

CONFESSIONS OF A TRUTH SEEKER.

A Narrative of Personal Investigations

INTO THE

FACTS AND PHILOSOPHY

OF

SPIRIT-INTERCOURSE.



"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."—SOLOMON.

—————"Dare I say
No spirit ever brake the band
That stays him from the native land,
Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay?
"No visual shade of some one lost,
But he, the spirit himself, may come
Where all the nerve of sense is numb;
Spirit to spirit, ghost to ghost."

TENNYSON.

"Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up; it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice."—JOB.

"Many can apprehend these arguments from sense, who cannot yet reach, and will not be convinced by other demonstrations."—REV. RICH. BAXTER.

"To me the doctrine of ministering spirits, next to the revelation of God's Fatherly character, is one of the most comforting which the Bible contains; and to restore and confirm the church's belief in it, and teach her what it implies, is to render her most valuable service."—REV. W. LANDELS.

LONDON:

WILLIAM HORSELL, 13, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1859.

PRINTED BY
BEARE AND JEALOUS, GREAT NORTHERN PRESS,
GRAY'S INN ROAD.



CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	6
INSTANCE OF TELEGRAPHED PREVISION	23
CHAPTER I. A WORD PRELIMINARY	33
II. TRANCE DISCOURSE—INVOLUNTARY WRIT- ING—ANTECEDENTS	38
III. FIRST INQUIRIES—BEREAVEMENT	53
IV. AUTOMATIC-CEREBRATION	62
V. ACROSS THE RUBICON	69
VI. MORE FACTS	81
VII. FACETIOUS SPIRITS—"UNDIGNIFIED"	101
VIII. TRY THE SPIRITS	121
IX. CUI BONO?	129
X. THE FUTURE LIFE — SPIRITUALISM — HOW STANDS THE QUESTION?	144
XI. SPIRITUALISM AND LAWS OF NATURE. DUTIES OF SPIRITUALISTS	158

VERSES,

CHIEFLY WRITTEN IN SEASONS OF DOUBT AND BEREAVE- MENT	177
--	-----

APPENDIX.

THE LAWS OF SPIRITUAL INTERCOURSE	199
---	-----

INTRODUCTION.



It appears to me that the subject discussed in the following pages, has not, in this country especially, received that thorough and fair investigation which it deserves, considering that it professes to demonstrate by *facts*, patent to all who care to inquire into them, perhaps the gravest problem which can occupy the attention of mankind; and that this evidence has brought conviction to the minds of thousands of honest, capable, and independent investigators.

Many causes have tended to bring about this indifference or dislike to spiritualism. It has come before us in a way so foreign to our previous thought; the revelations derived from it have run so counter to pre-existing fancies and prejudices, and those who might have wisely directed the public mind in the matter, having left it for the most part to the uneducated and the thoughtless, it has too frequently been conducted with a levity which could not fail to lead earnest and religious men to regard it with suspicion, and even its

investigation, as at best, a matter of very questionable propriety.

Would it not however be wise to re-consider the subject, *per se*, apart from the errors and follies of its advocates, and from all accidental associations ?

Washington Irving says, "The doctrine of departed spirits returning to visit the scenes and beings which were dear to them during the body's existence, though it has been debased by the absurd superstitions of the vulgar, in itself is awfully solemn and sublime. * * *

It is more the manner, therefore, in which this superstition has been degraded, than its intrinsic absurdity, that has brought it into contempt. Raise it above the frivolous purposes to which it has been applied, strip it of the gloom and horror with which it has been surrounded, and there is none of the whole circle of visionary creeds that could more delightfully elevate the imagination, or more tenderly affect the heart. It would become a sovereign comfort at the bed of death, soothing the bitter tear wrung from us by the agony of our mortal separation. What could be more consoling than the idea, that the souls of those whom we once loved were permitted to return and watch over our welfare ? That affectionate and guardian spirits sat by our pillows when we slept, keeping a vigil over our most helpless hours ? That beauty and innocence, which had languished into the tomb, yet smiled unseen, around us, revealing themselves in those blest dreams wherein we live over again the hours of past endearment ? A belief of this kind would, I should think, be a new incentive to virtue ; rendering us

circumspect even in our most secret moments, from the idea that those we once loved and honoured were invisible witnesses of all our actions.

“It would take away, too, from that loneliness and destitution which we are apt to feel more and more as we get on in our pilgrimage through the wilderness of this world, and find that those who set forward with us, lovingly and cheerily, on the journey, have one by one dropt away from our side. Place the superstition in this light, and I confess I should like to be a believer in it. I see nothing in it that is incompatible with the tender and merciful nature of our religion, nor revolting to the wishes and affections of the heart.”

Such is the powerful testimony of one who, apparently, regards the belief in the direct and visible agency of spiritual beings as a “superstition” and a “visionary creed.” It is a striking illustration of how

“The heart
May give a useful lesson to the head,
And learning wiser grow without his books.”

Spiritualism is, at least, a faith which, despite all impediments and encumbrances, has, in a short time, spread widely through the civilized world. Is it not worth while seriously to inquire, how is this? If it be a delusion, it is high time that it be stayed. If it can be explained by physiology, or upon any known principles of science, it is imperative upon those who possess the knowledge, to lay open these arcana—to write this chapter in the history of the wonderful nature with

which God has endowed us. But, should it appear, that the alleged manifestations from the spiritual world are indeed a reality, the fact cannot be too soon, or too generally acknowledged. It will then be well to consider how spiritual intercourse may be best applied to the promotion of religion and the interests of humanity.

I believe that I have made the "thorough and fair investigation" of spiritualism that I urge others to make; and I propose to state the course and the results of it.

Familiar as I had long been with the materialism of the French and English schools, and utterly sceptical as I was with regard to the religious side of man's nature, it may easily be conceived, that prior to this investigation, whatever my errors may have been, they did not lean to excessive credulity. Had I then been told that I should come to entertain the opinions set forth in this book, I should have thought it difficult, not to say impossible, to find anyone of whom such a prediction could be hazarded with so little likelihood of its fulfilment.

How this change has been brought about, the reader will find stated in the letters to which these observations are prefixed. But it may be useful briefly to state here, the points which I steadily kept in view in my investigations.

Were the facts related by spiritualists *genuine*? Did they truly occur uncaused by mortal agency? Was there no fraud, no delusion, no hallucination in the case? Having by long and close observation

satisfied myself of the reality and genuineness of the facts, I then inquired whether science could explain them, or whether they were explicable on any principles of mental philosophy. I carefully weighed, to the best of my ability, all the mechanical and scientific explanations that were offered. I felt bound to admit their inadequacy. At the *seances* I attended, I carefully watched my own thoughts, and the thoughts of those present,—so far as I could ascertain them by their looks, language, and behaviour,—that I might see whether any, and if any, what relation existed between them and the responses and communications received. I studied the characters and capabilities of the mediums through whom these were given, to judge whether or not they were in any way the production of their own minds. The result was, that the various theories of “dominant ideas,” “unconscious cerebration,” “mind reading,” “will force,” &c., were untenable: that, to use the language of Mr. Rutter, we might as reasonably attribute to dominant ideas the power to wheel wheel-barrows, or carry hods of mortar, as to effect these phenomena; and that we might extend the same remark to the other hypothetical explanations enumerated.

But still, might not the phenomena attributed to spiritual causation, result from the operation of some, at present unknown, physical law? I long thought it probable; the suggestion seemed a plausible and a modest one; but I sought in vain for evidence or analogy to support the conjecture, and at length concluded, that whatever the unknown cause or causes

might be, they must be homogeneous with the effects produced; and that, therefore, obvious intelligence, manifesting itself in divers ways, could not be the result of any unintelligent impersonal law as its efficient cause. For purely physical phenomena, it might be sufficient to assign only physical causes, but to phenomena evidencing the action of intelligence, an intelligent causal agency must be assigned. Intelligence can originate only in an intelligent being. Here, then, it became evident to me that there was involved the action of *mind* extrinsic to medium and circle—personality; invisible, spiritual. I could not see, nor can I now see, any escape from this conclusion. It was the result of patient, diligent, experimental inquiry, and of much reading and earnest thought.

Yes; these phenomena were the manifestations of spirits. But of what spirits—were they human? and if so, were they good or evil, wise or foolish? Here was another field of thought. Once admit the existence of spirits, and, for aught we know to the contrary, there may be other orders of spiritual beings than have belonged to our planet or our race. They may exist in infinite series above and below humanity. Nor, so far as we know, is it impossible that in some instances they may manifest their presence among us; but till we receive some direct evidence that this is so, it remains only a conjecture. On the other hand, these spirits declare themselves to be human, and are seen as such by spiritual clairvoyants. In their intercourse with us they appear actuated by human feelings, and exhibit all the qualities and attributes

of humanity. As to their moral quality, we are likely to be sorely puzzled if we do not keep in mind that they are simply men and women who have cast off the mortal body; and that hence we may expect to find in them the same varying qualities which men and women now present. Conformably to this idea, I have found among spirits great diversity of moral character, as well as varying grades of mental power.

I may naturally be asked—I have often asked myself—what proof is there that the spirit at any time addressing us is the spirit it professes to be? I answer, that in some cases, there is none at all; that some spirits will feign to be what they are not, and assume a name that does not belong to them; and that in all cases, demonstration of spiritual identity is difficult, if not impossible. For this reason, among others, it is generally best to seek communications, the value of which is independent of such evidence;—to seek for evidence of spiritual agency, rather than of a particular spiritual presence. But still, we often have the strongest presumptive evidence of spiritual identity. Clairvoyants, sometimes, see spirits whom they did not know in the flesh, and so see them, as by the exactness of their descriptions of them, to satisfy those who knew them. Again, particulars of the earth-life of the spirit, with names, dates, distinguishing personal characteristics and correct answers to carefully prepared test-questions are given. In short, if there is not absolute demonstration, there is frequently ample evidence to satisfy the candid inquirer. If, however, the questioner inquires simply from

curiosity, or without sufficient motive, or, if he insists upon asking for communications from spirits whose names are celebrated on earth, it is very likely he may be deceived. Of course, the communications themselves will, in a great measure, enable us to judge whether a spirit is seeking to deceive us. For instance, I should think few spiritualists would be so very simple as to take for genuine all the doggerel purporting to come from Shakspeare, Burns, and Byron. I believe, that in general they exact evidence, as rigidly as their neighbours, perhaps rather more so.

I have found many religious men who, while believing that unseen beings, departed friends and kindred, hover around, and spiritually influence us, yet feel a repugnance to the idea, that they can commune with us openly, visibly, sensuously, through material agencies. This feeling may seem very high and spiritual; but it is in fact, very low and earthly. There lurks in it the old falsehood, that matter is essentially evil. It draws a line of distinction between the world of spirit and the world of sense; as if *that* were sacred, and *this* profane; and not each equally the work of God, each in its kind to be pronounced "very good." The Earth-spirit in Faust, exclaims—

"Thus at the roaring loom of time I ply,

And work for God the garment thou *seest* Him by."

And, not only do we by our sensuous relations to outward nature learn something of the Divine love and wisdom, but our truest human sympathies and affections are associated with sensuous perceptions.

Can we not remember eyes into which we have looked, and there read the infinite depths of tenderness in the soul thus beaming upon us—tones of love which still, perhaps after many years, ring in the chambers of the heart—the fond touch of hands that are now dust, but which once folded our own infantile hands in prayer? Have we no dear memories which, while they soothe, at times cause the heart to exclaim in passionate earnestness—

“O for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still?”

If we know nothing of this, we may indeed have escaped a great sorrow, but we have missed a lesson, which, even at that price, would have been cheaply purchased.

Agreeing, as I do, in the belief that our spirits are impressed by spiritual influx—that happy ministering spirits often surround us when we know it not; I would ask, Is it not well that we should sometimes have other corroborative evidence of the fact, which would entirely free us from those painful misgivings and uncertainties that we are apt to feel about it? May this material evidence not be necessary, sometimes, to quicken our faith, to rouse our spiritual nature from torpidity into vigorous action, so that through sense we may thus be led to escape from the bondage of sense, from things seen and temporal, and our spiritual sight be opened to those that are, to our corporeal sight, unseen and eternal? Whether this be effected by spiritual touch, voice, vision, writing,

messages telegraphed by visible things, or audible sounds, what matters? To us, the means employed may seem low and unworthy. I believe, that in the sight of God such distinctions are unknown, "He calleth one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour, as it hath pleased Him"—

"To Him, no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, He bounds, connects, and equals all."

Among those who acknowledge the possibility of spiritual-intercourse, are many worthy, timid, conscientious people, who are restrained from its investigation by the apprehension that it is in some way sinful and impious, contrary to Divine order, an overstepping of those bounds which God has prescribed. Let them recollect that these same objections were urged when Franklin first drew lightning from the clouds, and when Columbus proposed to go in quest of a new world; then, as now, Scripture being wrested and misapplied to obstruct all further search. This feeling is frequently accompanied by the suspicion that if spiritualism be anything more than a pretence, it is only by the knowledge of some arcana, the practice of some occult art (probably including some unholy compact with spirits, and incantation of them with mysterious and unlawful rites), that the invisible is thus brought into communion with the visible world, and a mutual intercourse established. I do not wonder that those who feel thus should regard spiritualism as anti-christian and dangerous. It is, however, but an idle fancy, gathered probably from

old legends and stories, on a level with nursery tales. The spiritual medium might reply to any such questioning, like Canning's needy knife-grinder—

“ Arts ! God bless you ! I have none to tell, Sir.”

It is true, that he may invite and encourage spiritual influences, or actively repel them. In no case will it be wise for him to yield up his proper individuality, though he may see reasons for voluntarily and temporarily subordinating, or placing it in abeyance to higher natures ; but good spirits will never require him to surrender his moral freedom ; on the contrary, they frequently warn of the danger of so doing.

Like everything else, spiritual-intercourse is subject to certain necessary conditions, is governed by laws, and is possible only when we place ourselves in harmony therewith. As a friend has remarked, “Spirits are not lawlessly almighty.” I believe the conditions of which I have spoken are twofold. One class consisting in a certain peculiarity, chemical or otherwise, in the body and its surroundings—existing independently of our volitions ; the other class being mental or spiritual ; and, in part, at least, dependant on ourselves, and operative in determining the character of the spirits, who, by affinity are drawn toward us. Do you inquire, What are the most suitable conditions to cultivate, in order to attract to us exalted spiritual natures ? Another shall answer the question for me :—

“ How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold
Should be the man whose thought would hold
An hour's communion with the dead.

“ In vain shalt thou, or any, call
The spirits from their golden day,
Except, like them, thou too canst say
My spirit is at peace with all.

“ They haunt the silence of the breast,
Imaginations calm and fair,
The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience as a sea at rest :

“ But when the heart is full of din,
And doubt beside the portal waits
They can but listen at the gates
And hear the household jar within.”

On this point it may tend to clear away some obscurities, and remove some misapprehensions, if I here state the manner in which those circles have been conducted, of which it was my privilege to be a member.

First then, at each sitting, the proceedings began with prayer to God. Here is the form of prayer used at more than one circle.

“ Merciful and great God ! assist us to enter upon this subject with sincerity and faith ; and permit our spiritual friends, so far as they are commissioned by thy will, to attend us. Allure us by thy Holy Spirit from the vanities of the world, and free our minds from evil thoughts and influences. Create within us clean hearts, O God ! Cast us not away from thy presence, and

take not thy Holy Spirit from us. Restore unto us the joy of thy salvation, and uphold us with thy mighty power. Instruct us now, dear Lord, in that which is best for the good of mankind. Help us to cleave to that which is good, and deliver us from all evil ; for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

But do the spirits who teach at your circles approve of this? Yes. Not only so, but they always urge the necessity of its coming from the heart, and not from the lips only. And this prayer was given by a spirit, at the request of a circle, for use at its meetings. At another circle, it has been our custom to offer the following ; together with the collect for St. Michael's day, from the Common Prayer Book ; and the Lord's Prayer :—

"Almighty God, Father of spirits ! We, thy children, desire to approach thee in spirit and in truth ; in humility, reverence, and filial love. We thank thee for all thy mercies, and invoke thy continued blessing and protection. Guard us from all evil and misleading spirits, and leave us not in the hour of temptation. Pardon our sins, correct our errors, enlighten our ignorance, purify our affections, put within us clean hearts and right spirits ; that we, knowing in whose image we are created, may endeavour with thy help to walk worthy of the same, and become fitted for converse with the spirits of the just made perfect ; with whom, if it be thy will, we would now hold communion, in order that we may be led into the ways of wisdom, and receive instruction in those things which are best for us, not only in the present life, but in that which is to come. May our spirits be brought into closer union with thee ; so that we may not only learn thy will, but joyfully perform the same ; and in all our thoughts, words, and actions, have regard to thy glory, and the highest welfare of our fellow-creatures."

After prayer, a hymn would be sung if we had voice in tune. Cowper's "God moves in a mysterious way" was generally the favourite; or, a chapter from the New Testament would be read: or, appropriate music played. Occasionally, if we had sceptical visitors, they would be invited to ask mental questions; and, the medium holding a pencil, the answer would be immediately written. I have seen a number of mental questions thus put by different persons in one evening, successively answered without a single mistake; the medium being ignorant of the nature of the question and answer, until the answer was read. After a short pause, or, during the performance of music, the medium would be entranced by invisible agency; in which condition a discourse would be given by, or rather, through him, evidently without his volition or consciousness. In the latest circle I have attended, after a few suitable preliminary words, the spirit would generally ask us to name the question or subject, on which we then more particularly desired information; the more important and difficult the question proposed, the greater apparently was the pleasure with which it was received and answered. The topics were exceedingly diverse, but whether it was the origin and destiny of man, or the nature of comets; the laws of spiritual intercourse, or the proper treatment of obscure diseases; the response flowed forth free and clear. No embarrassment or perturbation was visible in the medium; while, for fulness of knowledge, aptness of illustration, and felicity of expression, the discourses could not have

been surpassed, and rarely equalled by the most skilful professor of the particular class of subjects then under consideration:—such at least was not only my judgment, but that of the literary, scientific, and medical gentlemen present on these occasions. The discourses generally occupied from an hour to an hour-and-a-half in the delivery, the medium being a young man, who according to his own statement (and with ample opportunity for judging I saw no reason to doubt it), had never received a twelve-months' school education in his life: and who, in his normal state, was obviously as unequal to deliver such discourses as I to wield the club of Hercules. Sometimes, when we had proposed our question, the spirit would say, "I am not sufficiently conversant with the subject about which you inquire, but there is one here, or, I will fetch one who is more competent to do so than I." Then, after the pause of a moment or two, the question would be answered with a different tone, style, and manner, marking distinctly a different actuating personality. At times, after, or preceding the discourse, we have had a short rythmical address, lasting fifteen or twenty minutes, generally expressive of the soul's aspirations, in language musical and devout.

The names of the spirits who discoursed to us would sometimes be given, though more frequently, the name of the band of spirits to which they belonged was alone stated. The discourses on the Laws of Spirit-Intercourse, purported to be by Philip Lemoine, (a French Physician) that on the Origin and Destiny of

Man, by a spirit giving the name of Hermes. Some spirits would preface their observations by a form of religious salutation. For instance, Hermes commenced invariably with, "In the name of God. There is but one God, and all true men are his prophets." Whatever the subject spoken to might be, these discourses always breathed a tone of elevated piety and benevolence; we could not but feel that we were in the presence of Intelligences higher, wiser, and better than ourselves.

Talk of these discourses coming from Satanic spirits! Why man, such spirits were worthy to have discoursed with Adam in Paradise in his state of innocence. Satanic! Why, then, for aught I know to the contrary, every church and chapel in the land may be a "Synagogue of Satan." You tell me that the devices of the Evil One are woven with wondrous super-human cunning; and yet represent him as acting like a perfect zany, fighting against himself, and destroying the market for his own wares. If it were thus, men, instead of fearing him as an enemy, might safely despise him as a fool. (Luther says, that above all things the devil can't bear to be treated with contempt.) Instead of his possessing almost matchless craft, the title of one of Ben Jonson's comedies, "The Devil is an Ass," would express pretty near the literal truth.

The substance of the discourses by Philip Lemoine, transcribed from notes made at the time, are given in the Appendix. Though the report is substantially correct in outline, it does not convey all the ideas

and distinctions that were expressed ; and must fail to convey to the reader an adequate conception of the affluence of illustration, and felicity of language, which characterised these discourses as spoken. I have selected them for publication, not as being the best we received, but as the most *apropos* to the purposes of the present volume.

In evidence of the abnormal state of the medium through whom the discourses were spoken, it may be mentioned, that at these times, his body, toward the extremities became cold, and the veins appeared shrunk and bloodless. On coming out of this spiritually-induced state, the veins gradually filled, and animal warmth returned. This result could be accelerated by magnetising the parts affected.

Various circumstantial and trustworthy narratives of personal experience in spiritualism—some by English writers not unknown—are now before the public. The author of “The Human Body and its connection with Man ;” has given a graphic description of some unmistakeable spirit-manifestations to which he was a witness. His account is confirmed by Mrs. Trollope, also an eye-witness ; and by Mr. Rymer, of Ealing, at whose house they occurred. Dr. Ashburner has given an account of the commencement of his experience in spiritual mediumship, and replied to the flippancy of the *Reasoner* and the *Leader*. Mrs. Crossland has narrated the experience of herself and friends. Mr. Wilkinson, of Hampstead, has given a very interesting personal narrative of the history of certain remarkable spirit-drawings in his family. Still more

recently, Mr. William Howitt has published a reply to a course of lectures against spiritualism, by the Rev. Edward White, Independent Minister of St. Paul's Church, Kentish Town. But these, and other published testimonies, are but a fraction of those which could be given, but which are not publicly recorded. It is not surprising that men should generally prefer silence, to speaking upon a topic which subjects them to suspicion, obloquy, and ridicule—perhaps to serious injury in their social position and prospects. It is painful, too, to sensitive minds at least, to find themselves treated with coldness and reserve, where before they had been honoured with kindness and confidence. When will men learn the lesson, that it is never wise or right to *taboo* any question in which their brethren feel that themselves and others are deeply interested. It has been truly said, that “the suppression of opinion leads to the suppression of truth;” that “the agitation of thought is the beginning of wisdom.” Justice and policy alike teach us to encourage each other, to speak not only *what* we think, but *all* we think upon subjects of human welfare. It is the pent-up fire that is always to be most dreaded.

