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MODERN MYSTERIES;

OR,

Table-turning, Tapping, and Tipping.

By W. TURLEY. *K*

Stay, let not thou thine unripe judgment slip.
Deeply hast thou studied the unproven,
Deciphered but by patient toil,
Thy morning's searching and thine evening's task?
Unimpassioned, let thy whole thought grow
Out of that thy power has conquered,
Lest thy matured years come, monitors
To thy youthful petulance.

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Dedicated,

IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE

OF MANY AND LONG-CONTINUED KINDNESSES, TO MY

UNDEVIATING FRIEND,

MR. G. BROWNE.



P R E F A C E .

In this little volume, devoted to a fair examination of the phenomena it describes, the Author has endeavoured to exhibit, in their natural sequence, the feelings and opinions which preceded and grew out of his doubts and endeavours. He is both undesirous and independent of belief on the part of his readers. What he wishes is, to stimulate inquiry. However true may be a description, and howsoever it may be believed, it cannot equal self-proof. As there is no special reason against each searching for, but every reason why each should investigate, and since, also, the means are easy of access, he respectfully recommends all earnest minds to *try*, not one, but many experiments. In an age in which scepticism grows out of the extension of thought, saturated by the literature of Germany and other countries—in an age of testing, and referring to the great principles which our own Locke has embodied, no occurrence which appeals to the intellectual faculty can be tabooed easily. It is, therefore, worth while to spend a fair amount of time on a theory which has moved the thoughts and puzzled the brains of both the philosopher and the fanatic in America—in England. Through the sieve of patience may fall many grains of truth; while the angry whirlwind of impetuous denunciation only tends to blow them far away.

“Great is Diana of the Ephesians!” would appear to be the

motto of some mesmerists; since they are ready to decry the phenomena they will not investigate. Gentlemen, say we, remember the extravagances of both statement and opposition which followed your own clairvoyant and biological testimonies. A little more modesty, and much more investigation, will arm you with *arguments*. Earn them, and learn their value.

The Author has studiously avoided reading works on the subject of table-turning, not because he wished to decry testimony, but that his mind should not have become tinged with the statements of others until he had expressed himself, so that their statements and his own might be compared. He is ready to guarantee the truth of every one herein contained.

MODERN MYSTERIES, &c.

COMMUNITIES and individuals alike, have their epochs, periods in which the mind, carried forward by some irresistible impulse, seizes on an abstract notion which absorbs its whole attention, and which, though undemonstrable by any ordinary method, is yet so thoroughly apparent to the fancies of its supporters, that they are astonished at the stupidity of those who do not view the matter or idea before them in the same light, and from the same angle of vision. Everywhere you go, friends and acquaintances are found possessed of the mania of the period; while those who smile and deny participation, yet prove, by their uncompressed features, that they have nevertheless some leaning towards the day-dream. Nor is this surprising, when we find how easily the quiet are governed by the active intellects. Quick temperaments make hasty conclusions, and, being satisfied themselves, imagine others ought to accept those conclusions as facts established; and, as mankind quarrel most about mysteries they do not understand, so they quarrel about appearances and noises they cannot explain. Phenomena of a novel character become a source of anxiety to millions—supernaturalism the readiest explanation. Not insignificant in number are those of unqualified integrity, who, having seen and heard something they are unable to explain, not only believe supernaturalism to be the immediate cause, but, from the circumstance of their known honesty, carry conviction to the uninquiring minds of others, who accordingly accept the statements, not on account of their inherent philosophy, but because Mr. — told them so, and “they know he would not tell an untruth.” But when the honest are also largely imagina-

tive, we can easily understand how a plain fact is distorted and swelled into monstrous disproportions. We refer to this because the accusation of untruth to masses of our fellow beings, however extravagant in their descriptions, is not the retort deserved. Thousands make mis-statements with a thorough belief of their truthfulness, from the causes just stated. Few are they to whom the patient perseverance of the philosopher is united; yet it is he alone who can, in general, explode a fallacy, or establish a just knowledge of the existence of a principle. It is the perseverant in truth who do service to humanity. To dissipate a fear, to heal a sorrow, to help the despairing, to strengthen the weak by learning to separate the supernatural from the knowable, is as much the aim of the philosopher as of the benefactor.

Guided by these feelings, and opinions we lately determined to investigate the far-spread doctrines of Table-turning, &c. For many months this matter had lain uninvestigated in our mind, though we had had several opportunities, through frequent invitations, to visit a friend far gone in table-turning experiments and his own conclusions. For two years he had been relating to us strange tales of the movements of his tables, and extraordinary conversations with what he, a very honest man, believed to be the spirits of departed friends, relatives, and in some instances strangers. Himself of quick temperament, he had fastened some little quarrel upon us for our infidelity to his statements. We confess, with some compunction, we really did laugh at his earnestness; we had known him too many years to doubt his honesty, we merely suspected his enthusiasm had carried him beyond the bounds of reality. A circumstance, however, occurred at this time which determined our course. Meeting accidentally with a mutual friend, we told him we were about to visit T. to see the tables dance and hear them talk. "Oh!" replied he, "I have already been there."

"And pray what was the result?"—"I came away convinced."

“ Really ? ” — “ Yes ; I had a conversation with my late daughter.”

Having described the conversation, he told us he felt very comfortable ; to us, however, he appeared quite the reverse, and that appearance determined us at once to investigate what we deemed a terrible superstition, and which we thought likely to produce ultimate insanity in weak minds and nervous temperaments. We considered, moreover, that if any of the statements were true, they involved the most extraordinary consequences to the whole human race, and our present modes of thought. That some clergymen had denounced table-rapping as “ devices of Satan,” and some materialists as “ devices of folly,” was to us of no consequence ; our mind and our resolution were formed to investigate. Nevertheless, an idea grew within us that the matter would afford only merriment and ridicule.

We could hear our imagination, in the future, singing our friend’s invitation, thus :—

THE TABLES BOBBING ROUND.

Oh! come to me when night sets in,
Night sets in, night sets in,
For then our table *does* a spin,

And oft goes bobbing round.

Or tapping, tipping, on the floor,
On the floor, on the floor,
Or runs up stairs, and through the door,
And then goes bobbing round.

Or tapping, tipping, &c.

Such merry faces come to see,
Come to see, come to see,
The tapping, rapping mystery
As it goes bobbing round.
Now darting right across the place,
See it race, see it race;
Then twist and turn with *quite a grace*,
And so go bobbing round.

Now you may hear real *table-talk*,
 Table-talk, table-talk;
 Or you may see the table walk,
 And then go bobbing round.
 While rosy cheeks turn pale and white,
 Pale and white, pale and white,
 And teeth all chatter at the sight
 Of tables bobbing round.

Such pretty maids come here to spell,
 Here to spell, here to spell,
 If for them fortune it will tell
 When it goes bobbing round.
 Beaux with black moustachios big,
 'Stachios big, 'stachios big,
 Who hope a golden purse to twig
 As it goes bobbing round.

Old age comes here with cynic eye,
 Cynic eye, cynic eye,
 And widows fortune come to try
 As it goes bobbing round.
 While on its head it may be seen,
 May be seen, may be seen,
 Spinning most rapidly and clean,
 The table bobbing round.

Next it will show *what none can see*,
 None can see, none can see,
 'Twill show you things *invisibly*,
 As it goes bobbing round.
 Arms and bodies wanting legs,
 Wanting legs, wanting legs,
 And legs with bodies wanting heads,
 As it goes bobbing round.

Next it will read the alphabet,
 Alphabet, alphabet,
 Or for the *Varsoviana* set,
 And so go bobbing round.
 A sailor's hornpipe or quadrille,
 Or quadrille, or quadrille,
 In fact, it never can be *still*,
 When it goes bobbing round.

Alas! for Madame Cerito,
 Cerito, Cerito,
 Who boasts she spins on double toe
 As she goes bobbing round.
 Our table spins on one alone,
 One alone, one alone,
 Eclipsing her, as all must own,
 When it goes bobbing round.

Then your commands it will obey,
 Will obey, will obey,
 Just like a slave mind what you say,
 When it goes bobbing round.
 No more decry a wooden head,
 Wooden head, wooden head;
 Give me a table top instead
 Of some heads bobbing round.

