he has been weak enough to republish as true—as corroborative of his theory, a fiction from which the slightest analysis would have developed several impossibilities and numberless improbabilities—a fiction which is evidently an argument showing his own proposition to be absurd—a fiction which, even if it were not an argument against himself, contains a theory before which his own must fall ; and, to crown all, he has held solemn conversations with a fictitious character, with whom, even if the tale were true, he could not, according to its statements, have held any communication whatever. Not one item does he deny, and the controversy is in fact closed.

"But he is not utterly undeserving of praise in the affair. For it can not but be admitted that he has had the frankness to come out and acknowledge (humiliating though it may be) that he is in a corner. Frankness is a jewel. Whether he could have taken any other step, is not, perhaps, to be inquired into too closely. It is, one must confess, no very pleasant admission for a man to be compelled to make, that, after having been for years upon the bench deciding upon the soundness or fallacy of arguments, he should have been so far led astray—he should have been 'fool enough,' to use his own phrase—to admit and re-publish an argument going decidedly to disprove the very proposition which he seeks to establish. Indeed, Mr. Editor, on the principle of not kicking a man when he

is down, I have no desire to do aught else than to commend the Judge to the kind sympathies of the public.

"But what does this lame rejoinder of his amount to? Why, finding himself in an inextricable predicament, he struggles to get out of his corner by explaining how it happened that he got in, and, under the circumstances, crying 'Mercy!' The ridiculousness of his pitiful situation, would induce me, now that the controversy is virtually closed, to say no more; but as his explanation contains several assertions, expressed and implied, which call for a flat denial from me, I am forced to the melancholy resort of driving him out of his corner and from the last beam where he has a foothold.

"His explanation appears to be that, first, he learned on undoubted authority, I was a truthful man, and incapable of publishing a fraud. I commend him to the same kind authorities still, and to that portion of my letter in the *Herald* of the 12th March, to which he has forgotten to allude, in which I stated, that I conceived I had a perfect right as a truthful man to propound a theory which I had never seen in print before, and which I believed might not be without interest to some—to hold up, even at a charge of arrogance, the result of an unaided mind on earth in contrast with a theory purporting to come from a world beyond the grave—to contrast a theory which is consistent in all its parts, and to say the least, not impossible, with a theory which contradicts itself, and therefore can not possibly be true. I believed I had a perfect right to weave that theory into a fiction, which, as a whole, would be the argument *reductio ad absurdum*, to be applied against spiritualism, without subjecting myself to the charge of being a man regardless of the high dictates of truth.' It may be an evidence of unusual sagacity in the

Judge, that he has not attempted to violate *all* common sense, by denying the truth of the above. But until he shall have done so, he must not expect me to exhibit an equal want of common sense with himself, by noticing further a mere assertion of his, which has already been fully answered.

"His second explanation is, that I sent him a copy of the magazine by a gentleman direct from San Francisco, saying to that gentleman, 'Do you think I would publish a lie under my own name?' My memory is tolerable, and it only serves me with the fact that I sent an exchange to Judge Edmonds, of the *Sacred Circle*, while the other exchanges were preparing for the mail. But this is child's play. What could the Judge desire to establish, more than that I wished to have a magazine go direct to him? If, in his agitation, he is anxious to excite sympathy for himself through this fact, I will give him the opportunity. I did direct a magazine to him, put it into the mail, and, of course, positively intended that it should reach him. But before I proceed further, let me in this connection make an extract from his letter :

" 'If the object of the device, [says he,] and all the pains taken to carry it out, was to impose on my confidence, it has been successful.'

I positively deny that there was any *device* on my part. I positively deny that I took any pains to deceive the Judge. I sent him the magazine and I had a perfect right, either through private hands or through the mail, to place it beneath his eyes. The theory developed in it was utterly opposed to his, and I supposed it would be entertaining to him. I thought, of course, that he would read it with interest. But I gave the man credit for ordinary sagacity ; he had been 'for years upon the bench of

a criminal court,' and I was never more astonished in my life than when I received his letter announcing that he had been rash enough to publish the first half. Even then I supposed that when he should see the last half, he would certainly find out his error. But no, he completed his humiliation by re-publishing that also, and giving several communications, which he, forsooth, had received from the fictitious character, John F. Lane, who, as I have said above, even if the article were true, was represented as utterly beyond the reach of communicating with any one on earth.

"But whether I or any one else did or did not send him the magazine, the Judge seems to forget, in his agitation, that it really makes no difference. Supposing, for the sake of argument, that I sent a magazine to him by a messenger direct, it will not help the matter for him, since he none the less blindly overlooked all the internal evidences of the fictitious character of the article, and disregarded the advice of his friends who cautioned him against it.

"There is little else for me to state. The Judge remarks, that 'if the object of the *device* [forsooth!] was to show me the dangers of spiritual intercourse, and how liable we are to be deceived by false or fabricated communications, it was unnecessary, as I had long ago learned the fact, and cautioned others in relation to it.' It is to be regretted that the Judge was not guided by the light of his experience.