I have only to add, that these letters originally appeared in the *Yorkshire Spiritual Telegraph*, and were occasioned by the letter signed J. D. concluding this introduction, and which appeared in that publication. The verses added, are published, not for their poetical merit, but because, being written at about the same time as the narrative, and under the influence of similar feelings, it appeared to me that they might

give some further insight into the thoughts and emotions which this inquiry and the convictions thence resulting have awakened in my mind; and probably, in the minds also of many others who have engaged in this and similar inquiries.

Being more conversant with handicraft than authorcraft, I can make no pretensions to literary skill, as doubtless the critics will soon discover, should any of that worshipful guild penetrate farther herein than the title-page; but I can lay claim to honesty of purpose and verity of statement. I am not conscious of having exaggerated anything, or of having suppressed anything needful to be known; and though, for sufficient reasons, I have withheld my name from publication, I consider myself responsible for the truth of every statement of fact I have here given.

INSTANCE OF TELEGRAPHED PREVISION.

To the Editor of the Yorkshire Spiritual Telegraph.

SIR,

A few months ago, a friend, whom I will name Curtius, talking of the "Manifestations," said to me:—

"I have witnessed only those of the writing and speaking. I think them curious, indeed, but not evidence of any agency outside the organization of the medium, unless perhaps it were that of another sitting at the table and acting somewhat magnetically

through the odylie atmosphere ; or, as I have sometimes thought, the medium's husband may influence her in some peculiar manner : they may be a clever couple ; or, the phenomena may be irrespective of the consciousness of the parties actually producing them, but I cannot see with you that one *must* attribute the phenomena to the agency of invisible beings :—indeed, the existence of any such in the affair seems to me most gratuitously presumed. The tongue and the hand of a medium are parts of her organization, and some organizations are so susceptible that they repeat the movements, external and internal, of another in some peculiar magnetic relation to them. The books on mesmerism contain instances of that kind. But a table not being part of a human organization, I think I should find better evidence of the agency of an invisible being in what you call the lower phenomena of the table-movements than in what I have seen. I must say I feel an interest in the subject. Could not you take me to one of those other mediums I have heard you speak of ?”

“ Well,” said I, “ I would if I could ; but one of them is now out of my reach altogether, and I hardly know what to say about the other ;—he can only be got at on Sundays, being engaged in daily work ; besides which he wants persuading to sit, which is troublesome. But I'll try and manage him for you some early Sunday.”

To my surprise, at this moment the very man I was speaking of walked in. “ Why, what on earth can have brought you, friend Bear !” I could not help

exclaiming, "I was this very moment speaking of you."

"Oh, I've come to see if you will sign this paper, about our being all right as to our health. We are getting an assisted passage, or trying to get it, for Australia. We've made up our minds to go."

"We'll see to that presently; but are you in a hurry? My friend here is anxious to see the table move. You'll oblige me and him by sitting down for that, will you, while I look at your paper?"

"Well, I don't mind if I do."

Beer, Curtius, my wife, and presently myself, sat down at a table, with our hands on the margin, and in one or two minutes the side at which Curtius was sitting rose, inclining towards Beer.

"Well, friend Curtius," I said, "what do you make of it?" His surprise, as the table moved up under his hands, was undisguised.

"I think," said he, "we all rely upon Mr. Beer not using any force?"

"I don't use any force, sir, my hands are pulled on to the table," said Mr. B.

"But, even if he were," said C., half to himself and half to me, in confidence as it were, "I am using counter pressure. Curious, very curious!"

"Well," I replied, "be satisfied that there is no collusion in us, nor delusion in yourself, and then we'll go on."

"Oh, go on by all means," said C., "I can't believe in the collusion doctrine here; and as to delusion, *one* may delude one's-self as to a matter of fact, but I

don't see how *four* can. Each one's observation is proved, you see, by the others. The thing for differing upon is the principle to which the fact is to be attributed: there's the rub."

During this the table maintained its inclined position.

I said here, "The question now is, as it seems to me, not what the force is that is in operation—it may be electric, or an odic, or a mixed force, or some special force—but what is it that uses the force? Is it the organization of the medium acting in some peculiar manner, or the organization of another, or of all of us?"

"Yes," said C., "that is the question."

"I think," Beer said, "that it's my electricity circulating from one hand round the table into the other, and so pulling the table up."

Such an explanation by the medium might have attracted the attention of a Faraday, or an Anderson, but C. did not think much of it. He asked Beer, "Did you think, or wish, or will, that the table should rise?"

"No, it rises all the quicker when I am nice and quiet, and passive."

"Then," I remarked here, "if there is an intelligent direction of the force, it does not come *from* the medium, but *through* him from some other intelligent being. Now, as we are only observers and not directors, we have to attribute the direction to an individual having intelligence, yet whom we do not see. Suppose, instead of discussing this, we admit it for the moment, and proceed for proof?"

“How?”

“By asking this admitted individual to telegraph to us, by means of the apparatus of the medium and the table, an intelligible communication. The fact of an intelligible communication will prove an intelligent communicator.”

“Well, to your proof,” said my friend C.

I said, “If an intelligent being is with us, but unseen by us, will he please move the table several times, say three?”

This was done.

“If,” said I, addressing the presumed unseen, intelligent communicator, “you wish to make a communication, please move the table in the same way.”

It was done.

“I will call over the alphabet, and at every letter I am to write to express your communication, will you please to move the table in the same way?”

It was moved.

The following letters were thus checked off:—

g o t o z e a l o u s g a b e s i n w a r d o

Here the movements ceased.

C. thought there might be some zealous man in Wardour Street, who was to convince him effectually.

My wife said that she knew that street well, but did not know the name of Gabes.

Knowing names to be sometimes telegraphed phonetically, I asked whether Gabez did not mean the name Jabez?

“Yes.” (Signified by three movements of the table.)

"Then is it Jabez Inwards he is to go to?"

"Yes."

The medium said he had heard Mr Inwards lecture, and thought he was against this sort of thing. The communication, he said, was perhaps for himself, about his wife's collection of phrenological casts. (Mrs. Beer had tried to make a profession of phrenology.) "Is he to go to Mr. Inwards about the casts?"

"Yes."

We broke up now, after appointing to meet in the evening to hear Beer "report progress."

All this excited my friend Curtius's inquiring mind. But "the proof" was yet to come to him. He said, "You see, the medium knows Mr. Inwards as a phrenologist, and he might have thought about going to him. But still it is altogether very curious."

We met in the evening. "Well, Beer, what fortune about the casts?" "Oh, I've been to Mr. Inwards's place, but he's out of town and won't be back for some days: he's out lecturing."

"Well, then that goes for nothing," said our friend Curtius.

"Don't give him up, Beer," I said, "look him up when he comes back. And now let us sit again."

We sat accordingly, but no consecutive sentence was telegraphed, only detached words as, "Malets," "Colza," "Turner." C., who is rather partial to a joke, said, he thought the spirit's name was Turner; and that Turner recommended his friend Beer to take with him to Australia a stock of mallets and Colza

oil. C. left soon, not so much excited as he had been in the morning.

I said now to Beer, "Well, perhaps the presence of my friend was an impediment. Have you any questions to ask about your own affairs? I dare say there is something; that is, if you think you are questioning something else beside electricity."

"Well," he said, "you know 'there's many a slip betwixt the cup and the lip,'—I certainly should like to know if I shall go to Australia. I will put that as a question."

The table moved "Yes."

"But is it right that I should go?"

"Yes."

"Then, when shall I go? Then we can make arrangements accordingly. In how many days?"

The table moved thirty-one times.

"Well," said he, "that will be curious too; and I need not hurry so much. That is not my thought anyhow. They told me at the office, that a ship was going in about a week which might have vacant berths for us; there was a bare chance, also, for the one that follows a month after; but that I must not fully reckon on a passage till February."

Next day Beer called. He said that when he told his wife what advice he had had at the table, she was quite vexed that he had not mentioned his business about the casts to Mr. Toogood, Mr. Inwards's partner; and that she had persuaded him to go and do so, as time was precious. He had been, and Mr. T. was going to look at them. "So we shall see."

But I understand we have no chance at all of getting off by the January ship, unless I return the paper to the Park Street office before it closes to-morrow afternoon. The clergyman has to sign it, and he refused this morning to sign until he had seen our marriage certificate; and he told me to meet him at the vestry-room to-morrow evening. I don't know how we shall get on about that: it's awkward, is it not?"

"Well," I said, "whatever you do, look in and let us know."

Next evening, Beer came in with—"I've taken the paper to the office in time, and what is more, Mr. Toogood came this morning and bought the casts at Mrs. Beer's own price. He took the whole lot, five pounds' worth, leaving no more than what she would like to take with her; for she thinks of trying phrenology over there."

"That's good. You contrived to persuade the clergyman then?"

"Well, there's something curious about that. My wife said yesterday morning, that if we were to go in thirty-one days, as the spirits said, we ought not to neglect the means, and that I had better go again and explain to the clergyman, and not leave his house without his signature. I knew she was right and so I went. Going along, wondering what I should say, and looking about, I saw a little Hahnemann's bust in a window; so I thought, here's a chance of my selling our big Hahnemann's bust; I opened the door, it was a homœopathic chemist's, and asked the gentleman inside if he wanted a bigger bust than that at a

bargain. Instead of saying No, he asked me (I was in my working jacket), how it was that I had a Hahnemann's bust, and why I wanted to sell it. I told him. He asked what part of Australia I was going to? and when? 'Oh, that depends,' I said, 'if the clergyman signs the paper before this evening I may be away in a month, if not, it will be two months. He would have signed it yesterday if I had had my certificate with me. I have it now; I hope he will sign it at once; I am going to try him.' He said it would be a pity to lose a month, and be out of work perhaps; he knew the clergyman and would go with me and explain to him for me. Presently, out we marched, and had only gone a few steps, when we met a gentleman. 'Better still,' he said, 'here comes the curate, he's our man.' He turned back, the curate with him, and after he had looked at the certificate and the paper, and talked a little, he put his signature to it. He said he had a brother, at Sydney, it was the best place in the world for young and active people, and wished me success. What do you think of that now? I thanked them, and posted off with the paper to the office, and so settled that part of the business.

"Well, when I got home again, I said to Mrs. Beer, I was sure the spirits had been with me, and told her all that had happened. And she said, 'Yes, to be sure;' and then she told me all about the casts being gone, and paid for. It is curious, is it not? We've only now to dispose of our little furniture and then we are ready."

After a few days, our friends Mr. and Mrs. Beer called to say they were going into the country, to bid good-bye to some relatives, and should come back when they received their embarkation order.

In about three weeks they came to take a final farewell of us. They were on the way to her mother's, where they proposed to pass the night, and present themselves, as per order, for embarkation the next day.

"Well, and how long is it since our sitting?" On reckoning, we found it was the thirty-first day.

Beer agreed now that there was a spiritual agency beside his "electricity," in knowing and influencing his and others' movements, as well as in directing the movements of the table.

The telling of how my friend Curtius's views were modified by the realization of the telegraphed prevision in this case of Beer's, I must leave till another opportunity. But, perhaps, C. himself, should he see this (as is most likely), will favour us with his own narrative, including his subsequent experience; for, some short time after, he himself became a medium.

London, Oct., 1856.

J. D.

CONFESSIONS OF A TRUTH SEEKER.



CHAPTER I.

A WORD PRELIMINARY.

To the Editor of the Yorkshire Spiritual Telegraph.

SIR,—As the “Curtius” of your correspondent J.D., I beg leave to confirm the truth of his statements concerning what transpired at the *seance* at which I was present, as well as the subsequent verification of the prevision of the same evening.* The only point I have to correct in his letter is, his allegation that shortly after I myself became a medium—an announcement which is at present premature.†

* It may be said here that J. D., has recently received a letter from Mr. and Mrs. Beer, in which it appears they have had ample reason to congratulate themselves on their success in Australia; and have been able to remit funds for Mrs. Beer's family to join them.

† As I wish to state facts with the utmost possible exactitude, I should perhaps modify the statement in the text, by saying, that the only approach to my having acted as a medium, has

As your correspondent has intimated that I might be willing to continue the narrative of my subsequent experience and views concerning spirit manifestations, I shall cheerfully embrace the opportunity of doing so

been that on my holding a pencil to see if anything would be written through my hand, as I had seen in other instances, I have felt it influenced, and attempts to use my hand for writing were evidently made, though unsuccessfully. And also, that on two occasions, when sitting in circle, my hand resting on the table, it was suddenly, and to me quite unexpectedly, rapped on the table in answer to questions. I, at the same time, though sitting near the fire, felt a sensation of extreme cold, something like what would be felt in the immediate proximity of a block of ice. This mode of spirit-action upon me, if such it were, I thought it advisable *not* to encourage. It is probably some of these circumstances that my friend had in mind in the statement referred to.

Since writing this, my friend J. D. has become a writing medium; his hand being only used mechanically, to write things, which are, for the most part, utterly foreign to himself. And in this way, he now receives communications almost daily, some of these being signed by names unknown to him; others by friends and kindred; some of whom have left the body many years. They often bring to his remembrance in this manner, circumstances, sometimes trivial ones, which he had entirely forgotten. These communications are often marked, as he tells me, by minute, delicate traits of character, and peculiarities of language which distinguished the writers on earth. Much useful professional assistance has also been derived by him from this source. I have been associated with him throughout these investigations, and I mention the above facts as being under my own constant inspection, and well known to many others, by whom he is universally esteemed for his intelligence, urbanity, and entire truthfulness of character.

in a short series of letters, should you deem them worthy of publication.

I do not know that I can relate any phenomena but such as the majority of your readers are probably already acquainted with, and I know that there are many whose experience, could they be induced to relate it, would be found more valuable and interesting; but believing that no man has a right to regard truth as his own private property, to be locked up in his strong box for his exclusive use, and then buried with him in the earth; but that it is a TRUST to be faithfully administered, and for which the holder will be held to strict account, I cast my mite into the treasury, and trust that those who are richer will be impressed to "go and do likewise."

It is advisable, however, in some cases, for a clearer understanding of a writer's views and experience on any particular point, to begin a little earlier than the beginning; to learn a little of his antecedents, so far at least as is necessary to understand his original standpoint of observation, and the side from which he has approached the subject. If we do this in the present instance we shall perhaps realise the truth of the old proverb, that "the longest way round is the shortest way home."

And this consideration leads me so far to anticipate what I had to say, as to caution all who believe in the spirit-manifestations of our day, and especially young, earnest converts, not to indulge in a miscellaneous, indiscriminate propagandism; not to cast their pearls before those who cannot appreciate their value, but

will trample them in the mire; to be careful not to introduce any one to their circle-meetings, unless they are fully persuaded that he is actuated by an adequate motive, and by a desire to pursue the subject for some worthy end. Those who would come for "Magic and Mystery" can be handed over to the "Wizard of the North," or some other Professor of the Black Art; those who would attend merely to ventilate their wit, can jump into the ring at Batty's and banter Mr. Widdicombe; they may be reminded that a joke and a laugh are all very well in due season, they fatten the body and exhilarate the mind, but that there is a time and place for all things. A comic song may be a first-rate article in its way, but "Polly, won't you try me, O?" would hardly be considered by the most indulgent latitudinarian an appropriate substitute for the doxology at the close of divine service. Even among ourselves it would be well to cultivate a more thoughtful, earnest, reverent spirit. For want of this I believe the communications we receive are often essentially vitiated.

In Wordsworth's poem, Protesilaus says to Laodamia—

"The invisible world with thee hath sympathised,
Be thy affections raised and solemnised."

Instead of this spiritual elevation and solemnity, how frequently does it happen, that those, who by virtue of these sympathies, have the privilege of direct communion with "the invisible world," rush into that communion with feelings utterly unfit, minds totally

unprepared, and questions frivolous and profane. So long as this is the case, need we wonder that communications of a higher order are not received by them? If in this matter men play the part of simpletons, is it surprising that they are answered according to their folly, or that the law of spiritual affinity should attract towards them spirits equally frivolous with themselves?

I am aware, that on the lower plane of manifestations, and in the early stages of inquiry, when the object is rather to test the reality of spiritual action, than to profit by spiritual teachings, much of this levity is unavoidable; it need not, however, be aggravated, as it too often is, by our own thoughtlessness, or, by the indiscriminate admission of visitors to "the circle," many of whom come to it, to witness certain expected phenomena, as they would to see the Aztec children, or the performances of Tom Thumb. Better, far better, to defer our investigations altogether till we are prepared to enter upon them in a right spirit, and for a sufficient purpose, than thus enter upon them in inconsiderate haste.

CHAPTER II.

TRANCE DISCOURSE—INVOLUNTARY WRITING—
ANTECEDENTS.

The first spirit-manifestations which I had the opportunity of witnessing, were presented by a speaking and writing medium, to whom I had been introduced by the kindness of my friend J. D. These manifestations usually took place at the meetings of a "Circle," consisting of some half-dozen persons, who assembled on Sunday evenings and once during the week, for the investigation of this subject.

On Sunday evenings the medium was entranced, or thrown into an unconscious state, similar to that of the magnetic sleep; and while in this state discourses were delivered through her to the friends assembled. Many of these discourses would have done credit to any metropolitan pulpit: profoundly religious, without being sectarian, they breathed a fervent piety, a faith in God, and in human immortality; an entire dependence upon, and trust in Him, whose messages they proclaimed themselves to be; they exhorted to self-knowledge, humility, prayer to God, and love to all; especially to the poor, the ignorant, and the afflicted. Ever urging to a higher life, they were yet considerate of human frailty. The reproaches they conveyed were

directed only against the false, the conceited, and the pharisaic; importance was assigned to the heart and life, rather than to the conclusions of the intellect, or the dogmas of the creed. The language of a true poet, whose worth the world did not learn to recognize till he was upon the point of leaving it—the late Thomas Hood,—might be taken, in part, as expressive of the spirit of their teaching:—

“My heart ferments not with the bigot’s leaven,
All men I view with toleration thorough,
And have a horror of regarding heaven
As anybody’s rotten borough.”

I had read the Rev. Charles Beecher’s “Review of the Spiritual Manifestations,” in which, while fully admitting their spiritual origin, he concludes, though not without some hesitation, that “if then the present pneumatic movement is to be referred either to the category of Rev. xxi. 14, or of Rev. xix., the probabilities are strongly toward the former;” namely, to “the spirits of devils working miracles.” But how could that conclusion be reconciled with these, and other teachings I had met with, of a like nature and origin? Strange, too, that “devils” should be at such pains to subvert the dogmas of the materialist, and to pull down their master’s kingdom! No, if it were a “pneumatic movement” at all, it seemed to me, that “the probabilities” were “strongly toward” quite another conclusion, to that indicated by Mr. Beecher.

I could not conceal from myself that these discourses possessed considerable intrinsic merit, whatever might

be thought of the source from which they sprung: and that they were much beyond the capacity of the medium in her normal state, soon became as evident to me, as it was to all who knew her.

On some occasions, members of the circle were individually spoken to, advice and exhortation being given them suitable to their character, experience, and state of mind. On one of these occasions, after a short discourse had been delivered, I was thus especially addressed, and the impression produced on my mind by the strength and fervor, the tender, earnest, loving, truthful words that were spoken to me, will not soon be effaced. I felt that if they were not indeed the utterances which they claimed to be, they were, at least, such as a watchful, sympathizing, affectionate spirit-friend might have uttered.

I did not attempt to conceal that I was still sceptical on this point; but, believing that in this, as in all subjects of investigation, it was best, for purposes of inquiry, to assume its truth, I at the next week-day meeting (when it was the custom to ask questions of the spirits who were presumed to be in communication with the circle), inquired, who the spirit was that had thus addressed us, and expressed an earnest desire for evidence which should authenticate its claims.

To this inquiry, I received the following answer, and on the ensuing Sunday some further allusion was made to it.

"MY DEAR SON,

"I am much pleased to perceive your mind is in a

far better, and in a much more calm state than it was a few days back; that although you are still tossing about on the waves of doubt, yet those waves are not quite so unruly as they were.

“I can only now tell you in answer to your question, that when we meet you on Sabbath evenings, there are several of us present, but it is I generally who speak through my medium, as I have the greatest power over her at present; there are many spirits, however, who will yet have power over her in the way I refer to, namely, as a speaking medium. You will be joyfully convinced in the good time we see approaching; but be patient, your own friends will surround you when you are fit to receive them; and although you are brought to truth in an apparently round-about way, yet it is the right way, be assured; and the time is not far distant, when, if you will follow the rules we will lay down for you, you shall receive your spirit-friends even in private where no one can intrude upon you. Do not get weary, but receive my thanks for your patient and passive state of mind, which I did not yet expect to see in so short a time. The more quiet you keep, the more you study, the more earnest you are for help, the more child-like and simple you become, the quicker will be your progress; the less you depend upon yourself, or your own reason, the greater will you become in the eyes of your Creator; and the more readily, and in greater number, will your spirit-friends flock around you, and finally convince you of the happy truth which will be the means of making smoother your path in life, softening the pillow

on which your dying head will rest, and making your spirit more happy when it awakes to a never-ending state in the spiritual world.

“Yours faithfully,

“PHRENO.”

This was written on the instant, without a moment's pause, and with a rapidity that was something wonderful; and this, whenever I was present was the case with regard to all written answers to questions, whether put by myself or others. These questions were of the most diverse, and sometimes abstruse nature. Questions in divinity, psychology, ethics, medicine, &c. (and of which no previous notice was either given or expected), were all answered in the same rapid, unhesitating, perspicuous manner. Those accustomed to literary composition, will know that the faculty of improvising answers to unexpected questions in this way is rare, even among educated men; but that a person comparatively uneducated, and of ordinary ability, should do this, in addition to frequently delivering discourses, such as I have before referred to, amid all the distraction of domestic and family cares, and while often suffering from ill-health, was, to say the least of it, a very note-worthy phenomenon.