All its performance none can tell,
 None can tell, none can tell;
 It does things quite *impossible*
 As it goes bobbing round.
 But one thing do not let it do,
 Let it do, let it do,
 Don't let it turn your brains for you
 When it goes bobbing round.

On the following Wednesday we went to the house of invitation, where we found a party of three ladies and four gentlemen already sitting at a small three-clawed mahogany table, around which our friend had neatly inserted a white border, with the letters of the alphabet, the ten numerals, the words "Yes," "No," and "Not allowed to answer." A movable top or cover was also made to go on a spindle above it, to hide the hands when required. A perpendicular pole, with a horizontal pointer, stood at the side of the table to indicate which letter or number the spirit intended. All this paraphernalia was just so much witchcraft, or wizard-craft, to our uninitiated eyes, which incessantly wandered to the feet of the table with an intuitive

expectation of some clandestine movements being made by the strangers of the party. Our friend requested us to sit down and place our hands on the table. This we respectfully declined; our wish, we told him, being to watch, and not experimentalize, that evening. We felt it necessary to keep ourselves in that frame of mind in which whatever prejudices we had might slumber for the present, while we had to guard against rapid conclusions in case we heard any knocking or saw any turning.

Patiently, then, we sat one quarter of an hour—no raps; twenty minutes—no raps; twenty-five minutes; thirty; still no movements. Do you, reader, know what it is to sit staring at a number of anxious-looking dumb humanities for such a space of time? Do you know what it is to have the risible faculties quartered at the corners of your mouth, ready to let fly their artillery on those who do look “so very ridiculous,” sitting, like Egyptian mummies, closely packed, upright and immovable, not indeed with hands on laps, but on a table? Do you know that, under such circumstances, time never thinks about flying, but crawls along in the most approved snail-pace? But when is superadded another quarter-of-an-hour—another—perhaps another, and *no spirits*, longer endurance seems out of the question. So some of us felt; and in the plenitude of our apparent triumph, were rude enough to let off our small wit. We assured our friend the spirits would not “place their feet under his mahogany;” that they had given the table “leg bail;” had not taken the necessary quota of alcoholics to rise under their influence; and some hoped “their shadows (the spirits’) might never be less.” In the midst of our mostly borrowed pleasantry several knocks were heard on the table top, then as if some one were knocking on the wall. Then fell *the suddenness of silence* on all, and the loudest wits became the most trembling expectant—the most daring and intrepid opponents presently the most cowardly nervous. A few sittings and quiet watchings develop the real characters of parties present to the observer. Men

seem here unable to conceal themselves. The pallid cheek, the half-breathed, scarcely-spoken queries, the fear and astonishment which art does not, cannot conceal; these are all so manifest, that alone, they will repay the philosopher, as exhibiting the oft-concealed emotions of the human being. There now followed a sound as of a musical bell being struck in the table. My friend himself, who has been experimenting the last six years, had not had this result before. He asked "what we thought of that?" We replied, "our thought is, electric matter escapes through the table, and strikes, in its passage, some piece of metal." On looking under we found a brass lock. Our friend now grew somewhat nettled, yet it was obvious to us our theory was correct; nor could we suffer our judgment to be warped by what appeared to us simple and explainable. We plead "*guilty*" to joking at his expense; but that night no more rappings or equivocal noises occurred. Our friend then requested us *not* to come to the *next* sitting, as he was sure our levity and infidelity to the spirits had put an affront upon them, and they would not attend. We protested that the spirits were bound to convince us, and not the ready-made believers. However, we stayed away as requested, in order to afford our friend an opportunity, as he said, of asking the spirits if our disbelief had not been the cause of their absence. On that occasion, we afterwards learned, the spirits were more bashful than before. Having sacrificially obeyed the invitation to—*stop away*, we also accepted an invite to the succeeding sitting. We were, we confess with shame, mean enough to obtain information of the latter evening clandestinely, as we were afraid our friend would be still more nettled had we obliged him, by our query, to confess failure. On this occasion we found almost a new company; amongst whom, with her husband, was a lady said to be a medium, as also another lady, who was present at our first sitting, also said to be a medium. We had not long to wait, as unmistakable rappings were soon heard on the table, which were speedily succeeded by sundry turnings and tippings. The spirit

was then asked to knock or tip the table three times for Yes, once for No, and twice for Doubtful. This the spirit (this word is used for convenience, and because our friend is a firm believer in their visitations) agreed to. We were asked to put any questions we thought proper, and replied that we should like to do so *mentally*. This also being agreed on by the company, we put the following:—

Who are you?

We then went through the alphabet thus slowly: A—B—C, &c., until we arrived at H, when three distinct liftings of the table took place; we then recommenced the alphabet, going on to E, when a similar lifting occurred; and so on until the word Henry was clearly spelt; then until the word Knight was also spelt. From whatever source derived, this to our mind was very strange, as we expected to have had the name of our father. We had decided that our own thought would initiate the answer, upon the theory of unconscious willing. Most solemnly we declare we had not the most remote idea of Henry Knight at that moment. Some of those present, as well as ourself, had known this gentleman, who had been dead about two years; but knowledge of his death was denied by all present except ourself. Our friend now asked, with an air of great triumph, what we thought of spirit-rapping; we replied, that while unable to account for such an extraordinary answer, we were certainly not ready to jump to the conclusion that spirits returned it. We were reminded that “neither would we believe though one rose from the dead.” We replied, No, unless we saw the fact with our own eyes; besides, the parallel was deficient: in the one case ocular proof would exist to some person or persons; in the other we had nought but supposition. Besides, we object to have quotations hurled at our head in the place of absolute conviction. This begging or frightening the question out of one we dislike; an apt quotation accelerates reception, but a loose one carries no conviction.

We now wished to ask Henry Knight some questions in our

own way ; this being agreed to, we commenced by writing down queries on paper : these, and the answers as they succeeded, were as follows :—

Do you wish to communicate with me ?—Yes.

Are you happy ?—Yes.

Do you know Mrs. M. ?—Yes.

If we have a *seance* at our own place will you attend and bring her ?—Yes

No one knew what we had asked until we told them, though they saw the tipping of the table. One present now asked—

Are the doctrines of Swedenborg true ?—No answer.

Do you understand his doctrines ?—No.

We wished to ask other questions, but every one present being disposed to do the same, no further opportunity on that evening occurred. We must here add that unless the spirits have a larger share of concentrativeness than falls to the lot of mortals, they are in no enviable plight where every person asks questions, relevant and irrelevant. They are expected to give information concerning persons who are not only dead, but who must have been so long ere themselves were born into the flesh. They are expected to know not only the beginning of things and their end, but also to tell if any speculations in which the persons asking may be engaged will turn up fortunate. These questions are put by the cautious, who have an eye on both worlds ; who long for heaven, and grasp at the very means by which they are told they will be excluded. Here, again, is the exhibition of the contemptible passions by which thousands are governed, and which afford to the philosopher *pabulum* for thought. With such querists the spirit would be reduced to the pitiable condition of a fortune-teller, *minus* the silver which that functionary of the future (?) finds so essential for elaborating favorable answers to anticipatory time-seekers.