"If," says he, 'the object was to give me the pain of learning that a gentleman, etc., etc., was unworthy of confidence, it was unnecessary; for I had already learned the public use he had made of my private letter to him, and it was not demanded that he should superadd to it the hu

miliation of publishing his own fraud.' As for making public use of a private letter, I would state that the Judge is misinformed. I have not allowed either his letter, or any copy of it, ever to leave my hands. I consider it equally sacred with a letter from my sister. If 'publishing my own fraud' is not beneath the Judge to charge, after my first letter to the *Herald*, completely refuting it, (and still unanswered,) I assure him that I consider any response to it beneath me to make.

"If," says he, 'the purpose was to convince me that men may not be what they seem, it was unnecessary; for I had not presided so long over a criminal court without learning something of the degradation to which the influence of evil passions and a perverted education may sink the fairest-seeming amongst us.' His Honor grows facetious: but really he reminds one a little of 'Patience on a monument, smiling at Grief.' He seems to intimate that he has seen such fellows as I am before at the bar of a criminal court. Oh, Judge—Judge! I can not assert that this is another evidence that his Honor's mind is a little shaken from its balance, for my associations during life have not been very intimate with criminals; but I will state that curiosity led me once to visit the Insane Asylum at Stockton, in order to investigate somewhat the condition of the unfortunates placed there for a restoration of mental health, and really the Judge's condition calls up to my mind recollections of a most sad and unpleasant character. But admitting what he would intimate, it only makes the matter worse in his agitation, the further he goes. For even if I were a man regardless of the dictates of truth, his Honor but admits that his experience has availed him naught.

"But if," says he, 'the purpose was to induce me to

withhold all confidence in my fellow man, it has signally failed.' Ah, Judge! it should teach you to have less confidence in yourself.

"But with regard to all the 'ifs,' I beg the Judge to bear in mind once again, that there were *no* intentions whatever on my part, for I sincerely assure him that I had not the slightest idea he would be 'fool enough' to republish 'The Eventful Nights of August 20th and 21st.'

"If it would not be considered as arrogance in me to drop one little word of advice to him, I would say, that by far the sagest plan for him to have adopted, when he found himself in his corner, would have been to remain there, looking up with an air of unconcern, and when the laugh was over, and his agitation was calmed, he could have slipped quietly out, and gone on his way into obscurity, unnoticed by any one.

"One word more, and then farewell. The world will hardly believe, Judge, that there are not truthful spirits enough among the 'spheres and circles' to tell you (if you have not sagacity enough to see it yourself) whether the next document you would gladly devour be genuine or not. Alas for that man who putteth not his own theory into practice!

"And now, one line for Mr. Baner. I am very ready to believe that large numbers of the New-York spiritualists saw the fictitious narrative of 'The Eventful Nights.' It would be a sad commentary on the acumen of many of my friends in that great city, if it were not so. Moreover, were it not so, I should really be alarmed for fear that I *had* composed a downright enormous lie, and was unworthy of being regarded as a truthful man. But if Mr. Baner will come to San Francisco, I will show him by letters from New-York, that he was misinformed with

regard to the fact that 'The Eventful Nights' was discredited by *all* there. But the most unfortunate affair of the whole is, that this man, Baner, should, now that the Judge is in his sad—his pitiful predicament, turn against him and seek to cast him overboard. Well may his Honor exclaim, 'Save me from my friends.' Why—why—why—Mr. Baner, *isn't* Judge Edmonds a Sir Oracle of the spiritualists?

F. C. EWER.

"P.S.—I notice that *The Christian Spiritualist* promises me a blast. It would be ungenerous in me not to allow the galled jades to wince. And so, without more remark, I touch my hat and retire from among their writhings, leaving them 'to settle it, somehow, among themselves.'

"SAN FRANCISCO, April 16, 1855. F. C. E."

To conclude, I would remark, that on the 16th of April, the following brief communication appeared in the *Daily Chronicle* of this city, namely:

"The Cock and Bull Story—'John F. Lane.'

"Editors Chronicle:

"It is a curious fact, if Mr. Ewer's 'John F. Lane' be fiction, that there did live and die, in our own day and generation, a real 'John F. Lane.' He was a young gentleman of distinguished ability and attainments, but impatient of distinction. He died by his own hand, during the Florida war. The following is an extract from the list of graduates of the Military Academy, published in 1850:

"'JOHN F. LANE—Brevet Second Lieutenant of Artillery, July 1, 1828. Second Lieutenant Fourth Artillery, same date. Acting Assistant Professor of Mathematics, Military Academy, from August 31, 1828, to February