These communications purported to proceed from different spirits, and the members of the circle, after a while, were easily able to distinguish among those who most frequently communicated (of whom the principal seemed to be the one who signed “Phreno”), by marked and obvious differences of chirography,

style, and other evidences of separate individuality and identity. Sometimes a spirit new to the circle would favour us with a communication, and this was usually at once perceptible to all present, by the evident difficulty it experienced in controlling the hand of the medium, so that it seemed sometimes only by a painful effort to be able to write even a single sentence; and this, when written, was with difficulty deciphered. Occasionally, a communication would be thus commenced, which the spirit was (apparently from the cause I have mentioned) unable to finish, and it would then obtain the assistance of a friendly spirit to complete it,—the second spirit signing its name, and giving that of the first one, which would then affix its mark where it could not sign its name. I have seen this take place, in the case of more than one medium, at a private *seance*, and at our ordinary circle-meetings.

I make no comment upon these things. Some of my readers may consider these, and other facts which I shall have to relate, as improbable, and unworthy of belief; I can only rejoin once for all, that I do not aver that they are probable. I only affirm that they are true. I record *facts* which have come under my own observations, and "*facts* are chiefls that winna ding."* "I speak that which I know, and testify that

* A non-spiritualist friend has appended to these remarks the following note. "You assume here, that the spirit unable to finish, asking another, &c., are *facts*. The medium saying or writing that this was so, surely, is the *fact* you observed." Not exactly so. I will relate a little more fully than I have done in

which I have seen." I am aware that "nothing is so brutally conclusive as a *fact*;" it pays no respect to philosophers, has no regard for theories, it shatters systems to fragments without remorse, and marches over their ruins; it will tell its own tale in its own way, let those list who will. I do not ask that my

the text, the facts I observed in the instance more particularly adverted to.

I was on a visit to an intimate friend whom I have long known. The lady was a medium: and, at my request, a circle was formed, consisting only of the medium, her husband, and myself. After we had solemnised our minds by prayer, we inquired if any spirits were present, and on receiving the affirmative signal, I inquired if any spirit was present, who was known to me when on earth;—if so, to signal the same by moving the table as I requested. This was done. In reply to further questions, I was told, by the same means, that it was a relative. I inquired, what was the relationship between us, naming, successively, the several degrees of consanguinity; I received answers in the negative to these inquiries, till I mentioned a very dear relative, when an affirmative response was obtained. I proceeded to ask questions about family matters, which were unknown to all visibly present but myself; and received, in the main, satisfactory answers. I inquired if my spirit-relative could give me a written communication? The signal for "doubtful" was made. I asked, "Will you try?" "Yes," was responded.

On the medium holding a pencil, her hand was moved in writing, slowly and strangely, as with great effort; and at length, the movements of the pencil ceased, with the sentence unfinished. It was then asked, if another spirit was present, who could finish what the first one intended to have written? On the medium resuming the pencil, the sentence was completed

conclusions from the *facts* should be accepted,—that is quite another matter. If any one can help me to a more satisfactory explanation than that to which the *facts* have conducted me, I can assure them that even “the smallest donation will be thankfully received.”*

My readers will please to bear in mind the statement made to me by “Phreno”—“Though you are brought

(though in a totally different handwriting to that at the commencement) with the facility which usually characterized my friend's mediumship; and the signatures of the writers were affixed as stated in the text. The communication was singularly applicable to my then state of mind, though certainly, *not* what I expected.

Of course, it may be said, that what I saw was feigned, but I would ask, to what end? The circle was formed at my instance. No fee was given, or would have been received. The lady was not a professional medium, had no interest to serve, and was utterly incapable of such deceit. I kept a sharp look-out on the table, and can vouch that it at least was not under her control; and if that respectable piece of mahogany had a natural faculty for conversation, it is certainly a fact, so far as I know, new in the annals of science. Perhaps our *savans* will take “a note of it.”

Let me here say, once for all, that in speaking of spirits answering questions by movements of the table, or by “raps”—one tilt, or rap, was the sign for no; two, for doubtful, or uncertain; and three, for yes; unless we requested, as we sometimes did, that the answers might be differently signalled, when they would be altered accordingly.

* One of the most curious and recent methods of getting spiritual writings that I have witnessed, has been by an instrument formed of a piece of cardboard in the shape of a

to truth in an apparently round-about way, yet it is the right way, be assured." On reflection, I could not help feeling that though a strange, and "apparently round-about way," yet if it proved to be "the right way;" it was one to which a mysterious providence seemed to have conducted me; one which I had been brought to regard as, at least, the most hopeful, and to which I had been led by what I may call the exhaustive process. I had tried every other way that had presented itself, and discovered, after proceeding a short distance, either that I was manifestly going a wrong road, or was stopped by a decided "no thoroughfare," or that the way I was journeying along was so devious and intricate, that I "found no end, in wandering mazes lost;" no chart, compass,

heart, having a pencil fixed at the apex, and moveable castors at each of the two lobes, so as to admit of the pencil moving easily in any direction. A sheet of paper being placed under it on a small table, two ladies sitting on opposite sides of the table, placed each their hands lightly on the *planchette*, which, at once, seemed to become almost instinct with life: writing communications, answering questions, and maintaining, in opposition to the views of nearly all present, a peculiar psychological theory, with the most ready ingenuity and ability. Several literary and scientific celebrities were present, and witnessed this singular phenomenon. I was told that, previous to my arrival, similar results were obtained by other mediums in the company on placing their hands on the *planchette*; and that under the hands of two children of our host, the *planchette* began drawing flowers. It will be perceived, that this duality of mediumship greatly enhances the difficulty of accounting for the phenomenon on any a pneumatic hypothesis.

or hand-book proving itself a trustworthy guide to me. Let me here, as I premised in my first letter, go back a little in illustration. I am not writing my autobiography, and shall therefore put what I have to say on this head into a few paragraphs, when I hope to get into the main stream of my narrative, and pull the boat along a little faster.

A book-worm from my childhood, I early exhibited a greater thoughtfulness than is, I believe, common to children; and, trained as I was, in the school of a narrow evangelical theology, my character acquired a yet deeper seriousness under the influence of its harsh dogmas and pitiless creed; its teachings often filled my childish mind with terror and apprehension, not alone for myself, but for those I most loved. Ah! many a young heart has it blighted, many a sensitive, timid conscience has it saddened with dire alarms, casting their ever lengthening and darkening shadows over advancing life; while many a bolder mind has been driven by it to seek in a dreary and dark materialism, a refuge from its still drearier and darker faith.

While yet a boy, I was thrown not only into the agitating social and political questions of the time, but into the still more exciting arena of theological controversy. I was brought face to face with those great and awful questions—God, Providence, Moral Evil, and Human Destiny; as well as all those minor sectarian disputes which have agitated the Christian church. Not only were the particular dogmas of my youthful creed called in question, but the foundation

and object of all religious faith was boldly assailed. At first, as might be expected, I shrunk back with horror from such impieties. If the hardy atheist, whom I first heard maintain his atheism, had been struck dead by lightning on the spot, I should have thought it the most natural occurrence possible. I soon found, however, that heaven does not deal about its thunderbolts in that way; and after awhile, the discussion of these questions possessed for me an irresistible fascination; it was the exploration of a new world, a voyage upon a hitherto unknown sea. With none to guide me (my father had died in early life), none to whom I could speak on the thoughts that were seething within me, none with whom I could take counsel, except young men engaged in the like inquiries, or busy proselytizers disputing with one another, the result may be anticipated; the strength of my religious instincts, and the force of early education, served as barriers for awhile; I did not yield without a struggle, without many an earnest prayer, many a sleepless hour. I gave to the subject all the study and thought of which I was then capable. At length, however, I could not conceal from myself that I had drifted far away upon an unknown sea of speculation, beyond all sight of land; that the faith which I had once regarded as fixed and immovable, had, bit by bit, crumbled away, till solid foot-hold upon it was no longer possible.

Strange as it may seem, the young men with whom I had thus associated, while openly avowing their disbelief in all beyond the present life and the

material universe; were yet earnest, full of faith in human progression, and in the social millennium of justice and brotherhood, which they believed nigh at hand, and which they laboured earnestly to promote. The world, and particularly the (so-called) religious world, does not understand such men, knows not what to make of them, or doubts altogether their existence. It has only one type of the infidel — it regards Rochester as the representative of the whole school; and hence, it blunders most egregiously whenever it undertakes to deal with them. I can only say of those I knew, that their sincerity and earnestness were beyond all doubt, and that their zeal and practical efforts to ameliorate the condition of mankind might put to shame many bodies of professing Christians. If they disbelieved in religion, it was not, as is often too hastily assumed, because they wanted to free themselves from its restraints, but because a God had been offered for their worship, whom they could not in their hearts reverence. If they had rejected the popular creed, it was because it did violence to the truest and deepest moral instincts of their nature. How could they accept as Divine truth, that at which their minds and consciences alike revolted? No, their self-respect, their reverence for truth and goodness, the very religiousness of their nature, the divinity that was unconsciously stirring within them, forbid it.

“There dwells more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.”

So sings our noble Tennyson, and my experience of honest doubters confirms the truth of his words.

The overthrow of all superstition (meaning thereby religious faith in general) was unhappily regarded by my companions as a necessary preliminary of those social conditions which were to inaugurate the coming millennial era. Their belief in this golden future of humanity, came to their minds with all the force, the quickening power, the sustaining influence, of a religious faith; and while it lasted, had upon their minds, in some degree, the effect of one, so that they did not experience the full sense of their deprivation. I entered largely into their views, and shared their enthusiasm. But when these hopes and dreams had vanished, when the visions of youth, with which our hearts had been cheated, faded away, when our grand scheme of world-mending broke down, as many like schemes had done before, and we were left to the cold, hard, naked reality, we began to think the religious question over again, upon larger grounds, and in a somewhat different mood. It was a rough shock to us, but in the end a useful discipline; and now, on looking back upon our little band, I scarcely know of one who has not been led, by subsequent thought, and the experiences of life, to the recognition and acceptance of the cardinal principles of religious truth; and among their later convictions, I have found there is a very general one, that the want of some religious faith as a binding principle, may be enumerated as one of the causes of our failure. They have learnt that in man there are wants, feelings, aspirations, which cannot long be ignored, and which require an answering objective reality.

And how indeed could their experience well be otherwise? The renunciation of religion is an abnegation of the best portion of our nature—its crowning excellence and glory. It is altogether an abnormal condition, which in minds healthily constituted, cannot be permanent, and is generally the intermediate passage from a dead faith to a living one. But the tree is not dead because dead leaves are falling from it to fertilize the soil; the living sap still circulates within its veins. Have patience; with the returning spring, it will again bud and put forth leaves—men shall rejoice in its beauty, and the birds of the air sing amid its branches. Better that it be bare and leafless now, than that it should maintain a goodly show, while decay is spreading within; better far than that it should put forth the Dead Sea fruit of a hollow conventionalism, fair to look at, but dust and ashes within.

I commenced anew my search for truth, with soberer feelings and chastened mind. I inquired of nature and of man. I endeavoured, as far as I was able, to glean it from the wisdom of the past, and the philosophy of the present. I studied books, and sat at the feet of living teachers. I felt the need of faith, and an ever growing distaste for the philosophy of negations. But, after all, I could not attain to that clear and certain ground of conviction for which I was striving. It seemed a very nearly even balance of conflicting probabilities; the great problem was unsolved, and was, I began to fear (in this life, at least, and I knew of no other), unsolveable. Perhaps

after all, God did not wish that we should know him—it might be absurd and presumptuous in us, mites on this little cheese of earth, to vex our souls with questions beyond “this bank and shoal of time.” Were we not bound to earth—wherefore lift our eyes to heaven? I could not, however, thus content myself; “facts of history,” and “functions of digestion,” would not satisfy the hunger of the soul; it was altogether a different *pabulum* that it needed.

Still, to my cry there came no sign, “no voice, nor answer, nor any that regarded.” Would the light never dawn? Yes! it came at last. I had sought it earnestly and long; I had sought it through the usual channels in vain. Yes, it came at length, “in an apparently roundabout way, but it was the right way, be assured.”

How it came, I must beg leave to tell my readers in another chapter.

*

CHAPTER III.

FIRST INQUIRIES—BEREAVEMENT.

I first became acquainted with the "Spirit-manifestations" through the American papers. I read wonderful stories of "spirit-rapping," "spirit-writing," "spirit-hands," seen and felt, &c. All this was attested by parties purporting to be present; recorded by the local papers at the time and place where the facts were said to have occurred. I thought, possibly this may be all clever conjuring, perhaps 'tis only a little smart practice of some down-east editors, a hoax, made to sell, like Defoe's "true relation of the apparition of one Mrs. Veal," which some good, easy souls, still believe in as a genuine thing: anyhow, it might safely be dismissed as a nine day's wonder that would soon wear out; one of those odd "notions," for which brother Jonathan has acquired some notoriety.

I next heard of Robert Owen's "*Manifesto*" on Spiritualism. And much I honoured the brave old man, who, after all his life combating what he believed to be the prejudices of the world,—now, at the eleventh hour, in the strength of his new convictions, turned round to combat the prejudices of his own followers. Finding, however, that the "communications" he received were all confirmatory of the truth of those

principles, to the advocacy of which his life had been devoted, and remembering that he was then above eighty years of age, I thought these circumstances coupled together might sufficiently explain his adhesion to these "new views."

Then came one speaking as having authority, a learned professor, who, from the lofty heights of scientific wisdom—far above the region of "vulgar errors"—looked down with pity upon the popular ignorance, which he condescended to enlighten, by demonstrating from the known laws of physics, and from certain mechanical experiments and tests which he had instituted (not by observation on the facts given in evidence, and open to his investigation), that this new folly of "table turning" (the only phase of the subject with which he appears to have been acquainted, or to have thought worthy of his notice), was all the result of "unconscious muscular agency;" and the belief that *spirits* had anything to do with it, was instanced as a proof of the lamentable scientific ignorance that prevailed. Shortly after this pronouncement, a very intimate friend (not a spiritualist) told me that Dr. Ashburner, in conversation with him, stated, that he had seen a large round table rise from the floor and move rapidly round, with a young person simply holding her two fingers on the top, no one else touching it. Now, as Dr. A. declared that he had *seen* this, as he was known to be a man of unimpeachable veracity, and one not lightly to be charged with scientific ignorance, I could not help regarding his testimony as a heavy

blow to the learned professor's theory, and began to suspect that possibly the said theory might furnish an illustration of scientific ignorance in a way which its author never contemplated.

Still there was nothing in merely physical movement to indicate anything beyond the operation of some (possibly unknown) physical law, nothing which necessarily implied intelligence, or the action of spirit-power. That still remained to be proved.

About this time I became acquainted with my friend J. D., who told me (among many other things connected with this extraordinary subject which had come under his observation), that he had received some medical prescriptions through a rapping medium, (an illiterate small boy, who could have known as little of therapeutics as a cow of cosmogony), that as these prescriptions commended themselves to his judgment as suitable to the cases for which they were given, he had applied them, and with great success. He also instanced the case of a medical man, whom I knew, having a large and successful practice whose treatment was *based* upon instructions received through the same channel.

I now became fairly interested in the inquiry, and eagerly read everything about it that came to hand. I found that in America, where these "manifestations" had originated, the subject had been thoroughly investigated, by individuals and by committees, by men in all professions, and of all parties; that if there was any trick at the bottom of it, the most searching investigation had therefore failed to detect it: that

while celebrated professors on this side the Atlantic were trying to write it down, celebrated professors and other qualified investigators on the other side, with better opportunities of judging, and after more extensive inquiry, were giving it their support ; * that it was not put forth in the interest of any sect, for its disciples were gathered from every sect, and from those of no sect at all ; and that it could boast an amount of well-attested evidence, a hundredth part of which, given before a jury in a criminal trial, would send any man to the gallows—evidence, which if brought forward in support of some ancient wonder, such wonder would be pronounced by critics “one of the best attested miracles on record ;”—that indeed its most intelligent and able opponents, † while disagreeing among themselves upon other points, agreed in this, that the facts were beyond dispute, that the phenomena of the manifestations must be accepted as genuine, and that the only question now was, as to the agencies to which they were to be attributed.

Turning my attention to England, I found, that though the “manifestations” were not so common here as in America, they were by no means wanting : many came under my own observation, many were narrated to me by friends who had witnessed them ; they were evidently gaining ground ; even here, a belief in

* See Professor Hare's Experimental Investigations ; Professor Brittan's Discussion with Dr. Richmond ; Judge Edmonds's Spiritualism ; Introduction, vol. i., Capron's Modern Spiritualism ; Rev. Adin Ballou's Modern Spiritual Manifestations, &c.

† *Vide* Revs. C. Beecher, Mahan, Drs. C. E. Rogers, Dods, &c.

them was extending, and that too among the educated, rather than the ignorant.

Of those accounts which appeared in print, I was most forcibly struck with that which appeared in a morning paper, signed "Verax." Though the writer was personally unknown to me, I knew him as a man of considerable literary attainments, and of great scientific reputation. His letter showed that he possessed a faculty of clear, keen, shrewd observation; that he was not a credulous man, or likely to be imposed upon; and the facts he recorded were of a kind about which he could not easily be mistaken. The evidence of sight, we know, is sometimes fallacious; but that of *touch* is not so easily deceived: yet in this case there was the evidence of touch, not correcting, but confirming that of sight. The circumstances which he detailed were also unexpectedly confirmed to me, by a gentleman who was present at the *seances* in question, and who filled up all the blanks in Verax's letter,* with the names of the parties referred to; and gave me several other interesting particulars.

A similar *seance* to that narrated by Verax, was soon after reported to me as having taken place in my own neighbourhood; and this report was subsequently confirmed to me by an esteemed friend who was present, and on whose testimony I felt implicit reliance could be placed. The same medium (Mr. Hume) and about a dozen gentlemen were present. Spirit-hands were not only seen by all present, but *felt and identified*

* I am glad so see this republished as a cheap tract.

by different individuals respectively. One, recognised the exact counterpart of the hand of a child, whom he had recently lost ; another, that of his father. Spirit-music was also played upon an accordion which was suspended in the hand of the medium. Several tunes were played, and then music characteristic or emblematical of the different spirit-spheres ;—first, sad, plaintive, wailing notes, representing the sorrow and suffering of the lower spheres : then, joyous music representing the happiness of the blessed—music which, in the words of the narrator, filled his eyes with tears of delight, and to which he could have listened all night.

These, and other like manifestations, occurring in different circles unknown to each other, were attested, not upon anonymous authority, by persons of no character, or living a long way off, but by my fellow-citizens and neighbours, respectable, educated men ; whose evidencethus given with every needful particular of name, time, place, and circumstance, would be received by any court of justice in the kingdom.

I felt bewildered. What could be said to all this ? Was it a new form of epidemic insanity ? If so, there seemed such method in its madness, and it bore itself so rationally withal, that the question might have been answered by the new sect in the words of one of old : “ I am not mad, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.” Was there anything, so far as we knew, in the nature of things, which rendered communication with the spirit-world impossible, or even improbable ? I could not assert that it was so. It had always

seemed to me, that, admitting the existence of spirits, the wonder was, *not* that they should communicate with those still on earth, but, *that they did not*: the absence of such communication had always appeared to me to be a most important link wanting in the chain of evidence for the continuous existence of the human spirit, after the change that we call death. For, if spirits after leaving the body retain their identity, must they not have the same spiritual affinities, sympathies, and affections? Must they not still feel an interest in those they loved—still desire and seek their welfare? I remember there is a passage in the writings of Dr. Johnson, in which he urges with great force, that a belief in apparitions of the departed, has in its favour, “the concurrent and unvaried testimony of all ages, and of all nations.”* If then, this feeling is so powerful with us on this side the river of death, is it not reasonable to believe that it will continue, and operate with regard to those left behind, when we reach the opposite shore? Where is the proof, where is even the presumption, that this earnest, mutual desire is incapable of being realized? And if evidence be offered in proof that it can be, and that it is realized, wherefore should that evidence be rejected?

I had not long prosecuted these studies, when I experienced an unexpected and most painful bereavement. This led me to think still more deeply, and to feel more earnestly about them than I had yet done.

* Rasselas.

O! when death enters our homes, sits by our firesides, and snatches from us those we most dearly love, we feel in truth, that these are no idle speculations, "which play around the head, but come not near the heart." They "stir the spirit's inner deeps;" and we feel that we must wrestle with them; we must know whether that dread

"Shadow, clothed from head to foot,
That keeps the keys of all the creeds,"

is a destroying demon, smiting in wrath, consigning our beloved ones to the jaws of vacant darkness and eternal oblivion; or, an angel of mercy, bearing them away from the cares, and pains, and sorrows of earth, to where tears shall be wiped from all eyes, "and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain."

And then, we further ask, May they not still hover around, and watch over us in pitying love, giving us evidence of their presence, guiding us with their counsels, raising our souls above the dust and darkness of earth, and impressing us with the conviction that our severance is not a final one, that they have only gone HOME, gone before us to *their* Father, and *our* Father; and that, if by a true life of noble endurance and righteous effort, we render ourselves worthy, we may be for ever reunited—one with them and with the blessed spirits of the just?

These questions may not indeed all be answered—may not be capable of being all answered satisfactorily, by logical formulæ; God's mysteries are not all shut

up in syllogisms; nor can we look for a reply to them while engrossed in the business, bustle, and petty cares of life. Where most needed, sensuous demonstration and logical proof are not, however, wanting; to those who require and earnestly seek them in the right spirit, they exist abundantly. But the intuitions of the soul are higher, and of deeper worth than all the cobwebs of the brain, however finely spun—than all deductions of the intellect, be they drawn ever so logically. Dost thou indeed desire to learn the inmost truth in spiritual things? seek it, not in the philosophy of the schools; not in the Babel of theological systems; but rather, “enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret.” In the vigils of the night, in the hours of holy meditation, “commune with thine own heart and be still.” Thou mayest find, that, as in olden time, there is still a golden ladder let down from heaven to earth—that God’s angels have not all deserted the world; and at times, when thy soul is elevated to diviner things, that spiritual presences, though not palpable to sense, surround thee:—

“That a Hades rolls deep on all sides,
With its infinite tides,

About and above us,	*	*	*
* * *	*	*	*

And through the dim rolling we hear the sweet calling
Of SPIRITS that speak, in a soft under-tongue,

The sense of the mystical march;

And we cry to them softly, ‘Come nearer, come nearer,

And lift up the lap of this Dark, and speak clearer,

And teach us the song that ye sung.’”