The serious part of the investigation was now closed, and the first-mentioned lady medium requested to know if the spirit of

her uncle Richard, with whom she had held previous converse at another place, and who had promised to be so, was present. He speedily made, not his bow, but his tips, and these so abundantly that the old fellow seemed to have a special inclination to crack the unfortunate table to pieces. Many questions were put, to some of which the ancient replied so tartly that we suggested he was a bachelor. His niece replied, "Yes;" whereupon we requested a sprightly, clever, good-natured lady to ask if he was not ashamed of having, when on earth, adopted so useless and unnatural a life as that of celibacy. She did so, when the old gentleman replied in such an affirmative manner, and by such violent and eccentric movements, as to suggest his vexation at having let slip the golden opportunity of loving and being loved under the pleasant yoke of reciprocated matrimonial kindness. "Do you really mean to say, uncle, that you are ashamed of having been a bachelor?" A rapid "Yes" was the reply. We confess to have felt even pity for those who wantonly inflict upon themselves the awful crime of bachelor life; but, at the same time, hope beamed graciously forth for some of our lady friends. Uncle, that is the table, was now requested to do all sorts of acrobatic performances, which he did in the most satisfactory manner. "Please throw the table right over on to its side." Over it went. "Please turn it up again." Done. "Please turn the table all round." Away it flew like a top. "Please go forward across the room, and hit that gentleman right in the chest, to convince him of your spiritual presence." This was desired by our friend. Being the unfortunate here ordered to be drubbed into belief, we confess to have felt rather desirous to avoid a blow which might possibly have made a spirit of ourself. Uncle, however, who seems to be of a bluff but kindly disposition, did not attend to this invocation; nevertheless, he made the table take excursions across the room, performing several *astounding and daring feats*, such as would have put Professor Risley and his two sons to

the blush at their own inadequacy. He then made his *finale* by rushing across the room some six feet, by command, to a single lady—the same good-natured one of whom we have already spoken. He was then requested to shake hands with her in token of reconciliation (she having been supposed to have offended him during the evening). The gallant old bachelor put forth his hand, *i.e.*, leg, standing easily balanced on the other two ; with this *affecting reconciliation* ended the evening's *amusement*. As he had very much excited our curiosity, sympathy, and admiration—for we like a good bluff, honest, straightforward person, be he spirit or flesh—we asked him if he would attend our *seance* with Henry Knight, who, it will be recollected had already promised to do so with Mrs. M. Up went the table three times in token of acquiescence. “Now what do you think ?” again queried our friend. “I know you are trembling, while you still refuse to acknowledge belief.” As we are always aware that others know our own feelings, and our own affairs, better than ourselves, we admitted our being all of a tremble, only *we* did not know it. We had witnessed phenomena which we felt certain, from the characters of those present, was not the effect of either collusion or juggling ; but as it was a matter of which each could judge more coolly under his own roof, we determined to defer both opinion and judgment until we had tested it in our own home, in our own way, with our own friends.

In a few days we assembled a dozen of those on whom we could rely as honest, clear-headed persons. Not having, as we considered, a proper representative table ourselves, we borrowed a sedate, immaculate, three-clawed one of a friend, a table which had never left the service of its owner for an unknown series of years. We were unable to trace its early history ; but as its present owner had had it in his possession ever since he had been wed, and his eldest son had passed the interesting period which made him a *legal* man, it will readily be

understood that it had acquired a character for honesty highly creditable and unquestionable. It was a table against whose personal character scandal had never dared breathe or insinuate the possibility of double-dealing. Once or twice in its life it had taken to tipping with sundry cups, saucers, and plates on its top, all which had gone off, with great *eclat* : but this phenomena had been traced, though he protested entire ignorance, to the *material* influence of aforesaid son, while running across the room with elevated eyes to entrap unsuspecting blue-bottles, or while scampering after a younger brother to obtain forcible possession of some purloined marbles, or in the resuscitation of the somewhat forgotten game of chevy-chase. It was, however, beginning to feel the encroachments of accumulated years ; and when it gave forth what some considered sounds or raps, its owner, who was present, declared he knew better ; “ he was personally acquainted with every creak in its old bones, and was ready to make affidavit to every one of them : ” “ they were veritable creaks, not raps.” However, on our asking shortly after if any spirits were present, three distinct raps were given just under the hands of a Mrs. P., who sat at the table, and she fainted. We must now state that this lady was the daughter of Mrs. M., who was, in spirit, expected to come with Henry Knight : of which expectation we had previously informed Mrs. P., that she, being of a timid and nervous constitution, might not be taken by surprise. She left the table, on her restoration, and *certainly* we were unable to obtain any more raps or movements that evening, though we sat patiently for one long hour. We concluded that possibly the lady was a medium, and our *seance* broken by the unfortunate incident. The owner of the table was present, but still declared he had heard no raps. He had not sat at the table, but his wife, who had, heard them clearly. We declare most unhesitatingly we heard three distinct clear raps under that part of the table on which Mrs. P.’s hands were placed. She also declared, not only that she had heard, but *felt* them. Some rapid

conclusionist will, perhaps, exclaim, "collusion." That will, however, fail as an answer. All present, except ourself, had never been at a *seance* before, were totally ignorant of the modes of operation, and were all persons whose veracity and understandings were trustworthy. Moreover, every one except the owner of the table heard the rappings; while their own hands were so placed upon the table that double-dealing was impossible. Equally impossible was it for the feet or knees to have produced such sounds.

On the following Wednesday we went again to our friend's house. The niece-medium (Uncle Richard's niece), some strangers, and another lady, said also to be a medium, with whom we were well acquainted, and whom we knew to be incapable of duplicity, were present. Neither of these ladies had, however, arrived at the conclusion that spirits were the cause of the phenomena they were supposed to invoke. In them, therefore, the unconscious willing theory, meets with no support. On this occasion we had raps and taps in so very unequivocal a manner, that none but the most determined advocate of obstinacy could have rejected them; the facts were exhibited so clearly, that trickery was altogether out of the question. Our friend, the peculiar leaning of whose mind we thought might lend some aid to the above theory, was requested to sit out of the circle, which he did; thus leaving the experiments in the hands of those who came fairly to examine, certainly not to deceive themselves. We turned the table up, to discover, if possible, any machinery by which it might be impelled; moved it from its standing place with the same idea; examined it in every possible way suggested, without finding anything which could lead even to the verge of doubt regarding the fair and candid operations of all concerned. We soon found Uncle was again present, when we put the following queries. The first was put by our friend, the others by ourself.

Will you answer by the letters?—No.

This answer came, as did several of the others, by distinct liftings of the table.

Do you know Henry Knight?—Yes.

Was he present at our own house last Saturday?—No.

Can you tell who was when Mrs. P. fainted?—Yes.

Will you answer us by the alphabet if we put questions?—Yes.

We commenced spelling, and received affirmative raps at the following letters.

Perhaps I will tell you another time.

Why not now?—I may see you another time.

When?—Better wait till I see your friend.

Do you mean Henry Knight?—Yes.

This and the succeeding answers were by tips.

Is there any utility in the spirits returning to earth?—Yes.

Will you inform us what?—No.

Is another spirit present?—Yes.

A relation of Miss J.'s?—No answer.

It was now very late, nevertheless we commenced the alphabet, and the answer was "G o."

Miss J. has made it too late?—Yes.

Is there a life hereafter for mortals?—Yes.

This, on the whole, was the best *seance* we had. Other questions were asked, and received orderly, straightforward replies; but as every one became anxious before departing to ask something, much confusion necessarily arose, and thus rendered it impossible to know sometimes to which questions the answers were given.

On the following Saturday we held another *seance* at our own home, with several friends added. We had again borrowed the table with rheumatic tendencies, the creaking ancient of our last party. Previous to commencing process, we had taken the

precaution to fill his inside with sundry folds of brown paper, to keep our old friend from doing the grumble, or expressing internal dissatisfaction; that is, we placed it on the top of the pillar, before laying down the flap or top and bolting the lock. Still we had not altogether stopped his power of expression; and, though many raps were heard, still some, and amongst them ourself, doubted the sounds. We therefore asked the spirit (?) to answer by tipping, for the reasons it was no doubt acquainted with. No sooner was this asked than up went the table. We must first remind the reader that we had sat three-quarters of an hour, with very little result—only a few rappings, and these doubted—when, as two of our friends had to retire, the circle was broken. No sooner had the two departed than sundry hints of juggling, or jokes, were directed against them, they being strangers to those left behind. When we next met the two, they suggested that some of those they left behind had been playing tricks with the table. Thus each suspected the other, as is not unfrequently the case, while neither were guilty; for, on being informed of the double suspicions, each declared most warmly they were innocent, while each seemed surprised at being suspected. Collusion, however, as we have before averred, was out of the question. All, without exception, came to examine, came in doubt, and left in belief; not, indeed, of spiritual influences, but of the indisputable existence of phenomena they had not expected, and could not deny. However, from the departure of our two friends we re-formed, and in a few minutes received most unequivocal answers, saw the table by request run about the room, while we were obliged to leave our seats to keep up with it. We now put the following queries, during profound silence.

Is Henry Knight present?—Yes.