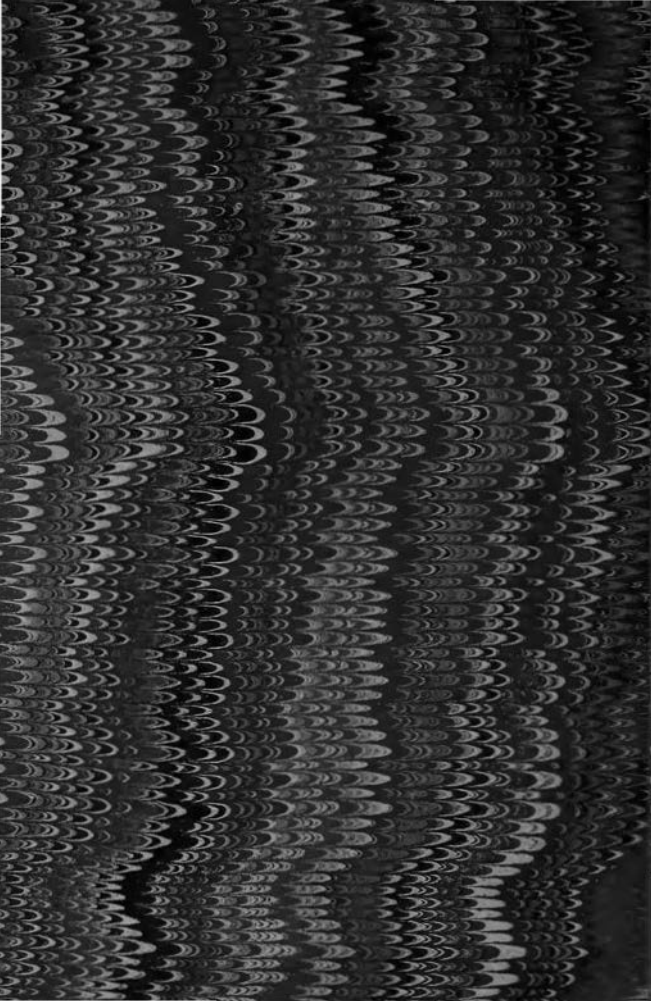
1, 1829. Assistant Quarter-Master from June, 1834, to May 17, 1835. Captain Second Dragoons, June 8, 1836. Colonel, commanding regiment Mounted Creek Volunteers, serving in Florida war, from September 1, 1836, to October 19, 1836. Died October 19, 1836, at Fort Lorane, Florida.'

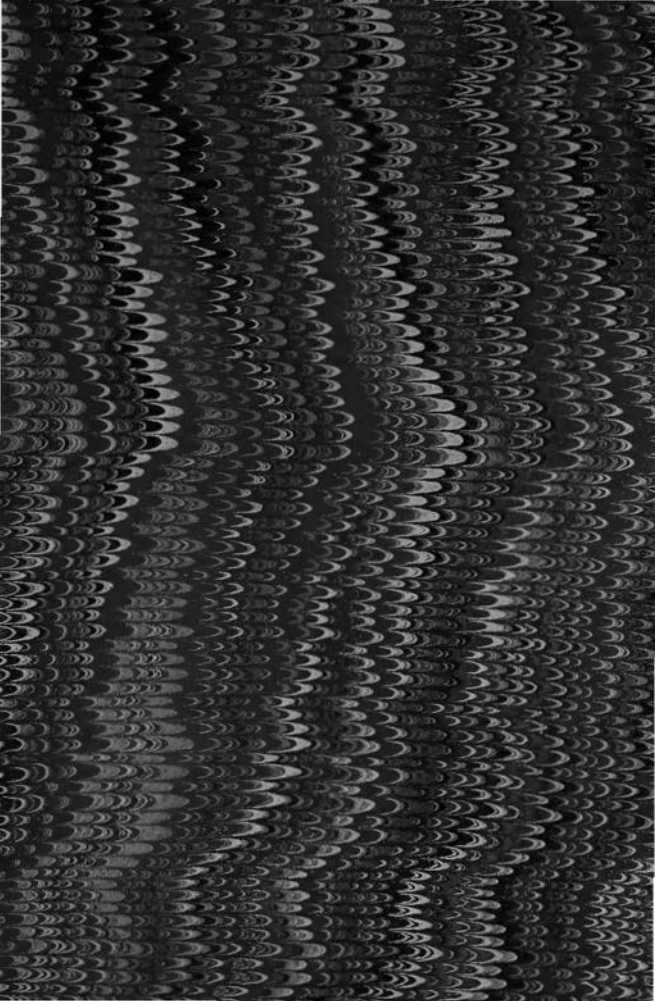
"*There*, Messrs. Editors, is a veritable, genuine 'John F. Lane,' and no mistake. When Judge Edmonds summoned the spirit of 'J. F. L.,' who is authorized to say that the genuine John did not respond? A."

Mr. NISBITT has himself so neatly plunged the point of his penknife into this soap-bubble, that no further remark is required from me. Says he:

"Oh! there are lots of *liars* in the other world, so the spiritists tell us. What matters it whether the 'Cocklane Ghost' itself, or the 'spirit' of Baron Munchausen, or of the 'genuine John,' trotted out and 'sold' this crazy Judge Edmonds? To adopt the sentiment of Lord Grizzle's excellent remark to Queen Dollalola, we may say:

"Spirits!—why, madam, 'tis all flummery—
He made the spirits first and then he saw them.'"





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