CHAPTER IV.

AUTOMATIC-CEREBRATION.

I mentally reviewed the various explanations and theories as to spiritualism that had been successively presented: that of "collusion" was on all hands abandoned as outworn; "unconscious muscular agency" was disposed of by the simple fact, that heavy bodies frequently moved without touch or contact; "Electricity," which I found most frequently used by those who knew least about it, reflection and experiment convinced me, was equally untenable. Our scientific opponent, Dr. Rogers, in his "Philosophy of Mysterious Agents," says, "The attempt to account for these phenomena by the agency of electricity has signally failed, as the most important characteristics of this agent cannot be found to agree with the phenomena." The above writer, in the work just quoted (by far the ablest which I have yet seen in opposition to spiritualism), has put forth the only theory on that side of the question, which appeared to me anything like adequate, or to wear even the semblance of plausibility: I will endeavour briefly to state it.

Reichenbach, Lafontaine, Arago, and others, have

demonstrated the existence of a previously unknown physical agent, called by Reichenbach "*Od*," pervading space, and forming the bond of sympathetic relation between external nature, and the organism (especially the brain) of man. This, when given forth from the organism of persons under certain conditions, acts as from a battery, produces the phenomena of sound, lifts or overturns heavy bodies, and attracts or repels them according to a law of polarity, independent of the will or desire of the persons so conditioned. Dr. Rogers concludes that he has here furnished to him the key with which to unlock the mysterious rappings and other physical phenomena of the present and of past times.

But how as to the intelligence displayed in them? Carpenter, Wilkinson, and other eminent physiologists have shown, that the brain in man (as in animals) possesses reflex, or automatic powers, which enable it to act without mind, as the instrumental representative of mind; simulating all the characteristics of intelligence, and even, as in the insane, the hypochondriac, the biologized, and the dreaming brain, assuming a fictitious personal identity. Under odic force, or other irritant, this reflex action becomes excited, ideas or impressions latent in it become active; the past is vividly reproduced in pantomimic representation, and *sensation* is sometimes exercised as to what exists in time and space; which *sensation* is reflected upon the impressible brain through *od*, as the human face is reflected upon a prepared daguerreotype plate. Two brains may be brought into odylic *rapport*, and being

thus filmily meshed together by *odic* threads, form as it were, a double cerebral unit,—like the two hemispheres of a human brain,—the impressions of the stronger being imparted or transmitted to the weaker, or of the more to its less active co-efficient, as along an electric chain: its volitions, or impressions, are propagated through the brain and nerve-centres to the motor-nerves, muscles, vocal organs, and lower parts of the organism; which, acting in mechanical union with it, produce the phenomena of the writing and speaking mediumship; while the table-tiltings, rappings, and other manifestations of the so-called spiritual agency, being directed by the automatic action of the brain, respond to it as if controlled by intelligent mind, and throw back in the responses, the impressions, or ideas, which have been reflected upon, or excited within it.

The apparent systematic rise and progress of the spiritualist movement, is accounted for as a nervous epidemic—the result of specific cerebral impress in sympathetic influence on the nervous system in relation to the *odic* agency; similar to the witch-mania in Europe and America, the *tarantula* in Italy, and the preaching-mania in Sweden.

This theory, which I have very imperfectly, but I hope fairly, represented, is urged by its author with great force of argument, felicity of illustration, and constant appeal to known facts. He maintains it to be no fancy sketch, and challenges its refutation “as a fair, logical deduction from ascertained facts.”

I felt that if the phenomena I was investigating

were produced exclusively by mundane agencies, it was in this theory, or in some modification of it, that the solution must be found. Here, or hereabout, the final battle would have to be fought: this failing, unconditional surrender was the only ultimate alternative.

I have not space, even had I the requisite knowledge and ability (which I have not) to take up the gauntlet which this author has so fearlessly flung down. But his theory had for a long time so strong an influence upon my mind, that in these "Confessions" I feel bound to state some of the considerations which finally led me to relinquish it. I trust my readers will excuse my thus apparently deviating from the main road of my story, into bye-paths every now and then. But I wish these chapters to be useful, and do not know how I can better make them so, than by furnishing hints to those who may be travelling the same way that I have travelled, as to the nature and difficulties of the road, and by, perhaps, helping to remove some of the stumbling-blocks which may lie across their path.

I found then that this theory, though tolerably capacious and elastic, neither was, nor could be made sufficiently so, to hold *all* the facts which it was required to carry; that, though a mighty smart vessel to look at, yet, after a few trial-trips, it was found rather too leaky to be altogether sea-worthy, or fit for substantial service. It had some sound planks in it, which, when the ship was taken to pieces, might

be found very serviceable: but, till that could be done, it had better lay up in dock.

The Rev. Mr. Beecher, while reviewing the spiritual manifestations in no friendly spirit, has pointed out the unsoundness in some of the timbers; he has more especially instanced the difficulty, if not impossibility, of reconciling the theory of automatic action, with the fact of involuntary contingent adaptation—an automaton duck may be made to waddle and quack, but not to be frightened. So, an automaton chess-player is impossible, because no automaton can adapt its moves to the varying exigencies of the game. I am aware that Mr. Rogers has responded that there is a great difference between animate and inanimate automata—between an automaton constructed of wood and iron, working with weights, pulleys and levers; and one constructed as the human brain is with its finer and more potent machinery of nerves, cells, fibres, and other appliances. True, but there is *one* thing which even this automaton cannot do—it cannot of itself *think*; whatever it may be capable of, cogitation is not within its province. Yet in the case of spirit-media, we have not only the expression of thought unknown to, and non-existent in, the mind or brain of the medium; but sometimes directly contrary to such mind or brain, and equally foreign to those of the other persons present. Shall I be told that what is taken for evidence of thought is only the result of unconscious cerebration—the giving out of impressions which exist unconsciously in the brain of the medium, or, of some person present? Indeed!

And how can you prove the existence of impressions in the brain of a person of which he himself is not conscious? How can you prove that he knows, what he knows he does *not* know? To try to make us believe this by virtue of bold assertion, may be very well as a biological experiment; but we are not all subjects of pathematic influence in that way, or to that extent. When you reply, Doctor, that what is regarded in these cases as the expression of mind is but a result of the involuntary action of brain, I rejoin in your own words, "This is not demonstrable, it is merely hypothetical, and has very *questionable* evidence to sustain it." If sequential logical discourse, pertinent answers to unexpected questions, be not evidence of thought, what is to be considered so? Where shall we find proof of it? Possibly some disciple of Dr. Rogers may, following out his master's line of reasoning, discover that the work under consideration did not come from the mind of its author, but was produced by this same "unconscious cerebration." The selection and adaptation of means to ends is a proof of design; design is the act of a mind; "the acts of a mind prove the existence of a mind;" so says Paley, and so says common sense.

If, then, mind is concerned in the operation, and the thought expressed is *not* that of the medium, nor of any person present (and in my experience many instances have occurred of this), Whence comes it? Whose is it? Shall we be told that it is only impression transmitted by some *absent* brain in *odic rapport* with that of the medium? Can this be the

resource of a scientific writer, boasting of his rigid adhesion to facts, and logical deductions from them? There is even less warrant for this hypothesis than the former one; it is open to the same objections; "It is not demonstrable, and has very *questionable* evidence to sustain it;" or rather, no evidence at all. Where are your facts? To whom does this absent brain belong? Where is he? What is he? Whence came he? Who is he? Has he a local habitation and a name? Bring him into court and put him in the witness-box that we may see, hear, and cross-examine him: his is material evidence, and he *must* appear: your case breaks down without him. Let us have no shirking here, Doctor; stand bolt up to the fact. It won't do to give me instances of what has been effected by the power of will; or to tell me that the mesmeriser can operate upon an absent patient. I know it, but that is done by a conscious, voluntary mental act; it is *not* unconscious cerebration; *not* involuntary automatic brain-play in *oddylic rapport*. *There* is the magnetizer; the operation can be traced back to him. Remember, you have to produce your absent brain — the operator which effects these wonders. "I don't believe there's no such person as Mrs. Harris," says Betsy Prigg to her friend Sairey Gamp; and under the circumstances of the case I think Betsy came to a very sensible conclusion. This anonymous, unknown, mythical personage who effects these wonders (invisible except when required for "*oddylic rapport*"), is the Mrs. Harris in our author's story.

Admitting, however, that Mrs. Harris, or this hypothetical Tom, Dick, or Harry *could* be discovered, I would ask, If a human brain can be worked automatically by an absent invisible person *in* the body to produce the phenomena in question, why may it not be so worked by an absent invisible person *out* of the body, especially, *when the invisible agent states that this is actually the case*, and there is no counter-claimant? I again ask, Why?

———"Gentle shepherd, tell me why?"

It is also to be noted, that automatic action has not only to be reconciled with *involuntary contingent adaptation*, but, that this adaptation is not to a single, but to a manifold contingency; not to a simple, but to a complex one: it is not like a coin with a different impression on each of two sides; but rather, like one (if you can imagine it), many-thousand, or million-sided, with a different impression on each; or, like any contrivance you can conceive of, which, in its action, shall admit of so many possible variations, singly, and by combination, as to defy the most elaborate calculations of the most profound mathematicians; for the contingent adaptation required to produce *all* the phenomena of spirit-manifestation must not only be manifold, it must include many different *sets* or *kinds* of operation. The automaton must be so constructed as to answer all sorts of questions, *ad libitum*, on the shortest notice; questions of number, questions of fact, questions of opinion. Mathematicians tell us, that the different changes or variations of position of

which the twenty-six letters of the alphabet are capable, amount to 620,448,401,733,239,439,360,000, so that if these letters were mixed together, and any given arrangement of them, say that of their alphabetical order required from an automaton thrower, the chances in its favour would be as 1 to the figures above given. But this would be as nothing to what would be required of our cerebral automaton ; for it would have to throw the letters, not into alphabetical arrangement, but into words, sentences, paragraphs, following in regular sequence, and having an intelligent meaning, pertinent to the matter in hand—a much more difficult thing ; and this would generally have to be done right on the *first* throw ; having for instruments, say, a choice either of a human windpipe, or a round table, with any amount of “od.” And this would not be all. Its work would but have just commenced ; it would have occasionally to communicate in different languages, write medical prescriptions to meet exactly the varying cases of different patients, to construct visible flesh-like hands, palpable to touch, out of invisible materials ; and when it had done all this, there would be plenty more work in store for it. Poor automaton !

Again, if all those things that we attribute to spiritual agency, are performed by “brain” and “od force,” how is it that they do not at once own up and acknowledge it ? Question the unseen agencies causing these phenomena, when, where, and how you will, be you believer, or be you sceptic, they will answer you that they are spirits, and pertinaciously insist upon it. How is this ? Does “od” tell lies ?

Emily Wesley, the sister of the celebrated John Wesley, tells us that the rapping spirit at her father's house at Epworth, got "very angry" when any one said that it was not a spirit. Does "od" so far partake of human infirmity as to get "very angry" when its veracity is disputed? I have been told by a gentleman that he was once at a circle where a young man present was airing his wit at the expense of ghosts and ghost-believers. In the course of the *seance* the spirit of the young man's father professed to be present; the young man continued to jeer, but said that he would be convinced if the ghost would perform some act such as would be characteristic of his father; presently, the table rose from the floor, and with its foot literally kicked him to the door. Truly, Doctor, your "od" force is an oddity, it plays more strange pranks than any other goblin I have read of.

That the mind does not take cognizance of all the acts of the body, is certainly true; but that the mind or brain (whichever Dr. Rogers prefers), is at any time unconscious of its own acts, I am not so sure; I doubt whether consciousness is not inseparable from it. Certainly, its ordinary consciousness may be suspended; but if it continues active, I think it can only be so by a different state or kind of consciousness being superinduced. This, however, let physiologists and philosophers decide.

I cannot, however, conclude these strictures, without remarking, that if we cannot from intelligent effects predicate an intelligent cause; if we are to believe

that all the operations of mind can be effected without mind, we introduce an element of confusion and uncertainty into all reasonings from analogy, sap the foundations of natural theology, and run counter alike to revelation and to the common sense, the common instincts, of mankind. If spirit-manifestations are to be accounted for as resulting solely from the operation of mundane agencies, we must be prepared to do this; to maintain principles and theories having this tendency; there is no alternative; or, if there is, I have yet to learn it. Some opponents of spiritualism have carried the application of their principles much farther in this direction than Dr. Rogers has done. Dr. Richmond, for instance, makes a clean sweep of it; he levels his reasoning alike at ancient and modern spirit-manifestations; at those that have taken place in Palestine, as well as at those occurring in the United States. He admits the facts in both cases, but thinks them equally explicable by natural and mundane agencies.

That all the instances cited by Dr. Rogers as nervous epidemics are *purely such*, I am not prepared to admit. It may however be observed; that while the present movement has some points of agreement with these epidemics, there are characteristic differences which he has altogether overlooked. But as I am here making my confessions—not writing a review—I must leave the determination of these to the reading, reflection, and experience of my readers; and hope to furnish facts illustrative of the general reasonings above advanced, in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER V.

ACROSS THE RUBICON.

My first observation of the physical-manifestations of spirit-power has been already given as an "Instance of Telegraphed Prevision," by J. D., in the Introduction to this work.

It appeared to me, that something like intelligence was certainly indicated on that occasion ; not so much or so clearly, in the communications themselves, as in the mode of signalling one by one, the letters which composed them : and in the answers to the questions purposely put by me, to test whether the table movements were directed by an intelligent agent, or were simply the result of the action of an unintelligent force. I could not help asking myself—If it is only the latter, why should the table always rise and fall *three* times according to mutual agreement when a particular letter of the alphabet is to be indicated ? When I asked if the letter put down was the one intended, which I did at every letter as it was tipped (I should think in all more than a hundred times during the sitting) why did it always repeat the *same* number of movements for the affirmative, and tip *once* only for the negative ? Why these numbers rather than any other if there was no directing intelligence

in the case? It could not be the result of some occult physical law, for, when changing the nature of the query, Mr. Beer asked, How many days would elapse before he would leave London for Australia? the table moved now, not once, nor thrice, as before, but *thirty-one* times; a number quite unexpected by all present.* It was certainly very strange, still, the matter of the first communication appeared in part rather obscure and confused; though perhaps not more so, even on the spiritual hypothesis, than might have been expected, considering the imperfect instrument of communication. This, however, was to me, an element of doubt and uncertainty: I was certainly astonished, when I learned that friend Beer had actually started on the day named thirty-one days before; especially, as I knew he had been led by the emigration authorities to expect that his departure would be required much sooner; still, after all, thought I, this may be merely a curious coincidence. Mr. Winkle, when he first went shooting, shut his eyes, fired his gun, and, to his own astonishment, brought down the bird; this, though it brought him the reputation of being a capital sportsman, did not prove that he was really a good shot, that he had

* Again, on other occasions, when a question has been asked which could not be fully or appropriately answered by the tips, or raps, I have frequently seen the table, if a writing medium has been present, incline forward into his or her lap, forming as it were a writing slope or desk, at once suggesting the idea that the answer would be given in writing; and, on the pencil being held, the answer has been written accordingly.

intentionally succeeded, or correctly taken aim; it was simply a lucky accident. This singular fulfilment of the small prophecy so oddly made, might be nothing more: though a little staggered by it, I was not convinced; more proof than this was needed. And more proof was soon given. Returning home one evening with a friend and fellow-inquirer who was in ill health, we called upon Dr. D. for some medicine. Draught and pill having been duly prescribed, the Doctor said to us, "We have formed a circle up stairs and are getting responses by the table, would you like to join us?" We did so. Inquiries were being made by different members of the circle, concerning distant friends; and being asked, if there was any one about whom I wished to make inquiry, I said, Yes, I should be glad of some information about a friend in Australia. The question was asked, if any spirit was present who would give the information required.—
"Yes."

"Well, is my friend in good health?"—"No."

"Very ill?"—"Yes."

"Will he recover?"—"It is uncertain."

"If these responses are from a spirit, may I know who it is?"—"Yes." I thereupon named several deceased who had been known by myself and friend, but "No," was answered as each of these names was successively given.

"Is it a relative?"—"Yes."

"His mother?"—"Yes."

"Indeed! If it is so, will you answer any proper test question that I may put?"—"Yes."

I paused a few minutes. The whole thing was so utterly unexpected by me, that, though I had spoken of a test-question, I was not prepared with one. While I was thinking about it, the table rose above the floor, and inclining toward me, remained thus, as if intimating that it was quite ready, and waiting for my question. At last I said, "Can you tell me how long it is since my friend left England?"—"Yes"

"Is it more than a year?"—"Yes."

"How many years is it?" In reply to this question, the table rose and fell thrice, and then rose slightly about half the former height from the floor.

"Does that mean four years?"—"No."

I should think, interposed friend D., that it means three years and a half. "Yes" was promptly responded by the table. "I think it is not so long," I observed. The table re-affirmed that it was.

"How many years is it since you left the body?" In answer, the table tilted seventeen times. I thought it was not so long as this, but said nothing about it. "Has my friend any increase in his family since he left England?"—"Yes."

Returning home, I found upon inquiry, that it was three years and seven months, less a week, since my friend had left for Australia. I subsequently heard of the increase of his parental responsibilities; the exact period of his mother's death I could not ascertain, but from a comparison of circumstances and dates, I found that it must have been at about the time stated.

This was sufficiently singular, but it was not all:

two or three weeks after, calling upon Mr. R. (a friend whom I have known for many years), I was surprised to find himself and two daughters, a lady relative of mine, residing under the same roof with me, and another lady and gentleman, well known to me, busy getting responses to questions by the table, and a little elated to find that on this, their first experiment, three of the ladies were declared to be mediums, my relative being one. When it came to my turn to ask questions, it occurred to me, that if I put the same questions as at the former circle, a comparison of the answers might be of some value—this circle (myself excepted) being entirely different from the former one, and unknown to the persons composing it; and the objects of my inquiry being unknown to the members of either circle; with the exception of my relative to whom the circumstances were partially known. I first inquired, as before, If any spirit was present who could give me information about a friend in Australia? —“ Yes.”

“ Is it a friend not related to him ? ” —“ No.”

“ Is it a relative ? ” —“ Yes.”

“ His mother ? ” —“ Yes.”

“ Is he in good health ? ” —“ Yes.”

This answer the reader will see was contrary to that which I had before received to the same question. I said to myself, there must be a hitch somewhere; after a moment's thought, however, I inquired, “ Has he been ill ? ” —“ Yes.”

“ Has he now recovered ? ” —“ Yes.”

Let me observe here, that my friend was subject

to heart-disorder, which at times rendered his life peculiarly uncertain from day to day; but when he recovered from these sudden attacks, which he sometimes did very soon, he would almost at once resume his usual health; knowing this, it seemed to me very probable, that the facts corresponded to the answers given; and this, at first apparent discrepancy, was to me more evidential of spirit-agency, than an exact conformity in all the responses would have been. The remaining questions which I had put at the first circle, I now repeated, and received the same answers. I further inquired, "Can you give me the initials of my friend's name?" This was done. "Will you oblige me by giving the christian and surname in full?" This was also done, letter by letter, without mistake, till the name was completed.

This double incident, or series of incidents, was to me a convincing proof of the action of invisible intelligent agency external to ourselves; most of the facts stated in the responses being unknown to all present but myself; and some of these, I did not believe to be correct till I had subsequently verified them. It could not therefore, have been my own unconscious agency which influenced the responses; the more I reflected, the more impossible I found it to account for these things on any other hypothesis than that of spirit-agency. If any one can satisfactorily explain them otherwise, I will patiently and thankfully consider the solution he has to offer; I have no wish to remain under a delusion; but I cannot abandon a conclusion not hastily taken up, nor without patient

investigation of, and deep reflection upon, all the facts which I have myself witnessed,—corroborated too, by like testimony and experience in others,—until it is *clearly proved* to be a delusion, or, until some better explanation can be given. My incredulity as to the reality of spirit-agency in the world rapidly declined from this day forward.

An incident, somewhat similar to the foregoing, took place soon after, at my own home, at a private sitting; the medium being my near relative. Upon asking for a communication, there was telegraphed by the table, the following letters:—p r a y f o r m e t o n i g h t. On inquiring the name of the spirit who thus solicited my prayers, that of an old school and class-fellow was given in the same way; and in reply to my further questions, the number of years since his death, and the christian and surnames of our respected class-teacher were also correctly given.

To assert that this was all by accident, would be mere childishness; and, as the facts stated (with the exception of the teacher's surname) were unknown to the medium, her mind could not have influenced the communication, or responses. I was not, nor had I been thinking of my school-fellow, or teacher; and although I knew the former had been dead many years, it was only by an effort of memory, and a comparison of circumstances, that I was able to assure myself, that the year of his decease was the one assigned; this again could not have been a transmitted impression from my mind; and beside me and the medium, there was no one else bodily present. From

whose mind then could it have been transmitted? Say, that the facts existed latent in my mind, or brain, and were read from thence by the medium, and thrown back in the responses, by the power of her brain, or volition, acting through the imponderable "od," or other agent upon the table. To say nothing of the difficulty of conceiving the *modus operandi* by which such complex action could have been effected, it is sufficient to remark, that the medium was in her ordinary, normal state, and could not have read what was buried so deep in my mind, or brain, without being conscious of it—which she was not. The so-called explanation is suicidal; there can be no reading without a reader; and in this case, that reader must have been an external invisible intelligence, or, what is ordinarily called a spirit. "To this complexion we must come at last."

It is true, that at a subsequent sitting, I was told in a communication, purporting to be from a spirit in a higher sphere, that I had been imposed upon by a deceiving spirit, and that it was not the veritable spirit of my old friend and schoolfellow. Whether it was so or not, I am unable confidently to say; I can only vouch, that to the best of my knowledge, the facts stated in answer to my questions were correct; but even had I been thus imposed upon, this would only affect the question of the identity and truthfulness of the spirit who in this instance had communicated with me, and would not in the least invalidate my conclusion as to the spiritual origin of the communication and responses themselves.