Is the friend asked for at our last *seance* present?—Yes.

Are the present theologies of the world true?—No.

Is the doctrine of materialism true?—No.

Will these both die out ?—Yes.

Will a pure religion supersede them ?—Yes.

And mankind be happy ?—Yes.

The other spirit friend present was Mrs. M., mother to the lady who on a former occasion fainted. The latter and her sister were at our *seance*, but, fearing another faint, we forbore questioning her supposed mother's spirit. The eldest daughter, whose nerves were stronger than her sister's, had been continually sending forth contemptuous sarcasms during the evening at ourselves, and the spirits also ; but some of the answers having taken her by surprise, we thought we might entirely "turn the tables ;" for which purpose we requested ours to go across the room to her, a distance of seven or eight feet, shake hands, and convince that *infidel lady*. No sooner asked than away went the table, and up went its hand, *i.e.*, leg, which she took hold of and shook in token of recognition. She who till now had denied the possibility of what was done, came at once to the conclusion that "it must be spirits." We warned her against hasty conclusions ; for whatever the singularity of the phenomena, however unaccountable, no reliable proof that it was the work of spirits had or has been given. Some of our timid and astonished friends thought there was impiety in thus invoking the reappearance of deceased persons, forgetful that even upon the hypothesis of spiritualism, no spirit could reappear without permission from Him who rules the universe. Whatever might have been the impressions of that group of inquirers in the beginning of the evening, they departed greatly changed. They had witnessed the table run round the room when asked ; had heard it rapped ; had seen it tipped by invisible influences ; had seen it obey injunctions just as a living thinking creature would have done ; had seen it, when requested, turn right over on to its top, rise quite away from the floor, suspended in "mid air," and run across the room, when pushing it was totally out of the question, and when only the tips of the long fingers were placed

lightly upon it. They had witnessed it do almost everything but speak: they were, indeed, astonished. We were not ourselves prepared to behold such extraordinary phenomena. As we had, nevertheless, made up our mind not to be misled, if possible, we deferred our conclusions until a future day.

On the next Wednesday we again visited our friend, and found a somewhat different party, with the two lady-mediums, present, sitting at a large old-fashioned square dining table. We joined the circle, sitting next to an old gentleman, Mr. P., who was there for the first time. This gentleman was too deaf to hear the raps, of which there were several, but he was nevertheless astonished to behold a heavy table turn round with easy velocity. "What is that," said he; "are you pushing it round?" We replied, "No." At the same moment up went the table on to its *corner*. The old gentleman thought we had done this; we therefore asked him to try if he could lift it in such an easy manner. Many questions were asked and answered this evening, both by raps and tips, but as they were mere tests and without philosophic aim, the evening passed away somewhat unsatisfactorily. An adjournment was now made by some of the party to our old friend the table of alphabetical notoriety. Questions were again put, which were answered by Uncle, who was present. Finally, one of the party proposed that he should bid a separate Good-night to each person; this the table replied to by shaking its hand, *i.e.*, leg, in the hand of each person present, and so closed the evening's sitting.

We have since seen many beautiful experiments at various times; have seen the old dining table tilt up on to its corner, a position the united strength of the company present could scarcely have held it in had they been so disposed; have seen the same table tip up and throw off a dog which was placed on it, repeating the dose, to the astonishment of the canine herself, who seemed in as great a quandary as the bipeds who grouped round her.

At a sitting at which the spirit of the mother before-mentioned was present, the daughter's husband mentally asked her to give proof of her presence by turning the table over and letting it balance on one foot and its top. It went over. Such a position would have necessitated tight and definite holding under ordinary circumstances. On further request the table turned clean over on to its top, and lifted itself from our hands entirely. All the experiments on this evening were remarkably beautiful, whether caused by electricity, galvanism, attraction, cohesion, spirits, or any of the known or imagined agents of table-turning. We also put the following questions (which we had written on a sheet of paper) on to the table, asking the spirit present to answer them in succession. Whatever the influence, unless the answers were guessed, it was able to *read* them as they lay, we being silent until they were answered.

Will you answer the question asked on this paper?—Yes.

Is there any other method besides those known by which you can communicate to us more rapidly?—Yes.

Will you inform us how?—No.

Are you able to communicate without the aid of those who are, or are supposed to be, mediums?—The answer we could not distinguish clearly.

Are you able to communicate with any one who desires it alone?—Doubtful.

Does the abstract weight of material bodies interfere with, or arrest your powers?—Yes.*

May we request and will you come to us when alone, if we desire it?—Doubtful.

Is Mrs. M. present?—Yes.

(To Mrs. M.) Do you wish to communicate?—Yes.

* Finding on several occasions, when spirits were supposed to be present, that the table was moved with difficulty, it occurred to our mind that they possessed only a relative amount of lifting power with their strength when in the body; we therefore put this question.

With whom?—Here the table turned over into her daughter's lap, and then taking an opposite direction, turned over into that of her son-in-law. This gentleman now asked the before-named query, that he might be convinced of her presence, viz., to turn on to one leg.

On the following day, being a few miles from town, at the house of another friend, the conversation turned on this subject. As this friend and his family had never seen any experiments it was proposed to "try a table." We did so, and the result was an agitated or irregular twisting round. As we could obtain no definite answers, we suggested the spirit was desirous to communicate with some one else. We asked if it were so, and the answer was "Yes."

Will you point out whom?—Here the table, as on yesterday at the other party, turned into the lap of our hostess, who, upon inquiry, found it to be the spirit of her brother.

Such, then, are the facts of table-turning; facts sufficient to induce belief in the minds of many, that they are the doings of spirits disenthralled from the human body, living now in spheres of different descriptions, according to the acts done on earth: the lower ones being inhabited by those whose lives were bad, and who are undergoing purgatorial discipline. The question, however, still remains, What proof have you that spirits are concerned in the manifestations? A promise has been made that they will some time hence grant a special unmistakable demonstration, and men shall be convinced; but until this happens, while we do not deny a possibility of spiritual intercourse, still, up to the present, we contend no warrantable conclusions have or can be drawn from the modes described here. Since we held these doubts we have been called on to explain the causes of the phenomena—a proposition by no means reasonable. We have no doubt that appearances like falling stars often take place in the heavens, particularly at certain seasons of the year. Since, however, we find those known always in their places,

we believe these appearances arise from some collected atmospheric or other heat ; it does not however follow that we are bound to find an explanation because we doubt or even deny the possibility of stars falling from their positions. What this phenomenon is—a delusion to the optics—the other may be to the ears and eyes, and like it, also, require many collected and compared facts before a rational hypothesis can be evolved. The existence of phenomena is no proof of their cause. Their existence alone is here demonstrable, as their *origin* must be ere they can be accepted.

A few evenings back we went to the house of our forgone conclusive friend, where we found ourself in the dark. Turning to go away, his voice called us to come in, when we soon understood that several persons were present. On the top of the alphabetical table, round which they were all seated, a bottle of phosphorus was placed, from which, at intervals, a luminous flame made its way, somewhat strengthening the electrical theory. By his voice, we now discovered the friend who told us on a former occasion he had held conversation with his deceased daughter's spirit, and "was by it convinced." He was again interrogating her, and the answers were very clearly rendered. The lights were now turned on, when we requested leave to ask the child some questions, as we had been well-known to each other, and had often romped together before her decease, which took place about her eighth year of age, some twelve months back. This being granted, we commenced.

Jenny, do you know who is asking you this question ?—Yes.

Can you spell our name ?—Yes.

Will you ?—Yes.

Our old and mutual friend then repeated the alphabet, and our name was spelt as clearly as it could have been by the best scholar in any of our universities. The father then asked—

Do you know where your mother is ?—Yes.

Will you tell me where ?—No answer.

Is your aunt at my house?—Yes.

The unhappy mother of this spirit is, owing to grief for the loss of her beautiful child, in a state of mind, as was well known to several present, which renders perpetual surveillance necessary. Much divergent conversation now took place, rather, perhaps, to turn away the attention of the father, who, full of trouble, and in a very delicate state of health, might have sustained too great a shock on being thus reminded of his double bereavement. That the influence itself should be silent to this query only, while it freely answered all the rest, is not a little remarkable. Was silence suggested by some hidden cord of sympathy? Are life's affections linked together with those beyond the grave? Is it possible that influences hover round, administering comfort to our affections? Indissoluble is that between this parent and his past child; ever his fond heart turns to her.