This leads me to notice an objection, which, though seldom met with in print, I have frequently encountered in conversation. It is asked, "If these communications are from spirits, how is it that they so often tell us what is untrue?" In reply, I might ask, How is it, that in the present life, men so often tell one another what is untrue? It often proceeds from ignorance, or, from possessing only a partial knowledge of a subject, when we think we know the whole; sometimes, it is from simple mistake, or error; at others, from an imperfect apprehension, or misapprehension, of another's meaning; and sometimes, we are obliged to confess that the falsehood is intentional. Now, what I wish my readers to see, is, that these causes may apply, and some of them with greater force, to spirits communicating with us, than to ourselves in communicating with each other. Spirits are neither omniscient, infallible, nor impeccable. The spiritual state, in many respects, must essentially differ from our natural one; this may cause some obscurity and mistake, and then, their instruments of communicating with us, are more imperfect than those by which we here communicate with one another; it is often like two men speaking different languages, attempting to converse by signs; they make themselves partially intelligible, but all sorts of blunders unavoidably take place, and, if a reasonable allowance for one another is not made, each may accuse the other of falsehood where it is not intended. If it be true, and I think it is, that spirits sometimes gain their information from the

minds of those present, this would occasionally be an additional and fruitful source of inaccuracy and error.* Again, those spirits who seek to deceive us, can more easily do so than mortals; at all events, they are less open to detection by us; we cannot confront, expose, punish, or bring the moral influence of our opinion to bear upon them. If we are over anxious to receive a communication from some spirit eminent when upon earth, or from some particular spirit whom we have known; a vain spirit, or one who wishes to gain our ear, may seek to palm himself off upon us as some great one, or personate the very one from whom we are so anxious to hear. For instance, to prevent my thus being imposed upon, I requested a particular spirit to give me a sign by which I should always be able to identify her presence; this was complied with, and the sign repeated to fix it more firmly in my memory. On a subsequent occasion, another spirit attempted to counterfeit this sign, making the required number of movements, but not with that peculiarity of movement in which the sign

* It may be noted that even when questions are not answered with accuracy, they often approximate very nearly to it; in rapping, for instance, the age of some one present, it is sometimes correct, at others not so, but still, pretty close to the mark; seeming like a shrewd guess; nearer than that of any of the company probably would have been. These cases would seem to indicate an intelligence a little, and only a little, greater than our own; but we should bear in mind that spirits sometimes say they answer, not as from positive knowledge, but simply from the probabilities of the case before them.

consisted; here was a clear manifestation of intelligence, combined with dishonesty; a case common enough, alas! among men, and it would seem not uncommon among a certain class of spirits.

It is necessary to take these considerations into account, in determining the quality, or reliability of spiritual communications, or responses, and of the spirits who give them; but they have nothing to do with determining the previous question, namely, "Do they proceed from spirits?" *That* must be decided by the fact whether or no they bear upon them the stamp of intelligence; whether they are the expression of thought—*relevant* to the matter in hand—*pertinent* to the questions that have been put. A man may be a blockhead, or a liar, without necessarily losing rank as an intelligent being; and it would be unwise in us to deny the agency of spirits, because sometimes their communications are either frivolous or false. It might perhaps be well for us to consider, whether our own falseness and frivolity had not a greater influence in attracting to us false and frivolous spirits than our self-conceit would willingly allow.

That spirits can read the minds before them, is, I think, evidenced by their answers to *mental* questions; this, then, is one source from whence they derive their information; and it is the misapprehension of this fact, which so bothers and misleads our scientific opponents, giving rise to so many ingenious, ignorantly-learned theories of "transmitted impressions," "automatic cerebral action," and the like. It is unfortunately the tendency of some minds, to cast about for

some difficult and far-fetched explanation of facts, when the true interpretation lies clear and plain before them. If however, these gentlemen would bear in mind, that there are abundant instances to which their favourite explanations do not apply—cases where impression, or transmission could not have taken place, it would save much time, controversy, and inkshedding.

CHAPTER VI.

MORE FACTS.

In my last chapter, I detailed certain incidents establishing in my mind the conviction, that the responses obtained in the circle, proceeded from an intelligence *not our own* ; that the answers telegraphed by movements or sounds were, as they claimed to be, a mode of manifestation of spirit-agency among us ; and that, in some cases at least, the answers or communications so obtained, contained *internal* evidence of proceeding from the spirits of those formerly known to us on earth, inasmuch as they revealed facts with which they were personally acquainted, but which were unknown to those present, in part, at the time, even to the questioner ; the truth of the statements they made, being verified by subsequent observation and inquiry.

It would be easy to enumerate instances of this kind ; but what need to multiply examples ; *one* fact, if admitted, is, for the purpose of the argument, as good as a thousand ; the same kind of evidence, the same principles of reasoning that applied to one case, apply to all. It is not by a cursory perusal of many similar facts, but, by the thorough analysis and examination of one or two, and the concentration of our faculties upon all the points which these present, that we are most

likely to arrive at sound conclusions. I know that cumulative evidence is of great value, especially, in establishing the reality of an alleged class of facts differing from those with which men are ordinarily conversant, or, in enabling us to understand the true character of unusual phenomena, which we may thus see under different phases, and examine by different lights; but after all, facts and phenomena are of little value, except as materials for thought, or at least, until thought has been employed upon them. If we do not thoroughly think them out, their multiplicity, instead of enlightening, tends only to bewilder and perplex us. Facts are the food of the mind, and if not properly digested, serve only to oppress and enfeeble its action.

If any readers of my book have made up their minds to admit nothing as true which is outside of their personal experience, or of the common experience of mankind, they may as well at once give up reading upon this and many other subjects; upon more subjects indeed (if they are consistent) than perhaps they bargain for. Testimony and argument is all the evidence that books can offer, and if this kind of evidence is declared inadmissible, one can only say, as did Tony Weller to his incredulous son, "Wal, Samivel, go and see."

The opponents of spiritualism must either deny the facts alleged by its advocates, or the conclusion they deduce from them;—no middle course is possible. Now the general facts given in evidence are admitted, freely, fully, unreservedly admitted, by its most

searching and able opponents: men of letters and of science, philosophers and divines, have admitted them, simply *because they could not help it*; because they knew that no sane man who had thoroughly investigated them could honestly deny them—they could only write underneath *Q. E. D.* and proceed further. Those who have remained opponents after attaining to this result, have had no alternative, but to combat the inference which has been drawn from the facts presented. It is because I have felt that, among men conversant with the subject, this is now the only remaining point at issue, that throughout these chapters I have not only stated facts, but endeavoured to show that these, and all facts bearing upon the question, lead inevitably to one and the same conclusion, namely, *that spirits may and do communicate with men on earth*; that the facts lead us *here, or nowhere*. We *dare disproof* of the facts alleged as the premises of our argument, and we challenge discussion on the validity of the leading inference we draw from them.

But “return we to our muttons”—the narrative of facts; one or two instances, in addition to those already cited, may still further illustrate the position maintained in my last chapter, that the responses obtained in the circle are frequently such as *could not* have been transmitted from the mind or brain of any one then visibly present.

A conversation one day taking place at home, about what had been seen at Mr. R's. circle, as given in my last, my brother said to his friend present, “Well, Jack, suppose we go there and see for our-

selves." "With all the pleasure in life," responded Jack, laying down his meerschaum and puffing forth his last volume of smoke. Jack, be it known between ourselves, *en passant*, was a great connoisseur in meerschaums, and at one time possessed a collection of them that a German prince might have envied: further, he did not object to "old October," but his great *penchant* was for the canine species: he had occasionally practised "gentle surgery" in their behalf, it was his glory and his pride to know all the "points" about them, and being somewhat of an amateur artist, he would indulge his "particular vanity" in painting sketches of his four-footed favourites: these amiable weaknesses were however unknown, or scarcely suspected, by the medium, and the greater part of the circle that he was about to visit.

On his return, in answer to inquiries how they had got on, Jack replied, "Oh, stunning!" and thereupon proceeded to narrate, that several short mottos, or practical maxims, suitable to the character and circumstances of those to whom they were severally addressed, were successively given. When it came to my turn, I said, "Now let's have something good." The table signified in the usual way a willingness to comply with this reasonable request. The alphabet was called over, the first two words signalled being, "leave off," two or three of the knowing ones, interposed with, "Oh, we know what's coming next, you're to leave off smoking." In this shrewd conjecture the table intimated they were mistaken: the next letter telegraphed was "d;" "Ah! they had it now, he was

to leave off drinking." No, wrong again. Well, then, we must go back to the alphabet. Upon doing so, "dog-fancies" was the compound word supplied, finishing, as they thought, the sentence. Jack opened his eyes to their utmost width, and, when he had sufficiently recovered breath, said, "Well, I suppose that's all you've got to say to me." "No," it wasn't. "Well, that concludes the sentence, don't it?" "No." The sentence was then completed, and it read. "Leave off dog-fancies and study something better." "Well! could they tell him what was this "something better?" "Yes." "Would they tell him?" "No." Probably they thought they had sufficiently complied with his request to "let's have something good;" that they had given him enough for the present; and that it might be left to his own judgment to find out "something better" to study than "dog-fancies." Whether he has found it or not by this time, I cannot say: but whenever the subject is alluded to in his presence, he kindles up and replies, "Well, certainly, that was a rum go anyhow! wasn't it?"

I have detailed this incident at somewhat greater length than its trifling character may appear to warrant, because I think it shows, though in one short sentence, that the substance of the communication was not only different from, but directly contrary to, the impression on the minds of all present; again and again they felt confident that they "knew what would come next," and again and again they found themselves mistaken; they guessed repeatedly, and in each case guessed *wrongly*, and in this case as

in each instance, the advice tendered displayed considerable knowledge, and discrimination of character.

On another occasion, at the same family-circle, a young man was present, whom I will call X. Y. Z. His age, on inquiry, was correctly given, and in answer to the question, where he was born, the name of a small French town in the West Indies was spelt out—a name with which all present but himself were unacquainted: he admitted that he was born and had spent the greater part of his life there. A communication being asked for, he was told in French that he was, “*un jeune homme mauvais pour les dames,*” and subsequently, the same evening, a communication was given (as before, by the table, letter by letter), which was unintelligible to the circle. On inquiry, “Was it in a foreign language?” they were answered, “Yes.” An interpretation was asked for, but instead of receiving this, X. Y. Z.’s proper name was spelt out. “Does that mean that he can translate it?” “Yes.” *Le jeune homme*, acknowledged with some trepidation, that he understood it,—that it was in the Carribean language, a language spoken by a tribe of savages nearly extinct, with which he had become acquainted while in the West Indies. He however refused to interpret it, but subsequently, he gave the literal translation to a friend, from whom I received it. Suffice it to say, that it was in purport similar to the one given in French. In narrating the story to his friend he added, “I also asked some other questions, and they hit me so hard that I couldn’t stand it any longer, so I took up my hat and bolted out of the house.”

I had this account from the friend to whom X. Y. Z. communicated it; and also (with the exception of the translation from the Carribean, about which they were still in the dark), severally, from each of the other persons present, within two or three days of the occurrence, and I could detect no discrepancy in their statements; their astonishment was too unequivocal to be simulated or mistaken; and well knowing the persons, I feel sure that they told me what had taken place, just as it occurred. I will not darken the light of these facts by comment. Let philosophers of the materialistic school ruminate over, and explain them as they can.

In pursuing the subject at home, at my own table (myself and medium—the relative before mentioned, generally being alone present), every element of doubt and suspicion, had any remained, must have been dispelled. The only circumstance, concerning the responses by table-movements, which I need mention in this connection, is, an experiment which I made to test whether electricity had anything to do with the production of the phenomena. I did not see how it could, as electricity can be conveyed and conducted only upon insulated bodies; but to put it to the proof, we several times sat at a table with a heavy round glass top (an electrical non-conducting substance); consequently, had electricity been the moving power, no movements would have taken place; but I found this glass top made no difference; the movements were made just as freely and powerfully with this table as with one constructed of the ordinary materials.

Though I consider this decisive on that point, I wish it always to be borne in mind, that the question is not simply to account for certain movements of ponderable bodies, but for the intelligence connected therewith. I have stated some reasons for considering that spirits control and direct these movements; whether they do so by electricity, od, or some at present unknown physical agent, is a very interesting question, but does not affect the first and main question to be settled.

A much more interesting phase of the subject, at least to my mind, was the efforts made by the spirits to use the medium for speaking; they inducted her into the trance state, but not deeply enough to enable them to discourse through her. On one occasion, a friend and myself had requested an explanation of some perplexity which had been presented in our investigations; we expected this to be given as usual by the alphabet, but were told by the spirits, that they would attempt to speak to us through the medium in about a quarter of an hour. In less than two minutes, she fell back in her chair, her eyes closed, her arms dropped, her head moved slightly from side to side; we spoke to her, but received no answer; this state appeared rather to deepen, but no words were spoken; after waiting beyond the time named, and on returning to her normal state, the spirits told us that they would not be able to speak through her that evening.

The medium said that she was partially conscious during the time, and could hear our voices, but could not speak, nor open her eyes; she felt as if some one was

powerfully pressing the lids down. I have seen a similiar partial-trance state in other mediums.

Soon after the severe bereavement to which I have before alluded, this lady was several times, when alone, thrown suddenly into this trance state; when she at once became conscious that the spirit of our dear relative was with her in the room, calling her by name, and speaking to her in the old familiar way: on the last of these visits to her she heard the spirit thrice call her by name, just as in the flesh she was wont to do when trying to arouse her: and then at some length address her, the words sounding as if spoken inwardly, and from a distance, being so faint that she could not catch the utterance; her impression, however, being, that it was altogether of a religious character; the only words beside her name that she distinctly heard, were, "You must believe in God." At the close of this address, she heard beautiful music, though differing from any other, which gradually grew fainter, dying away as in the distance. She has assured me also, that on several occasions when her mind has been anxious and agitated, she has felt the spirit-influence suddenly upon her, producing a pleasant, and soothing effect.

It must not be inferred from the words heard by the medium, as above given, that she was wanting in the belief referred to; the object probably was, to urge to a deeper faith and firmer trust in God, than we all are at times apt to feel; it may be mentioned, that the relative who had gone home before us, though possessed of deep religious feeling, was not at all, when

on earth, in the habit of talking on religious subjects : and that the medium had never seen any one in a trance ; neither had she heard, or read of this mode of spirit-manifestations, nor has she ever been a mesmeric subject, or the subject of pathematic influence of any kind.

We had, I fear, at least on one occasion, spirit-visitants of another and less welcome character. One night, just after the medium had gone to bed, she was startled with noises of an unusual kind, apparently at the head of the bed. Not thinking at all of spirits, she got up, carefully examined the bed and its surroundings, but nothing could be discovered : she had scarcely composed herself again in bed, however, before she felt herself bodily raised in, and with the bed, three times, as by some power underneath it. There was no person in the house by whom such a trick could have been played ; nor upon the strictest investigation, could anything be found to throw light upon this mysterious occurrence. Fearful of some injury to the nervous system of the medium, should such things be repeated, we discontinued our sittings ; and as other duties have precluded my attendance at circles for some time past, my notes are somewhat less copious than they otherwise might have been.

I find as it is, I must pack my remaining facts a little closer together, and state only general results ; otherwise, I fear my readers will begin to consider this, " a story without an end."

I have repeatedly seen the table incline forward to an angle of 45 degrees, or more ; the candle-lamp,

water-bottle, inkstand, pencils, &c., remaining on the table as if they were a part of it. At other times, I have seen the table rise *perpendicularly* from the floor, our hands all resting on the *top* of the table. (How could this be the effect of muscular action?) I have seen the table-cover drawn from under our fingers, and thrown upon the floor. Once, as the table was moving, one person only lightly resting his fingers on it, I jumped on the top, and, by this novel mode of locomotion, was carried round the room. I have seen a table, with the medium (a delicate female) lightly touching it with the tips of her fingers, rise off the floor, and answers telegraphed by its movements, notwithstanding the utmost efforts of two strong men to hold it down. I have received responses to questions by the table, no one placing their hands upon it but a child about four years of age. I have more than once seen the table move without human touch or contact. At the close of one of our meetings, it was telegraphed by the table, without any of us being in contact with it, that we were to sing the doxology; and as soon as we had sung the first note, the table rose without any of our hands upon it, and commenced beating time like a *baton* in the hands of a music-master keeping time to the end much more correctly than we did. I have known the names and ages of persons, the dates of events of a private and family nature, the time and place of the mortal decease of the communicating spirit, and many other particulars of a like kind, correctly given by table-tippings. I do not pretend

that such particulars were uniformly correct ; but I know that they were frequently so ; and that, when neither medium nor circle were previously cognisant of the facts so communicated.

At one of the sittings of our family circle, a gentleman was present, who had recently arrived in this country from New Orleans. In reply to his questions, he was told, through the table-tippings, the number of years he had lived there, and the number of weeks he had been in England—facts known only to himself. The spirit communicating with him, purported to be an old friend of his. He gave the initials of his name, and said, that he died in New Orleans ten years and a-half since ; all which particulars our friend from New Orleans certified to be correct.

I have repeatedly seen mental questions appropriately answered by the table ; on one occasion, at which about a dozen persons were present, as a relative or friend was mentally asked for by one and another, the table darted from side to side, toward the questioner—as if to assure him or her of the reality of the spirit's presence ; then a number of movements would be made, corresponding to the age of the deceased—the time of his or her death, or other mental question ; none but questioner and respondent knowing the question until after the answer was given. At one time the table-top gradually declined to and finally rested upon the floor, answering questions by rapping its edge upon it ; a lady present assured us, that this was done in answer to her mental request ; she desiring it as a test of a certain

spirit's presence. At this *seance*, during one of the pauses, I put a mental question, taking care that no movement of my lips or expression of my countenance (so far as I could control it) should exhibit any symptom of questioning, much less indicate the nature of my question; scarcely, however, had it proceeded from my mind, than the table flew toward me, pressing gently against me, then receding; and thrice repeating this movement. The character of this manifestation was so striking, that a lady sitting near to me observed, "That must be your mother, it was so evidently the expression of maternal feeling." It was indeed so. I had inquired, "If my mother was present, would she in some way manifest it to me?" This was the response. Here was evidenced perception, memory, intelligence, affection, blended in one act. Could this be done by electricity, odyl, or some unknown, unintelligent imponderable? To put the question seems to me to answer it.

I do not wish my readers to come to any hasty conclusion upon these facts: or rather, upon the class of facts, of which these may be considered as in part representative. This subject can afford to wait. I blame no man for suspending judgment, as I know, that convictions which grow up in a day, too frequently wither in a night. The town clerk of Ephesus was a wise man; would that his advice were more generally heeded. But I, and those who think with me, have a right to ask of those who occupy the post of public instructors, and especially of those who have sat in judgment upon this question, what they have to say

to these and such like things; and also the right to canvass the justice of their sentence: and should it appear (as it does to me) that they have generally decided in ignorance, in prejudice, or in haste—to appeal from their judgment; and I do so appeal. I appeal from the judgment which *precedes*, to that which follows inquiry, and decides, with a full knowledge of all the facts of the case—"I appeal unto Cæsar,"—to that royal and supreme authority under God—the reason and conscience of mankind; and await patiently, and with confidence, the ultimate verdict.

And what say our public teachers? I don't mean the newspapers; from them little is to be expected—from the so-called religious newspapers least of all; they all have something else to regard than the discovery and promulgation of truth; they have to consider their party, their influence, their circulation. One cannot look to *them* for the recognition and advocacy of an unpopular truth; it is sure to be given when such truth becomes fashionable, and their advocacy is not needed; their cue is, to keep a little, *just a little*, in advance of the public opinion to which they appeal, to watch the tide and head it as it turns, so that they may afterwards make a merit of it:—

"See how we apples swim."

Even those editors who may be favourable to spiritualism, are obliged to conform to the "non-committal" policy: the utmost to be hoped for from the periodical press, is an impartial statement of the case. It is refreshing to find even a reasonable approximation

thereto. As to our spiritual teachers,, the clergy, there are some men of mark among them, who have given to the cause the influence of their names and advocacy (all honour to them for their courage in doing so); but the greater number of them at present ignore the subject altogether; or simply join chorus with the press and the philosophers. Their position is, in some respects, unfavourable to the subject; they are banded together, officered, regimented, and cannot generally, without breach of clerical discipline, step out of the ranks: unhappily too, they are bound by creeds, traditions and formulæ; their minds are absorbed in studying the dead past, rather than the living present; it is difficult for them to recognize a truth in the theological sphere, which is not at least two thousand years old; or even then, if it is not clothed in the antique garb. They believe in celestial visitants; but then, they have all departed from the earth, long, long ago: evil demons may indeed remain to tempt us; but that ministering spirits of grace and mercy are at hand to guide and comfort us, is a heresy not to be tolerated: when science came in, all proper well-behaved spirits went out. God governs the world differently now, to what he did in the olden time; perhaps He has found something else to do, and left it to spin along by itself, under the direction of politicians, priests, philosophers, economists, and the almighty dollar. I, for one, do not believe this, and think that of all heresies and blasphemies, it is nearly, if not quite, the worst. Some of our clerical brethren, rather more courageous than the rest, have gone

a little way into the inquiry, but after generally commencing with a "pooh, pooh," they presently take alarm, sniff brimstone, and start back with horror, like Macbeth when he encountered the witches on the blasted heath; but, unlike the hardy thane, they will not stay to question farther. "Away! Hell is broken loose!—the fiends are upon us!"—the foot of the table is metamorphosed into Satan's cloven hoof: and the text, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you," practically interpreted, means, "Scamper off as fast as you can, and leave him in possession of the field."

And what say our philosophers, or rather, the men of science to whom that title is now appropriated; that is (with few exceptions), so far as they deign to notice it? One eminent professor, second perhaps to none in his own department, tells us, that "unconscious muscular agency" alone can explain these hitherto mysterious movements of our furniture; that everybody pushes the table, while nobody knows it, and that somehow they all push one way; and he even condescends (playful behemoth!) to banter those who cannot accept this very satisfactory and scientific account of the matter, assuring them, that if it is not so, then, "such a man, furnished with a nicely constructed carriage on a railway, ought to travel by the mere draught of his own fingers." * A second *savant*, discovers that the sounds, or rappings, are produced by the voluntary displacement and cracking of the knee and toe joints; a third, that it is the leather of the boot rubbing in some way against the table; a

* See note at the end of this chapter.

fourth, after witnessing some of the phenomena, gets all in a fog about it, doubts the evidence of his senses, says, "The table *seemed* to rise about four inches," admits that he saw some wonderful things which *he* can't explain, but then, he is no conjuror—thinks they may have been caused by this, that, or t'other, is not sure which; but is quite sure it's not spirits; he's made up his mind to that.

"These be thy gods, O Israel"—the philosophers and guides of the nineteenth century (pray heaven, gentlemen, to grant you a little less of such philosophy and a little more common sense).^{*} Well may Mr. Beecher say, "If scientific men allow themselves to be carried away by such vagaries, they must expect to divide with philosophers the reproach of Cicero's remark: 'How it is, I know not; but there is nothing

^{*} 'Common sense and true philosophy must always harmonize. What is deprecated, is that self-sufficient and presumptuous dogmatism, which so often counterfeits and passes current for philosophy. There was once an English philosopher of whom Pope wrote—

"Nature, and nature's laws lay hid in night;
God said, 'Let Newton be,' and all was light."

This truly great man, after making his most brilliant discoveries, compared himself to "a child upon the sea-shore picking up a pretty pebble or two, while the great ocean of truth lay before him unexplored." It is this modest, patient, reverent, teachable, child-like spirit, waiting upon nature, conquering by obeying her, as Bacon hath it, which ever characterizes the true philosopher; would that we could truly add, "and all modern professors of philosophy."

H

can be mentioned so absurd as not to have been said by some one of the philosophers."

You may have heard gentleman, how (as old ballads tell), once upon a time, Robin Hood, tired of the merry green-wood, and of the sport afforded in plundering Church dignitaries, and "killing the king's fat deer;" determined for a while to exchange the life of a forester, for that of a fisherman: but that he had not proceeded far in his vessel, before he found himself, literally and figuratively, "at sea:" unaccustomed to his new occupation, he could catch no fish, was laughed at as a "lubber," and only saved himself from reproach by the skilful use of the weapon of which he was so great a master. Study this little history, it has a *moral* in it.

Note referred to in page 96.

* "As to table-turning, there can be no doubt that a vast amount of delusion, often of fraud, has been mixed up with it. Perhaps it may be safely affirmed, that Mr. Faraday's hypothesis accounts for the larger number of instances in which the table has moved round without rising from the floor. When it rises or tips, a more occult force is at work, and if the table-tipping be made to answer as a code of signals, so as to elicit intelligent responses, it can hardly be doubted that the force employed is under the direction of an understanding.

"The evidence that such intelligent responses have been given, both by table-tipping and rapping, is unexceptionable, and comes, not from the United States only, but from the chief continental cities, from Paris, from Rome, and, as we hear on the best authority, from Stockholm, and even the Cape of Good

Hope."—*Encyc. Met., Article Modern Spiritual Manifestations.*

The same writer remarks, "For ourselves we accept these two fundamental principles, not as idle theories, but as an essential part of Christianity: first, the continued personal identity of the spirit after death; and second, the possible intercourse of disembodied spirits with mankind. Here is the common ground on which, we presume, all the believers of the revealed Word may stand together. The laws of spiritual-intercourse, or the power that spirits have to effect any purpose in this world, or that men, on the other hand, have to converse with spirits, are then fair subjects of experimental and philosophical inquiry; as rational, as likely to lead to valuable results, as the inquiries of Franklin and Priestley into electricity."

Mr. Rutter, in his work on Human Electricity, writing of "table-moving," while he thinks "that it is impossible to give anything like a satisfactory explanation of the cause," says, in allusion to Professor Faraday's theory, "A recent attempt to prove that table-turning is the result of involuntary muscular force, by one whose opinion on many other subjects is entitled to respect, is very generally acknowledged to be unsuccessful. Neither the arguments nor the apparatus appear to me calculated to settle the question. It is still open to discussion—deserving of further examination—and certain to yield instruction to those who set about it in a proper spirit, and in the right way."

It may be remarked here, that the late Professor Hare, of America, who devoted more than half a century to the prosecution of physical science, and who stood in the foremost rank of its professors, at first endorsed the conclusion arrived at by Faraday, and commenced a series of experiments with ingenious apparatus, specially constructed for the purpose, in order to confirm it. The result is before the world in his book on "Spirit Manifestations." Those who think that spiritualism cannot bear the test of a rigid scientific inquiry, may consult the work with profit. At the same time I feel bound to express

my dissent from many speculative opinions there put forth, as crude, exceptionable, and beside the question; and which the author was subsequently led, through spiritualism, to abandon.

"The table-moving, assembling around it and placing the hands upon it, was not known until nearly or quite four years after the first demonstrations. Previous to that all the movings were done *without contact*."

The above extract is from Capron's "Modern Spiritualism; its Facts and Fanaticisms." (1855.) A book which gives the best history extant of the American spirit-manifestations. The truth of Capron's statement has never, so far as I know, been contradicted; though, if untrue, this would doubtless have been done at once, as his book has had an extensive circulation, chiefly in the places where the facts occurred, and where the truth of the matter must have been known to thousands, both friends and enemies.

See also Maitland's "Essay on Superstition and Science."

CHAPTER VII.

FACETIOUS SPIRITS—"UNDIGNIFIED."

I have been much struck, not only with the intelligence and feeling, but, with what I may call the *characteristic tone*, or expression, exhibited in the table movements under spirit action; I do not now mean, as characteristic of the spirits so communicating, though this is frequent and striking; but I refer, more especially, to something in them at once representing to the mind the particular feeling or emotion intended to be conveyed. Sometimes this is so apparent, and by itself sufficient, that no further communication is needed to convey the desired impression: but, more frequently, it is to be noticed as in conjunction with, and incidental to, the communication itself; being, in relation thereto, what gesture, or action, is to human speech; thus "No" is expressed by a sharp, decided, and sometimes indignant movement; very different from the hesitating, uncertain one of doubt: and that again, from the ready unembarrassed affirmative response:—so, the soft gentle movements of tenderness; the slow, melancholy movements of unhappiness, or grief; the quick, pulsational throbbings of joy; the numerous rapid tiltlets of recognition on the entrance of a friend: all exhibit marked and obvious differences, and may be readily discriminated.

This may seem an idle and absurd fancy to those unacquainted with the phenomena, but those who are familiar therewith will readily recognise the truth of what I have endeavoured to express. This portrayal of human feeling, exhibited in, and through, dull, inert matter, and corresponding to the nature of the communication, was to me, from the first, more remarkable than even the substance of the communications so conveyed; and which they thus, apparently without effort and undesignedly, corroborated.

But when, in addition to this, I assert that I have seen a sober, serious-looking piece of mahogany, indulging in a hearty laugh with those present, I expect incredulity will ripen into a broad grin, and perhaps, give me a polite intimation, that I had better narrate that part of my story, at least, to the marines; to which I can only say, with Doll Tearsheet, "Very well." If, dear Mr. Incredulity, you are disposed to cacchinate, I have no objection—pray don't restrain yourself upon my account; laugh, but listen. It happened on this wise:—by the way, though, I may as well give the whole story at once, and tell all about it; when you have done laughing you can take your pipe and blaze away, it will perhaps compose your nerves a little after that boisterous guffaw. Well, while I was yet quite a novice, going to Mr. R. one day, I found a circle, consisting of his family and intimate friends, seated round the table, catechising it with great vigour; they were chiefly young people, who seemed to regard the whole thing, so far as they knew it, as merely a pleasant game, a new plaything,

and they were in high feather with it, too, I can tell you—inquiring all about their sweethearts, future husbands, and so forth ; questions which appeared to be responded to with great good humour. It was evident to me that there was much fun on *both* sides. During the evening our host, a hard-headed old fellow, who “was not to be done with gammon about spirits,” but who, like friend Beer, thought that electricity somehow or other had something to do with it, was somewhat displeased with the answer he received to a question, and, shaking his fist toward the table, exclaimed, “I don’t believe you, you’re a humbug.” The table instantly rose up, and indignantly repelled the accusation. I said, “Well, the table evidently shows a different opinion—the humbug may perhaps be in another quarter; if so, may-be the table will indicate who and where he is;” whereupon, the table darted to the other end of the room where our host was sitting, and butted at him amid a universal chorus of laughter; and then, as if in high dudgeon, refused to answer any more of his questions; till, on making the *amende honorable*, declaring he was very sorry, meant no offence, &c., he was so far restored to favour that his questions were again responded to, though evidently with a lingering reluctance. Towards the close of our sitting, speaking toward the table, I said, “It’s my private opinion, old fellow, that you’ve only been poking fun at us all this time.” The table not only owned the soft impeachment, but rocked violently, and in a curious manner, from side to side, like a man bursting out into a suppressed fit of laughter, and

trying to steady himself; one of the young ladies exclaimed, "Good gracious! if the table isn't really laughing at us." The table admitted the fact, and being thereupon *encored*, repeated its performance,* and then, by way of *finale*, consented to walk up stairs, and ambled out of the room to the staircase: had we allowed the evident intention to be carried into effect, I might have had to record "such a getting up stairs as you never did see;" but as the night was now advancing close to the "wee sma' hour ayont the twal," and some of the company had a long way to go, it was thought best to put this off to another occasion; the table was therefore requested to toddle back again instead, with which request it obligingly complied.†

* Friend Jack, of whom I have before spoken—he of the "dog fancies," having heard of this cacchinatory performance; at the close of his visit before-mentioned, requested that the same might be repeated for his special delectation; the table complied, but there being nothing particular to laugh at, it was done in a very temperate, sober-sided sort of way. Jack was not to be put off in that style. "You don't call that laughing, do you? Shake your sides old boy and give us a good un;" whereupon Old Mahogany shook and rolled about as though he would literally "have split his sides with laughing."

† Seeing Mr. R. the other day, I asked if he had had any particular spiritual manifestation in his family lately; he answered, "No, nothing particular; but a short time since, sitting at the table in the garden, on asking to see it walk into the house, it went right across from the further end of our long garden; as it was going in a direct line it would have gone right over the flower-beds, had I not called out, 'Take care of the beds;' when it changed its course, made a considerable curve to keep the foot-path, and marched into the house in triumph."

This may seem sad bathos, and perhaps it is. Well, the solemn and ludicrous are often very near neighbours—sometimes lodging in the same house; and we all know that tears and laughter jostle each other pretty freely in this strange world of ours.

Solomon has told us, that, “there is a time to weep, and a time to laugh.” I, for one (though sometimes a sinner in this respect as in many others), certainly think, that when we assemble to inquire of the spirits of the departed, it is not at all a fitting time for a contest of wit or the indulgence of uproarious hilarity; but though I may advise others, I have no business to judge them, or to act the part of a self-appointed censor; *chacun à son gout*, as our lively neighbours say on the other side of the channel; or rather, it may be better to say, Let each one ponder the matter well, and then deport himself in word and act, as he judges most befitting such occasions.

I have recorded the foregoing as an illustrative fact, *not* as an example, and further, because I think it neither wise, nor right, to suppress any facts, however absurd they may seem, which at all tend, either to elucidate the subject, or, to exhibit it under a new phase.

In proportion to the extent, variety, and accuracy of our knowledge of the facts of spiritualism, under all its aspects, are we likely to make right inductions and attain to a just and comprehensive philosophy concerning it.

“But can you really believe that spirits can occupy themselves in this ridiculous and frivolous way?” To

which I reply, Why not? Do we not find among men here, every variety and grade of character—some wise, some foolish; some serious, others frolicsome; some simple-minded and kind-hearted; others cunning and evil-disposed? Wherefore should not the same variety exist in the spiritual world as in this material one? Nay, if we reflect a little, does it not seem probable, almost certain, that it is so—that the character of men there, *must* correspond with what it has been here? I know that it is not popularly so considered; perhaps, because people so seldom consider about it, being content to receive the traditions of the elders without the trouble of thought or inquiry. And as with individuals, so with churches; hence is perpetuated among us the belief,—that after death the spirit (if its consciousness be not altogether suspended) enters at once, either into a state of ineffable bliss, or, of unspeakable torment: either to be for ever with holy angels hymning hallelujahs before the eternal throne; or, with howling devils in the burning lake.

These conceptions, however, as it appears to me, are based upon views of the Divine character foreign to the spirit of Christianity. If we suffer ourselves to dwell upon them, if we bring them vividly before us, not as words, but as the realities we profess to believe them, we shall find that we cannot look them in the face—that our moral sense recoils from them—that they violate all those principles of enlightened justice which are recognised by civilised men—all those moral instincts which God has implanted within us:

and with a noble inconsistency, the heart prompts the head to accept the poorest sophisms to escape from the consequences of those errors into which the intellect has been betrayed. Jail-chaplains may indeed tell us, that in an instant, by an act of faith, the greatest criminal becomes a saint, and leaps direct from the gallows to glory; and thousands profess opinions which countenance these assertions (though if we really believe the murderer to be thus rendered fit for heaven, we must believe that he is certainly fit for earth; if worthy to associate with angels, he must, at the very least, be worthy of a place on the episcopal bench); but surely, reason and conscience must whisper to us, that these things are not, and cannot possibly be so;—that “there are too many degrees of moral worth and of moral unworth amongst mankind, to permit of our supposing that justice could be satisfied by an abrupt division into two opposite classes”—that whatever is enduring is built up by insensible degrees;—that if human life is continuous, if men retain their consciousness, their individuality, their sense of personal identity, they must, when they enter the spirit-world, be just what they were when they left this; that when they leave their fleshly garment, they can leave with it only those things properly and strictly belonging to it; while that which belongs to the spirit, must follow the spirit whithersoever it goeth;* hence, its ruling affection,

* “The general apprehension does perhaps make the transition at death too abrupt; forgets too much the great varieties

whether it be good or evil, must continue to operate. A man may leave his carcass behind, but not himself; and his affections are spiritually an essential part of himself. If his delights have been wholly in the world of sense, it would require a miracle to enable him at once to enter into the enjoyment of pure spiritual beatitude; the very inmost of him must first be changed; otherwise, it would be, not a resurrection, or elimination of the spirit, but its re-creation. Immortality, as applied to us individually, would be a fiction; it would be a succession of *different* spirits, not the perpetuity of the *same* spirit. The connection of the present life and of the future life, would be little else than nominal; and the views we derive from this connection of God's moral government utterly without foundation. Not thus have we learned the lessons which God has revealed; which he has written on the human heart, and in the world around. "He that is unjust let him be unjust still, he that is holy let him be holy still." This is not the enunciation of a doctrine, but the statement of a fact, existing in the nature of things, and necessary to personality and moral agency.

of degrees and societies of spirits which must distinguish the inhabitants of hell and heaven,—how completely the inward tendency will make the grief or the joy,—how little mere change of scene and mode of existence can constitute the bliss or woe,—and how various must be the occupations and enjoyments of a world which is to consummate not our adoration merely, but active love and knowledge."—Vaughan's "*Hours with the Mystics*."

True, that the spirit when "scaped from out the body's gate" — when freed from the limitations, impediments, and grossness of corporeal life, may, and we have every reason to believe, will, better discern the nature of good and evil—have stronger dispositions to repentance, be more susceptible to elevating spiritual influences, be endowed with larger capabilities of perception, as well as of enjoyment and of suffering—these may well be helps to greater progress in wisdom and goodness ; but until the soul's ruling affection is towards good, and all that is contrary thereto has become hateful ;—until thus inwardly renewed, it must ever be lashed by the furies of remorse, and purged in the fire of suffering, " Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

If we could be made to understand and feel that this was veritably *so* ; that character elaborates destiny—that our future state was made *by us*, not arbitrarily fixed *for us* : not the result of an involuntary faith on the one hand ; or, of an equally involuntary unbelief on the other ; but that it was the necessary, inevitable consequence of our life and conduct ; that we were so constituted by God, as to be our own just, inexorable judges ; our developed characters and consciousness making our heaven, or hell ; that living here in time, our lives yet had infinite issues ; that we were daily building up around and within us that spiritual state in which we should both now, and hereafter, have to dwell ; surely, in such teachings, open to the comprehension of all, there would be presented worthier views of the Great Father, views more in analogy with what we here discern of the principles

of His moral government, than are now current in our traditional theology; and we should be offering the most direct and powerful inducement to men to live "soberly, righteously and godly in the world," and to cultivate that personal "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

"But," it is objected, "this rapping on walls, and moving of tables is so essentially ludicrous and vulgar,* this laughter and levity is so undignified, so unworthy of spirits, so"—Stay friend, Is it not better, first to determine, as to the truth of the alleged fact, rather than start off thus on the high *a priori* road of objection? Are you sure that your canons of dignity are perfectly reliable, or even consistent? You think such conduct undignified in spirits, and therefore cannot believe that they have anything to do with it; but you can believe that the Jewish tabernacle, with its furniture, including such things as "the tongs, and the candlesticks, and the snuffers," and how long the lamps were to be lighted, were all made and appointed by immediate divine command. You do not disbelieve these things on the ground that they are wanting in dignity; why strain at the gnat and swallow the camel? Or, perchance, I am addressing one whose thought runs in quite a different track—who will tell me that he is a matter-of-fact man, that he eschews metaphysics, trusts to the evidence of his senses, and thinks that religious truth should be as susceptible of demonstration as the problems of Euclid. Very well! I do not say that

* See note at the end of this chapter.

your requirement is a reasonable one; if consistent, your creed is likely to be of the shortest; but, in proof of spiritualism, among other kinds of evidence, is that which directly appeals to your own senses; and it does not seem quite the thing to go off in a huff and seek a refuge from the demonstrations you have invoked in your hastily-constructed camp of transcendental metaphysics;—metaphysics, to which you express so strong a repugnance. You are like the man flogged by the drummer, who complained first that he was struck too high, and then that he was struck too low; till the drummer, out of all patience, exclaimed that there was no pleasing him anyhow. “Undignified,” well! and what then? Do you, my friend, always walk on stilts? Have you never so far forgotten, or relaxed your dignity, as to perpetrate a joke—perhaps a bad one? When surrounded by “jolly companions every one” have you never consented to just oblige the company with a song, possibly one, not very dignified either? Well then,

“Gently scan your brother man,”

whether he be in the body or in the spirit: do not too hastily conclude that spirits who may occasionally join us in harmless pleasantry, are therefore evil or foolish, any more than yourself. The greatest men have ever possessed the widest, deepest, and most genial sympathies; and indeed, their greatness may be measured by this test. Shakespere was thus in sympathy with all sorts and conditions of men; with

every diversity of character, every mood of mind ; he could alike enter into the questionings of Hamlet, and the merriment of the clown. A recent poet, who made England from end to end thrill with his "Song of the Shirt," is also in our minds associated, perhaps more than any other (except the one just named) with—

" Quips, and cranks, and wreathed smiles."

Of course I do not mean it to be inferred, that such spirits as those of whom I am speaking, are to be classed with [Shakespeare and Hood: I think it more probable that they are generally ignorant, occupying a low plane: but I do mean, that in trying the spirits, we should do so on the same principles, and by the same tests, as if they were still bodily amongst us; and it is only when trifling and folly are habitual and predominant, that we are, in either case, warranted in pronouncing against them an adverse decision. We talk of certain conduct as being unworthy of spirits: might not spirits shift the saddle to our backs? I sometimes think that if an intelligent inhabitant of some other planet was to visit our earth, and see some of our strange, mad, fantastic doings, he would be tempted to pronounce it, "The lunatic asylum of creation." Whatever may be the follies and frivolities of spirits, they are but the reflection of our own.

" O wad some pow'r the giftie gie us,
To see oursels as others see us !
It wad frae mony a blunder free us,
An' foolish notion."

Again, let me ask you, are you not falling into the common error, of confounding means with ends—mistaking the milestone for the road? Would you think of objecting to St. Paul's cathedral because of the "undignified" poles and scaffolding employed in its construction; or, to the quartern loaf upon your table, because of the "undignified" material employed in fertilizing the soil in which the wheat was grown; or, to the book you are reading, because of the "undignified" old rags of which the paper is made? Surely you, and the world of Christendom in general, might have learned by this time, that God does not always use the most "dignified" instruments to accomplish his greatest purposes; but that the instruments themselves become dignified by the uses to which they are applied.

But (it is further urged), if we're to have spirits at all, spirits who rap and move tables must be of the wrong sort. Nay, not necessarily so. Are you sure that the conditions which enable higher manifestations to be made, are always present? Has it never occurred to you, that these things may have been, and may still be, necessary to attract men's attention to the subject, to force them, as it were, to think about it; that the beginnings of things are generally imperfect; and, that their tendency is from low to higher; that, for instance, the signs by which men express their ideas are never at once perfect; and that if communication is established between the inhabitants of earth, and of the spiritual spheres, the signs by which the latter represent their thoughts to us, must constitute a new

kind of language, and be subject to the general law to which I have adverted? True, spirits may, and sometimes do, where suitable media and conditions are present, adapt themselves to our existing languages, and address us in our ordinary speech; but it remains to be proved, that this is possible at all times and under all circumstances. Is it not, too, a fact, that the lower manifestations are specially adapted to a certain class of minds? Have they not, in many instances, brought home to them a conviction of confessedly important truths to which probably they would not otherwise have attained?—as remarked by Baxter, “Many can comprehend these arguments from sense, who cannot yet reach, and will not be convinced by other demonstrations.” Had spirits, by certain distinctive sounds and movements, or by any agency, however trivial or despised, only established indubitably in the minds of thousands, a conviction of the fact—that there was another state of being than the present; that though the body died the man still lived, they would have accomplished no inconsiderable good. Like the land-birds, and the drifted branch of a tree, with its fresh, red berries, seen by Columbus when pursuing his unknown course, they would suffice to indicate the near existence of a new world,—a spiritual world; the reality of which had by many been much doubted, while of its existence and nature, all would be glad to receive further evidence and more certain confirmation, even though the ultimate results of the communication between the two worlds might not at the outset be fully apparent. But, indeed, this

class of manifestations constitutes only one, and that, the lowest phase of the subject; one, which (except when specially sought for, or in the initial stages of inquiry) is already, almost entirely superseded by other, and higher kinds of manifestation—these being evidently preferred, and, whenever the conditions permit, adopted by spirits generally, rather than those more imperfect methods, which to some minds appear so objectionable.*

Indeed, it would seem as if God had purposely designed this new unfolding of spiritual power to be so multiform and varied, as to adapt itself to every diversity of mind. There are primary schools for those who need them, and there are colleges in which the advanced student may graduate. For those who require sensuous demonstrations, there are proofs which appeal to the senses—sometimes to only one sense, sometimes to two or more, conjointly; sometimes to the same sense successively, in diverse ways; and through these, an appeal is made to the common sense by evidences, not only of intelligence in connection therewith, but of directing intellect.