GENTLE SPIRIT.

Gentle Spirit! thou art o'er me;
 Yes, I feel thee ever nigh.
 When the summer airs are flowing,
 Blowing 'neath the clear blue sky;
 When the winter storms are raging,
 Still I kiss thy youth-warm cheek,
 Still I hear thy voice engaging
 Waging tones it once did speak.

Gentle Spirit! broken-hearted,
 Restless parents seek thy grave,
 Sweet violets and pansies planting,
 Panting vainly these to save;
 Cherished sorrows they awaken,
 Mem'ry feeding with its grief,
 Where the cypress slow is creeping,
 Weeping back in sad relief.

Gentle Spirit! thine for ever,
 Soon each parent comes to die,
 Ere the night star full is glowing,
 Going up the winter sky.

Life grows dim and hope still dimmer
 While upon this earth we stay,
 And a voice like thine, my darling
 Starling, whispereth—away!

“Round thy hallowed head, dear father,
 Mother, watching night and day,
 My protecting aid is winging,
 Singing each a soothing lay ;
 Angel airs breathe lightly o’er thee,
 Guardian spirits lend control ;
 Weep not for eternal morrow,
 Sorrow purifies the soul.”

When the father tried to resume conversation with his daughter she had departed, nor could he or ourself again obtain her presence that evening. It being now understood that another influence was present, a fresh conversation commenced, when, for the first time since we had attended *seances*, the table turned the alphabet engraved upon it to the pointer, and spelt every word as truly as in the antecedent case. Moreover, when a direct affirmative or negative was given, the word fell directly under the pointer ; but if the answer was doubted by any one present, by reason of the pointer standing too near the point of demarcation, the table shifted away and then returned in the most unequivocal manner to the word indicated. These experiments were also most beautiful. We now asked the following questions :—

Is the story of the visible spiritual arm appearing at Mr. Rymer’s, at Ealing, true?—Yes.

You know our frame of mind concerning these experiments?—Yes.

You say there is utility in the spirits visiting the earth?—Yes.

Will the spirits come and give some special manifestation, of so unequivocal a character as to remove all doubt of their presence?—Yes.

Some interruption here took place, or we would have asked, "When?"

After exhibitions of such peculiar character, and in the face of experiments witnessed by persons of unqualified respectability and judgment, of inquiring and thoughtful minds, it is folly to deny their existence—folly to say to what extent the phenomena may be elicited. If only as pastime the experiments would prove highly interesting, by indicating the power of mind over matter; but, while no positive explanation of the causes are known, we are bound by all the logic of philosophical investigation to search patiently, and not to commit ourselves to hasty conclusions either way. A thousand suggestions may be made, yet not one be near the mark. If questions were asked verbally only, and answers were given to them, it might be inferred that the minds of all present had predetermined those answers; but as many of the queries were put mentally, this theory is at once destroyed. We know that inanimate matter cannot return answers when verbally or mentally spoken to; yet, in each case, they are given by the tables, either by distinct knocks, which are often felt—as they were when our lady friend fainted—or by the table tipping up. Another singular part of this phenomena is the fact that when an answer is given, the table, with very few exceptions, stops. An objection often raised by sceptics is, that to come or manifest themselves through tables, as the spirits do (if spirits), is undignified. This objection we have ourselves often raised, but when we consider that after all a table is the most familiar object of household use; when we remember that we sit by, talk across, read upon, dine from, work on, write on, play on, nay, are constantly engaging it, that objection, we think, vanishes. But, in the course of our inquiries, it will be remembered, we were told the spirit or influence could manifest itself through other conditions: hats, plates, chairs, and a variety of articles are known to be movable. Again, we say, it is folly to deny the existence of phenomena,

because it is perfectly easy for all doubters to sit round a table and try experiments. They are common to all investigators: none have special power. If you have not a medium, try till you find one; sit patiently at your experiments; be earnest in thought; and have selected such persons as are above trifling. To our mind this is a very serious matter. If it be from God none can stay it; if, from man's mistaken judgment, a superstition has arisen, it is time it should be ended, by solving, if possible, the difficulty. For our own part, we are determined not to rest until we have exhausted every endeavour we can make to arrive at the cause, or causes.

In the midst of this unsettled question, it is regretful to know that the spirit of imputation is again alive. Parties think themselves right in their various hypotheses. There is yet, however, the necessary education to come, which will teach that unproved opinion must not be given assertively. The consecutiveness which arises from original thought is justifiable in him who holds it: but, though plausible, is still unproved. It may be, even as it is at present, that with all our searching there will remain *ideas* on which only speculation can exist. The richest imagination will see the greatest amount of beauty. The ever-searched, never-discovered, cause of universal operation furnishes, through all time, food for the idealising capacity which positive or any other philosophy may never be able to destroy. If every cause of material operations were discovered, still *their* cause might remain a mystery. When essences are discoverable, the probability of the eternal essence being so but begins. An age which, like ours, is not easily persuaded, but which seeks for intelligent solution to all statements, which questions probabilities, and is restless in pursuit of correct ideas, requires, hence, that personal imputation be abandoned. The uncontrollable independence of thought being known shows the impossibility of conformity, and teaches us to look at man, as man, in his social and moral relationships. We dare not stop to ask if our houses,

clothes, food, or conveniences are prepared by unbelieving hands. We stop not to ask or see if Protestantism, Romanism, Buddhism, Pantheism, or Materialism has helped their manufacture. Such a course would send society into a confusion, of the mischievous results of which few living could form a correct idea. The world would become a vast place of diabolical contention, and leap backward into the darkness of barbarism. "Does the article suit?" is the consideration we make. "Is he a man whose integrity may be relied on?" should be the introduction to social amenity. To this it must come; for as mankind grow more intelligent, so will their ideas become more divergent respecting the great spirit of the universe, the responsibility of their own thoughts resting upon each.

We recollect, at a public discussion some years back, the gentleman who took the theological, ran over a long category of crime against the freethought side: this was stepping away from the argument (in favour of the being of God) and descending to personality, while the principle itself remained untouched. God either does, or does not, exist, were fifty thousand more crimes chargeable to humanity; but the materialist, in reply, or self-defence, on the following evening produced a long bead-roll of crimes committed by the clergy and their supporters. The retort was provoked, yet what did it prove? Only that wrong can and does exist on either side; while the goodness and providence of God, the real subject of debate, was smothered in personalities. On both sides exist men whose character for integrity and kindness are indisputable, denouncing each other for unascertained opinions' sake. We shall yet come to the consideration of a man's good citizenship as the introduction to our esteem. Our present distance from each other lends, not enchantment, but diabolism to the view: when we get closer to each, we shall hear the great voice of humanity speaking from hearts we have learned in our ignorance to despise. For ourselves, we assert our inability—and we have

long tried—to find one absolutely *bad* man or woman; in all, the gentler emotions are to be awakened. God knows how much, even in those we are apt to regard as desperately wicked and deeply fallen, our repressive institutions drive men into despair and crime, while our punishments harden and brutalize. Yet, to the most deeply sinful, to the worst characters, the all-powerful voice of sympathy comes like an alleviating, inspiring, holy angel, dazzling and dissolving, by the brightness and serenity of its sweet countenance, the harsh and scornful expressions which are but the reflex of neglect, ignorance, ill-usage, barbarous and repulsive punishments. Thank God! our criminal code is undergoing revision. Even we who punish doubt our own wisdom, and are growing towards that state in which the kindly sentiments will have greater sway.

Love—

Around that steel-clad breast he flew,
 (So full of hatred hitherto);
 Unlaced he found one little part,
 And gently pierced the freezing heart.
 The harden'd man, awaiting strife,
 From Love's warm wound drew fresh-born life.
 The hand which erst was raised to slay
 Now gently moved in act to pray;
 The briny floods no longer keep—
 Long tearless eyes began to weep.
 Love's was the first, the potent blow
 Hate's demon form to overthrow:
 Its noble thoughts transform the soul
 When pity's angel holds control.