* It must be evident, that whenever medium or circle is anxious for physical manifestations, the conditions are unfavourable to those of a higher kind. But even when this is not the case, suitable conditions may still be wanting. Let me also note here, with what strange inconsistency physical manifestations are first demanded, then repudiated. Their production is challenged; and when the challenge is met, and the required proofs are given, these proofs are themselves made a matter of suspicion and reproach.

Those who seek for wisdom and spiritual instruction, find it in the spirit-writings, trance-discourses, answers to questions, mental or otherwise, and by teaching conveyed in various ways, and generally containing that which is best adapted to the different needs and states of mind of different inquirers, and to those perplexities and temptations with which each is severally beset in his onward journey to the better land. Those who have loved and lost, repeatedly find touching and decisive evidence of the continued presence, and watchful affection of those around whom their hearts' holiest sympathies are entwined. While, not only in words, but in deeds, do we find spirits exerting their beneficent influence—doing good to the bodies, as well as to the souls of men: cures almost miraculous (if any faith is to be placed in human testimony) being constantly effected by their agency.

To the kind of teaching conveyed by spirits, so far as it has come under my own observation, I have already borne witness: and therefore, need now only add, that if carried into effect, it would, in my judgment, tend mightily to consummate the mission of Christianity, by realizing the song of angels, "Glory to God in the highest; peace on earth, good will amongst men."

Note referred to in page 112.

It may be interesting to bring together here a few passages from different writers in reply to this objection:—

Professor Hare writes, "An effort has been made to throw

ridicule on spiritual manifestations, on account of phenomena being effected by means of tables and other moveable furniture ; but it should be recollected that, when *movements* were to be effected, resort to *movable* bodies was inevitable ; and as generally the proximity of media, if not the contact, was necessary to facilitate the movements, there was no body so accessible as tables. But these violent mechanical manifestations were always merely to draw attention ; just as a person will knock, or even kick, violently at a front door, until some one looks out of a window to communicate with him. The more violent manifestations ceased both at Hydesville, at Rochester, and at Stratford in Connecticut, as soon as the alphabetic mode of communicating was employed. I never have had any to take place during my intercourse with my spirit-friends, unless as tests for unbelievers, when intellectual communications could not be made.

“But is it not a great error to consider our tables as less sacred than our firesides ? Could any appeal more thoroughly vibrate to the heart of civilized man, than that of any invasion of his rights which should render his fireside liable to intrusion ? Hence, in the Latin motto, ‘*Pro aris et focis*,’ the inviolability of the fireside is placed side by side with freedom of conscience. But, with the passing away of winter, the interest in the fireside declines : ’tis changeable as the temperature of air. It loses all its force in the tropics ; but, throughout all Christendom, the table still draws about it the inmates of every human dwelling, at all seasons, and in every kind of weather. Even when not excited by hunger, we value the social meeting which takes place around it.

“At tables, moreover, conferences are held, contracts and deeds signed, and decrees, statute-laws, and ordinances are written. Treaties, also, are made at tables, on which not the fate of individuals merely, but of nations, depends.

“Is the renown of the ‘knights of the round table’ tarnished by their being only known in connection with the word in question ? Is any director or trustee ashamed of being, with

his colleagues, designated as a 'board?'—a humble synonym for table.

"It was at a table that the Declaration of Independence was signed; and in Trumbull's picture of its presentation to Congress, a table is made to occupy a conspicuous position. Our tables should be at least as much objects of our regard as the vicinity of our fireplace."

The Rev. Adin Ballou quotes Peter's vision and Paul's declarations, that "there is nothing unclean of itself," and that "unto the pure all things are pure" (Acts x.), and exclaims, "Why all this disgust at the lowness, uncouthness and vulgarity of the manifestations." Is not all nature full of such *undignified* demonstrations? Look at man's *generation, birth, nutrition, excrementation, medication and dissolution*. Will the objector call these low, uncouth, or vulgar? If so, let him begin his quarrels farther back. If he calls all these high, refined, and dignified demonstrations, let him not sicken at the idea of such undignified spirit-manifestations. Besides, let him be reminded that few mortals are yet free enough from low and undignified conduct themselves to justify this spiritual fastidiousness." He then contends that the objector is not justified in assuming either that men in the flesh, take them as they are, have a right to expect manifestations from spirits more refined and dignified than the ones in question; or, that all departed spirits must, of necessity, be too pure, elevated, and glorious, ever to manifest themselves by the methods to which he takes exception. "Some seem to cherish those extravagant notions, not only without proof, but contrary to all reason. Such need the very demonstrations complained of to disabuse them of their groundless imaginations. Let us learn all we can from the manifestations now given us. In due time we shall witness higher ones. All great results must have their *preparations*, however seemingly crude and undignified. Why find fault with nature?"

Mrs. Crossland remarks, "Thoughtless is often but another name for foolish; and perhaps there has been a good deal of thoughtless ridicule heaped upon the word, 'table.' How apt

we all are to undervalue common things ! Is there no reverence for that mysterious table which was made by God's own order, as part of the tabernacle furniture ? (Exod. xxv.) No tender interest in that modern thing which must somewhat resemble the board at which our blessed Lord himself broke bread, and bade His followers do the same in remembrance of Him ? The vein of thought which opens upon rightly contemplating this subject is rich in imagery and association,—so rich that I should have been little likely to hit on it myself, but owe its wealth to a conversation with one of our greatest living poets, who, in answer to the ridicule hurled at the table, pleaded its sacred character. Indeed, the table is the household altar. Around it how often is family worship performed, or in solitude the heart's orisons offered up ! At the table we read, and thus imbibe the spiritual influence of master-minds ; or we write, either to fling our own effluence on the world, or, in the confidence of epistolary intercourse, pour out the dear thoughts of love and friendship. Round the table family and friends gather, be it for frugal refreshment, or generous hospitality. Why, the phrase ' our circle ' is an idiom of the language, and, instinctively, congenial natures gather together to form it. Mark, if discord unhappily arises, how the chair is drawn back, the circle broken ! Who shall say there is not something about the table to which spirit may appropriately cling."

A correspondent of the *Yorkshire Spiritual Telegraph*, writing under the *nom de plume*, "Spiridion," says, "Truly, the modes of revelation are various, from the most insignificant to the most sublime, but the fact remains the same ; and, although it is our duty to seek for perfection in all things, yet God can make not only a table, but a stone, the servant of his will. God is circumscribed by nothing ; there is no boundary to his operations ; nothing too great or too small for his consideration, in accomplishing his glorious designs. It is true the pulpit is a more perfect instrument than the table ; but, if the spirit of evil sometimes takes possession of the latter, the unrighteous and miserable state of those called Christian nations, fully

proves that he very frequently, in the garb of an angel of light, occupies the former ! 'There is nothing impossible with God,' repeats some reverend Pharisee,—and in the next breath he denies that he can, or will employ so mean a thing as a table to work his will ; and yet he will profess to believe the assertion of Jesus, that God could raise up children to Abraham from the stones of the street. Really, I think any table, however stupid or addicted to lying, could be as consistent as this. God can make all things, both noble and ignoble—the rap of a table, or the tongue of a prophet—the sight of a seer, or the inspiration of an apostle—wood, stone, water, or spirit,—ministering agents of his power ; and those who assert the contrary are infidels indeed, whatever be their profession."

See also William Howitt's Final Reply to the Rev. E. White.
—*Brit. Spir. Telegraph*, No. 7, Vol. III.

CHAPTER VIII.

TRY THE SPIRITS.

I agree with Mr. Beecher, in thinking that wherever the organization presents suitable odyllic conditions, spirits, irrespective of kind or quality, are thereby enabled to manifest their influence; and this, independently of the character of those so conditioned.

But though the primary conditions which enable spirits to act upon and through human media may be purely physical, yet the moral condition of medium and circle have much to do in determining the kind of spirits with whom we thus hold communion; and also, though perhaps in a less degree, the character of the communications we receive from them. The moral law of affinity, sympathy, or spiritual attraction, is as universal in its operation as the physical law adverted to. Bishop Butler, in his great work, "The Analogy of Religion to the Constitution and Course of Nature," builds his whole argument on the probability of there being an analogy, or correspondence of the future to the present life; contending, that both are parts of one divine plan:—that our future existence is only the continuance, or going on of our present life as intelligent agents: and infers that we shall there be able to trace the further carrying out of many things connected with the

divine economy, of which we see here only the imperfect beginnings.

The same conclusion at which Butler arrived by reasoning, Swedenborg attained by interior illumination and direct intercourse with the spiritual world. The "Analogy" of the one, so far as it goes, perfectly harmonizes with the "Correspondences" of the other : what the English bishop argued for as a probability, the Swedish seer asserted as a fact. It is, however, to the line of argument adopted by the former, and which I would apply to the subject of our present inquiry, that I now specially direct attention. I think his argument altogether a fair one :—

"Of God above, or man below,

What can we reason but from what we know ?"

And we do, all of us, know, that men are drawn together by ties of natural affection, similarity of habits or disposition, and general moral affinities. Good men may, from a sense of duty, and under the influence of humane and Christian principles, seek out those who have fallen, to rescue them from their evil courses, or those whom they believe to be in error to convince them of the truth ; but they cannot delight in the company of profligates, nor in the conversation of those whose language abounds with oaths and blasphemy : the man who has learned to be "temperate in all things," will not choose for friends those who indulge in bacchanalian orgies ; and in these, as in all similar cases, the repulsion is mutual.

Is it not reasonable, then, to conclude that spirits

are attracted to, or repelled from us in like manner ;—that if we desire the presence of those who are capable of teaching us, we must cultivate in ourselves a humble and teachable disposition ;—that if we would draw around us from the spiritual spheres, pure and holy beings, we must present them with suitable conditions, by endeavouring ourselves to become pure and holy ?—and then, even should spirits, *not* wise nor holy, nor desirous of being so, unbidden, intrude themselves,—they would find that they were in an uncongenial atmosphere, foreign to their present nature, and in which they could not long remain, or if they should do so, who will say but that we might, however unconsciously to ourselves, be made the instruments for their improvement—and “those who come to scoff remain to pray.” If we persevere in the right way, trusting in God’s help, who will say that we may not inter-act upon them, as they upon us, or, if we cannot thus effect any good to them, at least, we should free ourselves from their continued presence.*

* It may not be inappropriate to introduce here, an incident of a *seance* of our family circle. On the occasion adverted to, some manifestations were made by a spirit confessing itself to be “an unhappy spirit.” On the spirit being asked if those present could do anything to make it less unhappy, it solicited their immediate prayers in its behalf, and further, that they would read for its benefit a chapter in the Bible. On the question being asked, “Will the spirit select the chapter to be read ?” the affirmative was responded. The books of the Bible were then called over in the order in which they stand,

True, I believe that many spirits, especially those who are concerned chiefly in producing what I think are rightly called the "lower manifestations"—i.e., those of power rather than of intelligence, are of a low, undeveloped, and in some cases, positively evil nature; drawn to us, not by consanguinity, or by spiritual affinity, nor in discharge of duty; but simply, because their gross natures are most in affinity with matter—"of the earth, earthy;" their pleasures bound up with sense and the objects of sense; and hence they seek, by preying on the odyllic and corporeal energies of the living, or by any means which they can compass, to return, if only approximately, and by a species of piratical encroachment, to that material world by which their thoughts and hopes were bounded, and which voluntary abnegation of their highest nature has now become to them an avenging Nemesis.

I know that many spiritualists consider these displays of spirit-power as necessary to demonstrate the reality of spirit-agency among us: I think that they are (at least partially) mistaken in this judgment—that they do not sufficiently discriminate between the different states of mind, which different

and the book of Revelation was signalled; then the chapters were called over, and the twenty-first was the one the spirit selected to be read. If the reader will take the trouble to turn to that chapter, I think he will agree with me that a more appropriate one could not have been chosen, though it was not till after it had been read that the circle knew what were its contents.

kinds of manifestation are calculated to produce:—the display of unintelligent power, or of power in which the direction of an external intelligence is ambiguous or obscure, or of a very low order, however great or extraordinary such power may be, will create only astonishment and perplexity; and probably be attributed to some unknown and occult force in nature: I doubt if such displays alone ever produced sincere and lasting conviction in any cultivated and well-balanced mind. It is only, as it seems to me, when seen in combination with the higher qualities of our nature, that they succeed in producing this result. Be this as it may, when a solid conviction of the presence and agency of spirits in human affairs has been attained, is it not unwise to seek only, or chiefly, the “lower manifestations” when the higher may be within our reach—for demonstrations of power merely, when we may receive evidences of spirit-love and wisdom? “Brethren, leaving those things which are behind let us press on to that which is before.”

But it is asked, “How may we know whether the spirits who come to us are good or evil?” A very pertinent and important question: let St. John answer it for me. “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false spirits are gone out into the world.”

This is as true now as at the time when St. John wrote—it applies to us equally with those to whom it was first addressed: the particular mode of applying this test given in the next verse to that quoted,

appears to have been intended to meet a form of false doctrine then prevalent, but which has now ceased to be so, and to have had therefore a special suitability then, which it has not now; but the general principle is of universal and permanent application wherever spirits and men commune together.

How, then, are we to obey the apostolic injunction? Not, surely, by questioning the spirits as to their admission or rejection of any verbal proposition or historical fact; nor, by the names or titles by which they may designate themselves, but, by the rule which Christ has given us, and which is justly applicable to all moral agents, "By their fruits ye shall know them." I know of no Ithuriel's spear, no reliable counterfeit and evil-spirit detector, other than this; and it is one to which spirits have frequently referred me. We must judge of spirits, as of mortals, by their words and by their works. If they teach us to violate God's laws and man's duties—if, instead of aiding our Godward aspirations, they seek to bind us more to earth—to make us mammonites and self-seekers; then, though they should claim to be archangels from the highest spheres, we may be sure that they are not of God, and that their gospel is damnable. If, on the other hand, their teachings accord with the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord's Prayer, and Christ's summary of duty and rule of life: if they open the eyes of the spiritually blind, and if further, as is the case in many instances, they exercise a healing power over the bodies as well as the souls of men; then, may we not reasonably believe, that they, as well as good men on

earth, are labouring in the Master's vineyard, and thank God for those "ministering spirits" whom He hath appointed us?

If, then, the moral quality of the spirits who place themselves *en rapport* with us is to be judged by their acts and teachings, the question on this point is one of fact to be determined by testimony and experience. My experience, and the many testimonies—both written and unwritten, that I have met with—of other investigators into this subject, have led me to the conviction, that spirits who communicate with us differ as widely in their moral and intellectual qualities as we do; and, that though ignorant and foolish spirits may abound, as do ignorant and foolish mortals, yet that spirits who are positively malevolent are comparatively few, and as their nature is less capable of disguise before each other than is the case with men on earth (the concealing mask of corporeity having fallen off), it is not unreasonable to believe that such evil spirits are more easily watched, and their machinations more readily detected and thwarted, than is the case with evil-disposed persons in this world. We may at least be sure that the spirit-world is not a lawless world; and our second life probably does not differ from the first so much as we are generally apt to think. The "son of Sirach" tells us that "all things are double, one against another, and He [God] hath made nothing imperfect." Let us ponder these words; they may help us to understand much that we now but dimly apprehend, and to conclude that the more perfect is our knowledge of

ourselves, and of God's dealings with our race the better prepared shall we be to—

———“assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.”

CHAPTER IX.

CUI BONO ?

When the facts of spiritualism can no longer be gainsaid, and all methods of "accounting" for them by mundane agencies are shown to be insufficient and fallacious, the advocate of the spiritual theory is usually encountered with "*Cui bono*?"—the inquiry not unfrequently put with a sneer, and the conception of the good desiderated, being often a very poor and narrow one, meaning frequently, "Will it favour some pet crotchet or notion of mine? Will it help me to get on? What good, in a worldly point of view, will it do me?" "If your spirits would only tell me what the price of stocks would be on any particular day, they would be of some good to me," said a friend. Another inquired of the spirits, about a will, under which he fancied himself entitled to some property, and got sent on a fool's errand for his pains. Failing to discover, or appreciate its highest uses, men would apply it to the most mean and paltry ends; like Friar Bungay using the invention of Adam Warner to boil eggs with. Because they cannot bring celestial wisdom from the spheres to serve their petty interests and ends, they inquire, "What good is it?"

To those who urge the question, not for purposes

K

of inquiry, but in a spirit of denial, and to set aside further investigation, I would say, not in my own language, but in the words of one of the acutest metaphysicians of the present age, Isaac Taylor, who—writing of “those almost universal superstitions which, in every age and nation, have implied the fact of occasional interferences of the dead with the living;” says, “It must not be denied, that some few instances of the sort alluded to, rest upon testimony thoroughly unimpeachable; nor is the import of the evidence in these cases at all touched by the now well-understood doctrine concerning spectral illusions, as resulting from a diseased condition of the brain.” * * * *

“Nor,” he adds, “in considering questions of this sort, ought we to listen for a moment to those frequent but impertinent questions that are brought forward with a view of superseding the inquiry, such for example, as these: ‘What good end is answered by the alleged extra-natural occurrences? or is it worthy of the Supreme Wisdom to permit them?’ and so forth. The question is a question first of *testimony*, to be judged of on the established principles of evidence, and then of physiology, but neither of theology, nor of morals.” * * * *

“Now, in considering this or any such extraordinary class of facts, our business is, in the first place, to obtain a number of instances supported by the distinct and unimpeachable testimony of intelligent witnesses, and then, being thus in possession of the facts, to adjust them as well as we can to other parts of our philosophy of human nature. Shall we allow an objector to put a check to

our scientific curiosity on the subject, for instance, of somnambulism, by saying, 'Scores of these accounts have turned out to be exaggerated, or grossly untrue; or, this walking in the sleep ought not to be thought possible, or as likely to be permitted by the Benevolent Guardian of human welfare.'"

Just so. That is "hitting the right nail on the head." At the same time I do not wish to evade the class of questions referred to. I only insist that the question of *truth* and the question of *use* should be kept distinct; not that they are so in fact, in the sense of being severed, for they are correlative; but that our knowledge of the one is not always equal to our knowledge of the other; and the investigation is altogether simplified by *not* confounding them.

Of what use is spiritualism? First clear your mind of all doubt as to its existence. When you have done *that*, you will be the better enabled to discern its uses. Admit its reality, and you may be sure that, like every other reality in nature, it *must* have its uses, even should you fail in detecting them.

Possibly we may never know them to their full extent; but much we may readily know. It lies so obvious on the surface, that unless stone-blind, we cannot fail to see it. Doubtless, we shall learn more and more as we earnestly and diligently seek it, faithfully applying that to which we have already attained. If we worship at the shrine of truth, the indwelling spirit will unveil itself to our gaze as we are prepared to behold it. We may learn the "open secret" if we will.

Of what use? Strange that, at any time, men should need to make the inquiry. What! are we so wise, so good, that the teaching of our elder brethren can make us neither wiser, nor better? Do we desire to know *nothing* of the land whither they have journeyed, and where *we* must shortly follow them? Do the curtains of sense hem us round so closely within their folds, that we can neither see beyond them, nor desire that the light beyond should penetrate to us? We stand here trembling on the brink of the dark river that we know we *must* cross; and when beacon-lights, love-kindled from the spirit-shore to guide us, are seen, we ask, "What use are they?"

Yes; 'tis strange, but stranger still that the inquiry should be made at this time,—now, when a base and sordid materialism, with its "mechanical profit-and-loss philosophies" has permeated society through every pore, and the pursuit of physical good, and the greed of gain, have absorbed the faculties and energies of men to the almost entire neglect of that inner life which constitutes their veritable being. If we look at some of the characteristics of our age, we need not go far to find abundant reason for the special outpouring of spiritual power which is now manifested. Is there not among us a tendency to think and act as if all the problems of life were to be solved by steam-engines and spinning-jennies? Have we not learned and popular books which teach that civilization is the result exclusively of, and that it can only be promoted by, material agencies? Have we not also a school of philosophers, who, confounding

the house with its inhabitant, deny the being of the soul, because forsooth, the anatomist is unable to find it amid the gore and filth of the dissecting-room, and cannot exhibit it to his pupils on the point of his scalpel, and who resolve life into a product of organization, and the loftiest thoughts of the most gifted minds into results of the performance of a function of the animal economy by its appropriate organ? Has not an eminent professor of this school told us that it is not the soul that acts, but the brain that "secretes thought, as the liver secretes bile;" in other words, that a soft medullary mass, about the consistence of hasty-pudding, secreted, say, the "Iliad" of Homer, the "Principia" of Newton, the "Lear" of Shakspeare? Does not this very "positive philosophy" tend to show that the truest human affection, is only a consequence of the material particles of the human organization, acting chemically and mechanically; and which, therefore, "can be nothing worthier than the love of a spoonful of nitric acid for a copper halfpenny?" In short, have we not systems and theories finding favour among us, which make man, with all his hopes, aspirations, and capacities, little else than "an omnivorous biped, wearing breeches."