We have been asked repeatedly, what is the utility of the spirits returning to earth? We do not pretend to answer. This is one of our inquiries. Shakspeare—whose mind seems to have been equal to all emergencies; whose thought to have penetrated into the inner, the hidden life of man; whose genius, transcending ordinary powers, seemed to connect him with the

“ministering angels;” whose perception showed to him some of the mysteries of the untold world—says, “There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dream’d of in our philosophy.” May not this be one of the things? To the believers in God we are disposed to say, beware of that presumption which says, “Satanic devices.” This is not the language of holiness. You, at least, are bound to investigate: you acknowledge the power of the Great Spirit; you believe in extraordinary manifestations; you are waiting for some completing link in the evidences of your own volume; to you it is written, “Judge not, that ye be not judged,” the meaning of which we take to be judge not rashly, nor, until you have completed evidence; you may not easily dispose of that you do not understand. To the materialist,—since you are afraid to deny the existence of God, though you may not believe in it, you admit the possibility of a Great Spirit existing; does not this admit also the possibility of smaller spirits? Admitting that the Great Spirit makes no special revelations, yet what is revealed may have been in the great scheme for ever. New developments and strange phenomena are ever coming forth. The hidden power by which an acorn becomes an oak; by which flowers germinate, by which all nature continues its eternal stream of loving and beautiful things, is, as yet, totally unknown. The world is still a mystery—time a mystery. The past, present, and future glide into each other, and leave no perceptible joints or marks by which we may distinguish them. Yes; the world, both in its source and development, is now, as ever, a mystery—

Ne’er commencing, never ending,
 Time yet passes ever by;
 The Was, the Is, the Yet to be
 Flow in endless harmony.
 Unmark’d the rising of the sun,
 Fading night’s verge into day:
 Know’st thou the moment it was done—
 Can’st thou solve the mystery?

Know'st when buds conjoin to flowers;
 Or where rainbow tintings blend;
 Where just are separate the hours;
 Or where life begins or ends?
 All growths are imperceptible:
 Flowers upspringing from the sod;
 Rocks which stem the mighty ocean;
 And, oh! the mystery of God!

To those philosophers who, freed from the torrid heat of bigotry and the frigid iciness of materialism, can turn with reverent aspect to the pure soul of the universe; to whom its mystic voice sounds forth with ever sweet and holy hymnings; who know they have scarcely yet caught the hem of its garment; who walk with religious and solemn thoughts along the great road which leads to the sublime temple of God, the truth or error of "*spiritual manifestations*" is a subject which will claim marked attention, and will, in either case, furnish themes for admiration.

London was but lately *delighted* with a juggling exhibition made by the *soi-disant* "Wizard of the North," Professor Anderson, who pretended to set it right on the matter of table-turning; and many of those easy-minded, uninquiring people, of whom we formerly spoke, were "quite convinced." They should, however, have been informed that sleight-of-hand and real manifestations are as different as light from dark — as Professor Anderson from Sir Walter Scott — that a simple, unprepared table will do more in the hands of pure and disinterested inquirers, than any table prepared by the professor, with all its electric machinery. At best, the one performs poor *imitations* in skilled hands, while better exhibitions can be procured from those totally ignorant of the phenomena they invoke.

Table-turning is so generally used in many parts of America as to have become an ordinary practice; and while no doubt extraordinary statements are there made regarding its power,

the mystery still remains; and he will confer a blessing on mankind who shall decipher its character. To expel that which, after all, may be only a superstition in many minds, regarding its source, and which may possibly lead to the lunatic asylum, is worth a good man's endeavour; to stop, if it be so, that illicit desire of man to peep into the world beyond the grave, and also into the future of life here; to leave mankind in possession of the natural, the true, that which forms the progressive, is a noble work. But if, on the other hand, a warning voice has been sent amongst us to convince those who doubt existence after death, of the desirability of living so that we may become holy and fitted for a high state of existence when our bodies fall to earth, surely God is amongst us, and we shall do well to listen to his commandments, given by these means. Let us all, then, go to our work as men determined to arrive at just conclusions, if possible; let no prejudice stand between us and our hope for truth; let our investigations be calm and dignified, our conclusions the result of patient and earnest search. The time of an audience is frequently frittered away in asking such questions as are of no practical benefit. There are questions to be put, of significance, of moral worth. Put them. Keep a record of these and the answers, so that when a large number are put together—as I hope they yet will be from all quarters—they may be compared and a judgment formed. In this frame of investigation only can any usefulness be derived from table-turning.

To the objections raised in the spirit of inquiry it is necessary and proper to make some answer. First we take the doctrine of electricity. There are three clear modes by which answers are given; first, by knocks, or as they are generally termed raps; second, by turning; third, by tipping. If the two latter modes alone existed, then electric force might explain them; but it is to be recollected that attraction and repulsion both manifest themselves. The hands slightly

resting upon the table might, by electric aid, force it forth ; but when commanded the same table returns with a velocity force alone could impart ; it will lie down on its side, will turn over clean on to its top—as it has done in our hand and that of others ; then balanced itself on its outer edge, and this so steadily and easily that no juggler could imitate, or raise it to such a position. It has also by request lifted itself from the floor, while in a horizontal position, to the height of six inches, when no person was near it. We have seen a table turn round some distance, when asked, without one hand being upon it ; unless, therefore, the mind possesses some unknown quality of electric power which it can impart while at a distance from its object, this theory stands at best in a doubtful position : if tables, like hats, merely crossed a distance or spun round, then we might grant the electric theory. But in addition to the above objections there is also this important fact, that when the table gives tips for answers it stops, with very few exceptions, when those answers are given. Now, would not the electric power continue to run, and not break itself into irregular or intelligent intervals ? This theory, then, is at present unsustained.

Here let us note, that they who accuse experimentors of using deceit, unconsciously fix upon them a power few of those charged ever knew themselves to be possessed of. Legerdemain and its attendant arts require that dexterity which can be gained only by long continued practice ; while our accusers improvise us into artists, and place us above the Houdins, and all other juggling manipulators, without our knowing, or having had the trouble to learn, one necromantic transformation.

The more extraordinary fact, however, to our mind is the rapping ;—distinct letters, distinct words, and distinct sentences, are spelt with as much ease as a boy spells at school. This some refer to unconscious willing. But how is this to apply when answers are given totally opposite to the thought which under such circumstances should hold government over the spirit ?

We ask a question, having a preconceived idea of some deceased person whom we had known : this person (spirit) not only does not reply to us, but some other does, of whom we have not had the least thought. We hope for a certain answer to a query, one *directly opposite* is returned. What becomes of unconscious, or even conscious, willing? We sat at a table a few evenings back with three lady friends, one of whom had never been at a *seance* before. She kept up a continuous fire of ridicule for twenty minutes, about which period distinct raps were heard under the table, and near her own hands. She tried still to laugh, but it was no use. The fact had transfixed her so much, that gradually she lapsed into silence, fear, and expectation. We watched the changing colour of her countenance, saw the various exhibitions from opposition to doubt and fear—themselves beautiful phenomena—the changing emotions of the mind gradually giving expression through her fine dark eyes, her pale and almost powerless lips, and blanched cheeks. We asked questions, and obtained such answers as indicated to us the powerlessness of our will. We then asked the table if it would tip into the lap of the one present whom it wished to converse with. It rapped once, which we understood to mean, “*No.*” We then asked, “Is there any person here whom you wish to confer with?” The answer, by three distinct raps, was “*Yes.*” We then asked a young lady, about eighteen years of age, if she would ascertain whether it was her whom the table or spirit was seeking? She put her query mentally, asking who it was. The name of the spirit present was then spelt beautifully clear, though, as the lady herself was too timid, we went through the alphabet by her request. We had never heard her called by any other than her sponsorial, were ignorant of her surname, and for the first time learned it by the influence, “W m H d.” When it had been distinctly spelt, we inquired whose it was, and found it to be her father’s. The lady gave signs of fainting, and, though we tried to reassure her, we could

not prevail on her to ask any more questions that evening. We then asked if the spirit, whose name had just been obtained, would attend at some future time, and convey any information to its daughter, when she, perhaps, would be in a calmer state of mind? The answer was clearly and distinctly, "Yes." Our own mind at this period was upon the sister (who died about twelve months back) of our sardonic lady. Our will, then, determined nothing. Indeed, the theory of unconscious willing meets with so many contradictions, that it is scarcely worth so much as that of electricity. But if there are objections to the electric and unconscious willing theories, there are also reasons in support of them, which the philosopher must not forget. We have found that a more ready movement takes place in warm than in cold rooms—in warm and dry than in cold and damp states of the atmosphere. Moreover, the tables or spirits do not give all their answers so clearly or concisely as to render doubt impossible. For instance, four, five, or even six tippings will sometimes follow a query, which are neither "Yes," "No," nor "Doubtful," according to the standards generally agreed upon at the *seances* where we have been present. Again, we have been unable to obtain any answers, even after an agreement has been entered upon by the spirits or influences themselves. These, however, we find generally to happen when any confusion, or considerable amount of useless conversation or laughing takes place. When our friends have been silent and thoughtful we have had the best and most continuous results. There is another part of the phenomena which deserves attention, it being, to our thought, very desirable to explain, namely, that persons may often sit for a whole hour, or more, and not a single result will follow: the table remaining as quiescent as though no one was present. The answer generally supplied by individuals is, that in the one case some medium was present, in the other, *none*; but we have no test, that we are aware of, which proves the existence of mediums, as mediums, at all, or

why the spirit which has a communication to make should not do it without the aid of a third person. *Per contra*, many persons no sooner sit down to a table than it begins to move. This was the case, we understand, with Mrs. Hayden; and we know those ourself who, being present, the tables are agitated almost immediately. Opinions, then, are almost as valueless as assertions or ridicule, until some demonstrable principles follow them. It is as unjustifiable to deny as to rush to the conclusion—to rush to the conclusion as to deny—that spirits are amongst us. In our present state of ignorance regarding phenomena—which has puzzled the intellectual as much as the simple—there yet appears to be no royal road to the causes: patient investigation only will be likely to solve the enigma of table-turning.

One word to the timid. All answers yet obtained, so far as we are aware, are of a character to inspire us with hope—certainly not with fear. We know of no case in which unkind or malicious answers have been returned. Recommendations to virtuous and holy lives, with the statement of a better, loftier future for humanity, is the general theme of what are supposed to be departed spirits. There is, therefore, no ground of apprehension from them; while, if the answers are supplied from some unexplained source, in our own minds they beautifully illustrate the great and important fact, that in every human soul lie those noble principles of which the truly religious and philosophic have held no doubt, and which only require culture and conditions through which to manifest themselves. Be they, therefore, true or false as regards the spiritual, hope still shines pleasantly forth for the human family, and the sublime precepts of Jesus of Nazareth come nearer to our expectations, “when every man shall sit under his own vine, and under his own fig tree, none caring to make him afraid.” Again, then, we venture to repeat—investigate, investigate! If any one tell you he has special power over the tables, believe him not. You are as able as he to sift this phenomena. We have told you

how : be neither too contemptuous, nor too credulous. The mystery, if still unexplained, will afford many an hour of pleasant and innocent investigation and pastime, and will certainly lead you to believe

The outer world is full of things
 Greater than imaginings ;
 Blending for ever the unknown
 With the life which is, or gone,
 To unseen powers, those which fly
 With our thoughts beyond the sky,
 Through unmeasured realms of space,
 Footless, trackless, still their place
 Traceless, though thy soul be full
 As the true and beautiful.

Finally, those statements which end only in surmise are unworthy the philosopher ; those which end in ridicule, the intelligent. Undemonstrated theories are valueless. Objectively and subjectively we are connected with the outlying universe, independently of *will*. The dominion of this latter power is stayed so frequently, that a relational existence is all which can be accorded to it. Do we wish ? do we will ? a conversivity of action destroys wish and will, reciprocation flies predisposition, and the theory of mental power is, in its relation to table-rapping, destroyed. If nature produced isolated facts, facts incapable of eliminating more than *immediate* results, this matter might be allowed to rest where it is ; but the insatiable thirst for intelligence, which underlies human endeavour, cannot stay at the mere exhibition of phenomena. Who may say that, inasmuch as the search for the philosopher's stone, the elixir of life, the transmutation of metals into *the metal*, produced the chemistry now so rich in facts, ripe in experiments, and beautiful in its thousands of bright combinations, both of colour and form, in its adaptations to art and health—that experiments may not be made of a highly useful character, in what, at present, appears vague and unsatisfactory ?

The suggestive faculties aroused to decipher nature's laws, learn to deal with those beginnings of which human power may possibly never eliminate the end. No great name must come in to depress the search after the truth. We lose ourselves, our individualities, directly we accept a dogmatic decree. Had the genius of experiment stayed its power on the dictum of Sir H. Davy, that it was easier to pluck the silver queen of night from her throne than to light London with gas, our metropolis at this day had remained in that miserable plight which only renders "darkness visible." A quarter of a century has scarcely been interred in the tomb of the ever coming past, when, not alone London, but almost every town, village, and hamlet in England is brilliant with the light of the unseen and subtile agent; while all the great roadways are already lighted by, or are preparing for it. Let us not, in the deserved reverence we pay to the memories of great men, forget that our own powers are for our own use in interrogating all forms of intelligence. Great men make mistakes, and the highly-gifted Professor Faraday may yet be found wrong in throwing aside as useless that of which experiments up to the present time have given us no clear solution. In all new experiments singular statements are no doubt made by enthusiastic inquirers. Their incoherence will ultimately destroy such statements. Meantime, the philosopher works to discover and apply the law—for to law is even table-rapping subject. To our thought we are only at the commencement of phenomena whose character will aid the great changes now coming over the minds of our race, and that added experiments will prove the peculiar existence of that which, at present, we are either too ignorant to know—too indolent or too contemptuous to investigate.

Since writing the above, another very remarkable result has attended us. We were at the house of our oft-named friend where a party, mostly new, were sitting (by an arrangement

which left nearly all those who had been experimenting before outside), when, after a little time, the table moved very gently. One lady, whom we had not seen before, was requested to ask questions. This was done to save the confusion always caused when many ask at once.

Is any one present?—Yes.

Will you tell us your name?—Yes.

Shall I go over the alphabet?—Yes.

This was done until the name “M” was spelt.

Is it Mrs. M.?—Yes.

Is any other spirit present?—Yes.

Who?—K n i g h t .

On hearing these two names announced we concluded they were our two former friends, who had been at our own place. We therefore requested the lady to inquire if they would come again to our house on the following Tuesday. The answer was exactly as follows :—

W i l l c o m e T u r l e y .

The plural pronoun *we* and the preposition *to* were *not* spelt. Here then were thirteen persons present, all anxiously watching and listening, who heard and could not deny the clearness of the sounds, some doubting, others almost denying, the facts of table-turning and moving, until they both saw and heard what it was impossible to deny. Concerted action again altogether out of the question—collusion, only the delusion of him who thought or asserted it. In order, however, to put the matter to a severe test on the evening promised by the influences themselves, we invited several strangers, persons of thought, some of them doubters of both the facts and causes of table-rapping; some who, if not absolute materialists, were strongly tinged with that philosophy; and who will not believe unless every matter is “made evident to the senses”—persons whose Baconian inductiveness stands forth in strong relief, and who, therefore, were not likely to be easily misled.

Several strangers were present, and we sat for a rather long period, when rappings were heard.

Is Mrs. M. present?—Yes.

H. K.?—No.

He was to be here?—No.

Did we misunderstand you at our last sitting?—Yes.

Then he will *not* be present?—No.

An invalid friend, who had a paper with queries on it, now requested answers to them. We laid the paper on the table, and requested another friend to take down the answers as they were given, no one present having been told what the paper contained. They came by rappings, thus—"Yes," "No," "Doubtful," "Redford."* Our friend is in that state that any moment may find him dead. He is aware of this, and is naturally anxious—through the knowledge of the influences—to find if there exists a possibility of relief, as he has tried medical aid of all sorts—Homœopathic, Allopathic, Hydropathic, &c.—without relief. Some of the questions were these:—

Do you know the nature of my complaint?—Yes.

Is it possible for me to find relief?—Doubtful.

At our next sitting the same influence told our friend, by the alphabet, he has a *diseased lung*.

A gentleman present, whose materialistic views are patent to all his friends, now asked a question, and received such an answer as made him wish to introduce some other doubters at our next sitting. Even he, a strong-minded, clear thinker, was unprepared for the result, and as he knew nearly all the persons present, he had too much good sense to suspect the oft-exploded idea of collusion.

* His name is Redburn, and, though known to the influence when on earth, it is doubtful if the influence ever knew his name rightly. Moreover, he is as often called by that she used as his own, and it will be seen that the terminals *burn* and *ford* are *synonymous*.

It will be noticed that during the progress of this work, new matters have been added, the author being anxious to introduce accounts of such phenomena as presented themselves from time to time. In this way is given the following :—

Sitting at a table, a few evenings back, we found the father of the child mentioned on page 20. The *mother* was also present, having been restored to her home. The father, one of the before named lady mediums, and ourself agreed to sit at another table. In a few minutes it began to tip. The parent then asked,

Is any one present?—Yes.

Will you tell us your name?—Yes.

By the alphabet?—Yes.

This was gone through by ourself, when the following letters appeared—

M a r i R e d b u r n .

The influence was then asked if the letter i was used in the place of y?—Yes.

Are these substitutes and elisions made to save time?—Yes.

Is it my dear daughter?—Yes.

Do you know who is present with me?—Yes.

Please tell me who it is?—M a m a. (Another elision.)

A most strenuous unbeliever, who was present, said he wished to ask a question. This we advised him to do *mentally*. He did so, and received for answer “T r y b e l i e v e.” This he said was no answer. We then requested him to let us know his question. “I asked the spirit,” said he, “to tell me if my daughter (she died several years back) was living, in spirit, amongst them; therefore, the whole affair is humbug.” “And pray,” said we, “what description of answer would you wish? you are here confessedly with predetermined unbelief; to such a state of mind we think you have received a very pertinent answer, let it be from whatever source it may. Who knew your question? None but yourself. In your *own* brain you sought communication with the mysterious world; for such a

frame of mind the answer is exactly what might be expected." He then asked—

Do you *know* my daughter?—No.

Our friend then burst into a fit of that strange laughter which half betrays, while it denies, conviction; then, taking some coins from his pocket, and shutting his hand, he asked, "How many pieces are in my hand?" The table rose, and we counted six; while, however, he was counting five (the number), the table rose very rapidly again five times.

Did we mistake the number?—Yes.

Was five intended?—Yes.

"I will try again," said he. "How many now?"—"Four." In his hand there was only *one*.

He then requested to be allowed to write something on paper, place it face downwards on the table, and call on the influence to spell the word. This was done; but the influence was unable to decipher it. We then asked him, "Have you made the writing so plain that a child not very well up in reading, and only eight years of age, would be likely to read it?" "Perhaps not; I will rewrite it." He did so; and the influence now clearly spelt, "Y o u;" and then wandered into a confusion of letters, when our friend again had a hearty laugh. On his turning up the paper we found the word "Young" (his own name) written, or rather scrawled, no less than three times, and running *one into the other*. The letters which the influence had spelt were clearly enough written, and as clearly spelt; even he confessed he began to feel serious when the first three letters of his name were made apparent. So far, then, from failure was this experiment, that, except the last numbering of coins, this was a very interesting evening.

The father then asked, "Do you still love your mamma?" The table moved gently up to the side of his wife, and there by certain movements indicated, as it would appear, the child's affection for its restored parent; it continued to move about

her, and would not leave her. The father at length asked it to shake hands with the mother; when the table tipped on one side, thus raising one of its feet, which the mother took hold of in acknowledgment. The father next asked the table to follow them; this it also did, but still adhering to the mother, for some distance, when at length the influence, on some questions being put, was found to have departed.

Altogether this was a most extraordinary sitting; and though our infidel friend departed after having rudely charged those whom he had known and respected many years with wholesale collusion, yet was deception far away from all present. This only affords a fresh proof of the wretched subterfuges which humanity will adopt when unable to explain principles. Too impatient to investigate, often too proud to suffer preconcepts to be disturbed, it neglects to inquire where it might be informed.

Suppose, however, the doctrine of spiritual manifestations to be true, say some of our friends, we gain by it—nothing. This we respectfully opine is incorrect; for if it be true that life is, after mortal dissolution, continued, the whole question of modern materialism is completely answered. The knowable and reliable—as the things of sense are in modern phraseology termed—are found inadequate to the reverential faculties, nor will men hold life less a duty than a hope, less a hope than a duty, if fresh means of intercourse with the untrodden, mysterious future are furnished; the educated soul will still bear the ills of life, nor seek to rush from them in suicidal despair; in the stern anomalies of present existence his manliness and self-reliance will find their scope, none the less that he may hope and believe in the reunion of those who on earth were his heart's loves and associates. Duty here he may find his passport to spheres of higher, holier intelligences.

A friend remarked, a few days since, that a good man lives a good life. We ask, will he not, in addition to mere moral enjoyment, find that of a somewhat certified hope? We con-

fess that the whole incident of the child's behaviour to its poor mother, on the evening just named, affected us exceedingly. In her accepted belief this poor creature found comfort. What mysterious chicanery was it which thus influenced the feelings and opinions of both these parents? If any trickery existed they must have assisted in it. The poor mother was never present at any *seance* before, yet on our walking home—a distance little less than two miles—this hitherto unhappy mourner expressed great happiness. Whence came, then, the deception? Emphatically we say, from *no where!* As we have said before, like a living creature, with a heart full of strong affections, this *inanimate* table followed and clung to her who came to witness its operations, and this same *inanimate* object, by the graceful movement and adhesion it exhibited, subdued the griefs, the wretchedness of her whom long and wearying months had failed to lift out of despair.

The strong, says our friend, master their griefs. True; but all humanity is not strong: and whatever we might wish it to be in the abstract, we must take it as we find it. We are as willing to accept the principle of self-reliance as he, but if side-by-side with it comes a demonstration or reasonable proposition of a future existence, why should we refuse it? If at length we find a clue to this strange mystery—table manifestations—in material combinations acted on by the will, while its supposed supernatural character will have given place to newly-discovered and, by the consequence of knowledge, beautiful natural laws, the world will have gained a splendid addition to its existing stores. Therefore, if for no other, these reasons should teach the necessity of search, and carefulness of expression, concerning these wonderful, beautiful, and at present mysterious phenomena.

POSTSCRIPT.

An Article appears in *Tait's Magazine* for October, 1856, which certainly does not bear the impress of patience. A critic goes to hear *one* public lecture in America, and finding the experiments introduced fail (though, even here, Dr. Achilli obtained, according to the critic himself, sensible answers), concludes the whole is "humbug." Why did not this gentleman try the table, in private, with those of his friends whom he knew to be above prejudice and trickery? For our part, we protest against experiments being made before general audiences, who come more from morbid curiosity than intelligent hope for truth. We have seen and tested many experiments in company with persons whose capacities were of a strong character, often matter-of-fact people, who, like Thomas à Didymus, would not believe unless they "had a hand in it"—people who sat and smiled in semi or whole contempt until they, too, saw and helped in some results which confounded their judgments. Our critic adopts the easy tone of condemnation by which the world, when it does not comprehend phenomena, so complacently accounts for it. Does another quietly investigate the novel enunciations of nature, "he is a humbug" when he announces results—particularly so when, in public, his experiments fail; or, "he is a sensible man, an acute observer, but he has a weakness—he actually believes in table-turning;" and the generality of men agree with the acuteness (?) of the denunciator: it is so

easy a mode of purchasing the appearance of being wise. "The Story of a Scull" forms the head of the tail (tale), which, as we are too dull to perceive its connection with table experiments, we pass over, and re-assert that extraordinary phenomena have been, and are, witnessed daily by thousands of intelligent capacities; that answers and actions, where collusion is altogether impossible, are obtained, to the dumbfounding of the most indefatigable opponents. Finally, we undertake to exhibit, if he will have the patience necessary for a philosophical examination, to this or any other doubter, such phenomena as he or they will find it impossible to solve by contempt or ridicule.

THE END.