And while some are immersed in the business, or pleasures of the world, and others are groping their way over arid wastes of dreary speculation, misled by the *ignis fatuus* lights of false philosophy, young earnest souls are growing up around us, seeking in vain for trust-worthy guidance, struggling with the burden of life's mystery, and with much else in which

churches cannot help them, cannot, indeed, help themselves, not to speak of other struggles on a larger scale, of nations and races the wide world over. How often have I heard educated Christian gentlemen lament over the prevalence of anti-religious principles, especially among the operative classes of our large towns, and the difficulty of finding an adequate means to meet the evil? Well, in spiritualism a means is offered, which for the conversion of materialists and sceptics, has already proved itself more effective than all the religious machinery of the age; yet, because it does not flow in the old traditionary channels, but comes to us in an unexpected manner, perhaps not exactly accordant with our notions and tastes (God's means seldom do), instead of welcoming it as an ally, we rather treat it as a suspected enemy. It is not the first time that despised instrumentalities have worked out great ends; that God has chosen the foolishness of the world to confound the wisdom of the wise. When I hear, as I have heard again and again, the expression of feelings which have found an echo in my own heart, such as, "Well, I would not be without the convictions I have received from spiritualism for anything that the world could give; it is the greatest blessing I have ever known;" I feel that in presence of such facts I may, without presumption, say to the objector, in the language of the apostle, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."

If ever there was a time in which it was necessary for God to speak to men in other ways than those

with which they are ordinarily familiar,—so familiar, indeed, that they have ceased to recognize them for what they are,—that time is *now*. If ever there was need that spirits, filled with divinest love, should descend from their starry heights to teach the ignorant, to enforce the neglected truth of human brotherhood, to bring men nearer to God, and encourage and aid those who are labouring as His instruments to establish His kingdom upon earth, that time is the present. Everywhere, the thirsty earth is opening wide her lips to receive the spiritual influences which are beginning to fall, and which we trust will soon descend in more copious showers.

“ Fall warm, fall fast, thou mellow rain,
Thou rain of God, make fat the land ;
That roots which parch in burning sand
May bud to flower and fruit again.”

“ In spiritualism a force may be found potent for the subjugation of evil, and for the development and firm ascendancy of good in the human soul—a force which will fire and exalt its powers, which will impart new ardour for the discovery of the laws of nature, and reverence for them as revelations of the will of God in regard to man.” It may not meet all the requirements of a Faraday ; but, if it tends to conserve and re-establish spirituality and religious faith, to satisfy the yearnings of the soul, to elevate it above the vanities and littlenesses of earth, by implanting within it a deep and abiding sense of the reality of that eternal world in which the temporary distinctions

and petty ambitions of our mortal life will have passed away, as a feverish dream when one awaketh: if, in the hour of temptation it restrains us from cherishing an evil thought, or doing an unworthy act, by the knowledge that these all lay bare and open to the gaze of the pure, loving, and loved spirits who watch over us, as we rise or fall with devout joy or pitying grief; then, surely, it will have subserved no unimportant purpose, even though it give us no instructions for the improvement of photography, or omit to tell us how the contents of a bottle will act upon those of a neighbouring bottle. "Oh, could we but realize at one grasp of the *conceptive* faculties, the tears that have been dried, the sighs that have been hushed, the anxieties that have been soothed, and the heartfelt gratitude that has been made to ascend up to God by this new outpouring of spiritual light, and by the blessed assurance it has brought of the continued love of our departed friends, of the love of the angels, and above all, of the love of our heavenly Father, we should all be abundantly satisfied with the 'good' which this new dispensation has brought to the world, even without inquiring for further proofs of its beneficent influence."

Truly, and forcibly, has Young remarked, in his Preface to night the sixth, of his "Night Thoughts," "The dispute about religion, and the practice of it, seldom go together. The shorter, therefore, the dispute, the better. I think it may be reduced to this single question, *Is man immortal or is he not?* If he is not, all our disputes are mere amusements, or

trials of skill. * * * I have long been persuaded that most, if not all our infidels are supported in their deplorable error by some doubt of their immortality at the bottom. And I am satisfied, that men, once thoroughly convinced of their immortality, are not far from being Christians."

Have our theologians and philosophers, with all their learning and ability, eradicated this "deplorable error?" Have they even abated it? Are "our infidels" less numerous now than they were when the above passage was written? Let the present state of religious opinion in England, on the continent of Europe, and in America, reply. Does spiritualism supply the evidence needed? Does it fairly meet and satisfactorily answer the question at issue? I think it does. Its argument is a very simple one, and may be concisely stated. An old philosopher said, "I think; therefore, I am." So, the spiritualist may say, "Spirits act; therefore, they exist. Men and women manifest themselves to us in many ways after their animal life has ceased, and their bodies have decayed; therefore, they must possess a spiritual life which survives their body's decay." The premiss of this argument rests upon facts which have satisfied thousands of qualified and independent investigators of its truth; and, the premiss of the argument established, no other conclusion from it than the spiritualist one is possible.

Judge Edmonds, of America, writes, "Spiritualism proves the immortality of the soul; it does not ask us to believe it upon the authority of its mere assertion;

it does not merely appeal to nature and her laws, and their operation, which in this age have been so powerless to work out the end in view; it does not merely point to the golden vaults of the heart, and seek a response from its awakened instincts; but it proves it in a manner most satisfactory to the intellect, even when enveloped in its material surroundings; proves it as the Creator proves that the sun shines at noonday, and the stars sparkle at night; proves it as nature demonstrates the existence of the storm and the thunder; proves it as matter makes manifest to us its own reality; proves it through the instrumentality of our material organs; and proves it as many other things are made apparent to us, so that we may say, not merely that we believe, but that we know. And what is most interesting is, that the evidence is within every man's reach. He has but to knock, and it will be opened to him; he has but to ask, and he may receive. No man lives, but he may have, if he pleases, evidence most satisfactory, that the friends whom he has laid in the grave do yet live and can commune with him.

“This is a bold assertion to make, but I make it after years of careful investigation, conducted under most favourable circumstances, after having witnessed innumerable manifestations, and after having beheld the intercourse in all its known phases. I make it deliberately, and as the result to which my examination, and that of many, very many others, has conducted me; and I know I cannot be mistaken.”—*Spiritualism: Vol. 2, Introduction.*

And not only have "our infidels" been "thoroughly convinced of their immortality" by spiritualism, and thus made "not far from being Christians;" but, in many instances, they have, by its agency, been made Christians altogether. In illustration, let me cite the case of the late Professor Hare, as given in a published letter of Judge Edmonds, dated, New York, July 5th, 1858:—

"My first acquaintance with him (Professor Hare) arose out of his having sought an interview with me shortly after he had begun his investigations of spiritualism.

"He then told me how resolute an opponent to the prevailing religion of the day he had been all his life, denying all revelation, rejecting the Bible, and even going so far as to collate and publish offensive extracts from it, and questioning man's immortality and the existence of a God. Therefore it was that I watched his progress with solicitude to see if his unbelief would not yield to the truths of spiritualism, as that of many, very many others of a similar state of mind had yielded.

"Scarcely two years elapsed before the Professor showed me that my anticipations were correct, and that his unbelief was yielding to the force of evidence. He first acknowledged a belief in his immortality, and said that it had been demonstrated to him by spiritual intercourse in this wise: That the spirits who had spoken to him through different mediums, had so proved to him their identity with persons whom he had known on earth—and particularly his sister—that

there was no room to doubt it. He was slow and cautious in receiving that conviction, but when it was thus, by frequent intercourse with the spirits of the departed, firmly fixed in his mind, his next step was, as he told me, to reason, that if man did live for ever, there must be an over-ruling Providence!

“But there he stuck fast for a while, denying still revelation, and the value of the Bible. Hence, in my letter to ‘a distinguished legal gentleman,’ written in December, 1856, I used this language:—Dr. Hare has all his life long been an honest, sincere, but inveterate disbeliever in the Christian religion. Late in life spiritualism comes to him, and in a short time works in his mind the conviction of the existence of a God and his own immortality. So far his spirit-teachers have already gone with him. But he still denies revelation.

“The Professor saw this letter as published, and spoke to me about these remarks. This was the last time I ever saw him, and he then told me that he was at length a full believer in Revelation, and in the Revelations through Jesus—that in fine, he was now a Christian, full in the faith—that but a few days before he had made a public proclamation of this belief, at a meeting which he had addressed at Salem, Mass.; and he read to me a long article on that subject, which he had prepared for publication.”

In the same letter Judge Edmonds says, “In the introduction to my second volume of ‘Spiritualism,’ I published some twenty letters from different persons,

showing that the writers of those letters were but a few of the long list we have of such conversions."

Cui bono? Perhaps the question is best answered from the stand-point of personal experience, as the direct evidence of consciousness is stronger than any other, and as, where faithfully narrated, the experience of one must generally, in essential points, be the experience of many. "Only by a felt indubitable certainty of experience does speculation find any centre to revolve round, and so fashion itself into a system." If I could not answer the question for myself, I could not feel justified in attempting to answer it at all.

What then has been the influence of this belief upon my own mind? What have I learned from spirit-teachings and from the general study of this subject?

Among many things, these are the most noteworthy. It has answered for me the question put by one of old, and by many since; "If a man die, shall he live again?"—and brought home to me a firm conviction of the reality and nearness of the spiritual world and its intimate relation with this—the present life being only germinal of the future. "The fore-splendours of which truth, and beginning of truths, fell mysteriously over my soul. Sweeter than day-spring to the shipwrecked in Nova Zembla; ah! like the mother's voice to her little child that strays bewildered, weeping in unknown tumults; like soft streams of celestial music to my too exasperated heart, came that Evangel. The universe is not dead and demoniacal, a charnel-

house with spectres ; but God-like, and my Father's." It has taught me that whatever errors there may be in theological systems, they are separable from those root-ideas which are the truths common to them all. It has thrown a flood of light upon much in the history and religious systems of bye-gone times and nations, which before was dark—the torchlight of philosophers serving only to render the darkness, and their own ignorance, visible ; their cuckoo cry of "Imposture" making night still more hideous. It has made many things in the Bible appear possible, probable, which, before, were to me, wholly incredible.

It has enabled me to form a nobler estimate of the dignity, worth, and destiny of human nature (a good which cannot be overrated, from whatever source derived), and a clearer view of the chief purpose of human life ; the only one which seems to me calculated to remove those distressing perplexities concerning it, with which the thoughtful mind is so frequently beset ; teaching me to regard it, not as given primarily for the enjoyment of present happiness, but for the performance of duty ; and to look on this world as a school, in which we are to be trained and educated—not without discipline, perhaps an unpleasant and severe one,—for the future life : just as the boy is sent to school to train and prepare him for the future life of manhood. Happy we, if we learn our lessons aright, whatever trouble they may cost us.

We receive these lessons in various ways. I have received those here enumerated and others, chiefly through my investigations into this and kindred

subjects ; there are still many of its lessons, which I only imperfectly apprehend ; many, of which I am entirely ignorant ; but of some I may say, like the blind man restored to sight, "This I know, that whereas I was blind now I see." It has removed from my mind many doubts, and solved many enigmas, which before, to me, were inexplicable. It has been to me light in darkness ; hope in despondency ; consolation under bereavement ; and "the happy truth" of the future life of which it has convinced me, will, I doubt not, fully realize, as it already has in part done, the language addressed to me by the spirit "Phreno : " * — It "will be the means of making smoother your path in life, softening the pillow on which your dying head will rest, and of making your spirit more happy when it awakes to a never-ending state in the spiritual world."

* Page 41.

NOTE.—See also remarks of Washington Irving as quoted in the Introduction, page vi.

CHAPTER X.

THE FUTURE LIFE. SPIRITUALISM. HOW STANDS
THE QUESTION ?

Robert Burns, in a letter to his esteemed friend, Mrs. Dunlop, writes, "Can it be possible that when I resign this frail, feverish being, I shall still find myself in conscious existence ? When the last gasp of agony has announced that I am no more to those that knew me, and the few who loved me ;—when the cold, stiffened, unconscious, ghastly corse is resigned into the earth, to be the prey of unsightly reptiles, and to become in time a trodden clod,—shall I be yet warm in life, seeing and seen, enjoying and enjoyed ? Ye venerable sages and holy flamens, is there probability in your conjectures, truth in your stories, of another world beyond death ; or, are they all alike, baseless visions, and fabricated fables ? * * * * *

What a flattering idea then, is a world to come ! *Would to God I as firmly believed it as I ardently wish it !*" And then, in the same impassioned manner, he speaks of the delight he should experience in the restoration to him in another life of those who were most dear to him in this. "There should I meet an aged parent now at rest from the many buffetings of an evil world, against which he so long and so bravely

struggled. There should I meet the friend, the disinterested friend of my early life. * * * * There should I, with speechless agony of rapture, again recognize my lost, my ever dear Mary !”

Bishop Heber, writing to a lady whose brother had lately died, makes these reflections : “ I know not (indeed, who can know ?) whether the spirits of the just are ever permitted to hover over those whom they loved most tenderly ; but if such permission be given (and who can say it is impossible ?) then it must greatly diminish the painful sense of separation which even the souls of the righteous may be supposed to feel, if he (the lady’s brother) sees you resigned, patient, hopeful,” &c.

Dr. Valpy, in reply to an address from his pupils, alluding to “ that dear saint in heaven, my lamented wife,” touchingly observed, “ If spirits have any sense of what is passing below, that happy spirit is now hovering over you, whom she loved. I do not know that I can prove that spirits are sensible of our actions ; *but it is an idea from which I have gained much comfort in many a trying hour.*”

How many thousands are there now, aye, and at all times, in one or other of the states of mind which these passages severally represent ;—tortured by uncertainty of the future, thinking it possible that God may permit the spirits of the loving and the loved to be still present with them, participating in their joys, and sympathising with their sorrows, to whom *even the idea that it may be so inspires comfort*, but who are unable to drink of its full cup of joy, or administer

its balm of consolation, because of their own painful misgivings.

Is it then nothing that a means should now be opened by which these misgivings may be effectually removed,—by which the doubting, hoping, anxious mind may *know* that this is veritably so, having evidence of it as certain as of the realities of daily life, as certain as the nature of the subject can possibly admit? When Paulinus, the Christian missionary, invited our Anglo-Saxon fathers to embrace his faith, an old warrior rose up in the national assembly, and argued thus before the king: “On some dark night, O king, when the storm was abroad, and rain and snow were falling without, when thou and thy captains were seated by the warm fire in the lighted hall, thou mayest have seen a sparrow flying in from the darkness, and flitting across the hall, and passing out into the darkness again. Even so, O king, appears to me the life of men upon the earth. We come out of the darkness; we shoot across the lighted hall of life, and then go out into the darkness again. If this new doctrine can tell us aught of this darkness, and of the soul of man, which passes into it, let it be received with joy.”

These words have not lost their wisdom. They are as pertinent in their application to the “new doctrine” of to-day as to that proclaimed to our ancestors a thousand years ago. Let us think over them. If the “new doctrine” I am enforcing be a true one, it demonstrates that man is a spiritual and immortal being—a truth, and beginning of truth, which is

closely allied with other kindred truths of the highest import, centre-truths, of which who can measure the circumference? God, Providence, Responsibility, Human-brotherhood, Man, in all his relations to the finite and the infinite ;—while around these, other truths again revolve, as satellites around their primaries.

How must the right contemplation of these truths elevate and enlarge our entire spiritual being! From their lofty heights we may take in new, broader, grander views of all above, around, and within us. "The soul once opened, how different is the aspect of life! It is the hour of our majority that makes us heirs of the all-embracing universe. Perhaps too, the constant outflow of these thoughts and aspirations may, as by magnetic threads, link us to higher natures, and fit us for divinest truths in still larger measure,—truths whose operation cannot be limited to ourselves, but must flow out into act and use, exercising an influence upon others, who again shall spread their ever-widening circle? Thus, even on earth, may we realize a foretaste of the joys of heaven; for "certainly it is heaven upon earth to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth."

But, we hear it urged, what have we learned from professed spiritual intercourse that we did not already know? What new truth has it revealed to us?—The objection implied in this question, I must say, seems to me a very shallow one,—one which argues a very superficial knowledge of human nature, and of the

actual course of God's providence, as manifested in the history of our race. Can we read that history, and not see that there have been times when men specially required to be recalled to truths which had indeed been proclaimed ages before, but which they had either forgotten, or neglected;—times, when the Divine Spirit has been manifested in a marked manner, and through various instrumentalities, according to men's needs? When the oppression of the Hebrews was at its worst, insomuch that they hearkened not to the divine message "for agony of spirit and cruel bondage," and when the nations around them were altogether corrupted by idolatry, Moses was raised up to deliver his people, to make of them a nation, whose mission it should be to proclaim to the polytheistic world, "The Lord our God is *One* Lord." When later, puerile traditions were substituted by the chosen people in place of the earnest assertion of this truth, and hypocrisy and formalism prevailed on the one hand, and materialism on the other; when, among the educated and *elite* of the Roman world, faith had reached its lowest ebb; so that "augur could not meet augur without laughing in each other's faces," and "the various modes of worship which prevailed were all considered by the people as equally true, by the philosopher as equally false, and by the magistrate as equally useful," and when the polished cities of Greece were "wholly given to idolatry," Christ came as the light of the world, proclaiming the unity and spirituality of God; and that "those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

When to men's perceptions this light had become obscured by clouds of wordy controversy, and the voice of the great Teacher was drowned amid the din of vain jangling sects; when idolatries were rampant within as well as without the church, and men's souls were rotting within them—from out the desert, from the midst of wild, wandering tribes, came the prophetic message, the truth which lies at the root of all genuine religious faith, written with point of steel, proclaimed with tongue of flame, "God is great. There is no God but God. All duty lies in submission and obedience to His will." When, again, in place of that liberty wherewith Christ had made them free, the consciences of Christian men were enslaved under the yoke of Papal Rome, a German monk, the son of a miner, was made the instrument, under God, of re-asserting and re-establishing the individuality, and inalienable rights of the human soul. And now, when a deeper spirituality is the great want of our time, more even than of most times, is it to be thought a thing incredible, or if true, of no account, that evidences of man's spiritual and immortal nature, evidences appealing to the senses, the intellect, and the conscience, should eminently abound?

"The night is darkest before the morn.

When the pain is sorest the child is born,

And the day of the Lord at hand."

And who can say that the spiritual unfoldings of these latter days are not the fore-runners of a greater millennial glory, when God's Spirit "shall be poured

out upon all flesh, and when all shall know the Lord from the least unto the greatest?"

Further, in considering this objection, we must be careful not to confound the truth of things with our *perceptions* of such truth, nor forget that that ascertainment of truth which we call knowledge, is a work which each must do for himself. It cannot be done by proxy. Truths as old as the creation are thus ever new, new successively to each son of Adam who perceives them. When their light first dawns upon his mental eye, that is to him the moment of revelation. The truth may have existed before and been known to thousands. It matters not. To him, previously, it was as though it were not. Hundreds of facts familiar to men of science, but unknown to the multitude, might be cited in illustration, if illustration of so plain a truth were needed.

Now, while admitting that those great elementary truths of religion to which spiritualism conducts us have been reached in the majority of instances, mediately at least, by other roads, there yet are, and always have been, men so constituted, as to require either additional evidence, or of altogether another kind from that which has sufficed for others; and thousands of such men have been reached by direct evidence and proofs from the spirit-world for whom sermons have been preached and "Evidences" written in vain.

Nor must we lose sight of that tendency in human nature which leads men, when they have been long familiar with a truth, to forget the *source* from whence

proof of it has been originally derived. Take for instance the question to which in this chapter my remarks have been chiefly applied. What *proof* have we of the immortality of the soul other than has been derived from spirit-manifestations in past or present times? I do not deny that independently of these there are strong *presumptive* evidences in its favour, sufficient of themselves to bring home conviction to many minds; but apart from the direct evidence of spirit-revealments and agency, where is the *proof* of it? Turn the question over in your minds. It will bear thinking of.

The difference between the believers in modern spiritualism and the dissidents from that belief, consists mainly in this: that the latter generally accept certain of the traditions which have come down to us of spirit-manifestations in the past, but deny them in the present; while the former, *knowing* that they are taking place *now*, derive from this additional reasons for believing that similar manifestations were made *then*.

But, reverting to the ground of personal experience, I can at least answer for myself that I have learned from this source a knowledge of many truths which I did not know before, and a more certain assurance of many others which I knew previously only as speculations, "Guesses at Truth," not as Truth; may-be's confronted by other may-be's, and out of which chaos of contradictions certainly seemed unattainable.

I have generally found the objection we are considering urged by those whose notions of the subject

were gained at second hand, or, whose acquaintance with it was at best but superficial, often only with its lowest phases; while men of education and culture, who had gone deeper into it, who had seen and questioned, and thought for themselves,—determined, if possible, to pluck out the heart of its mystery—have confessed their obligations to it, and concurred with me in the belief, that when properly qualified men, men of science and of learning, who do not know everything, and are not too wise, nor too proud to be thus taught, enter into its investigation with proper media, and under suitable conditions, they will hence receive many valuable contributions to the cause of science and philosophy, and may probably acquire a knowledge of many things about which science and philosophy may be questioned in vain.

These reflections lead me to glance at the present position of spiritualism, and at some considerations thence arising.

There are three stages through which a question has generally to pass to its destination. First, **NEGLECT**. The leaders, or mouth-pieces of public opinion are too much occupied to pay it any attention, especially, if on the face of it, it does not seem to accord with the results of their previous studies, and with generally-received theories. They have a natural, and perhaps wholesome prejudice against whatever is new and strange; while the mass of men wait till it is vouched for by orthodoxy and respectability, the only credentials which they conceive admissible. You have only to label a new truth *heresy*; and it is at once turned

ignominiously out of doors to shift for itself. Then we have secondly, **RIDICULE** (or in sterner times, persecution), the most trying of all, generally fatal where the subject does not possess the inherent vitality of truth, having in it sufficient worth to raise those who first acknowledge it to that higher level where, undismayed, they can face the forfeiture of men's favourable regard and encounter

“The world's dread laugh,
Which scarce the firm philosopher can scorn.”

Then comes, thirdly, **INVESTIGATION**, followed by acceptance or rejection. If found true, it is so received, first by the inquiring few, ultimately, though often only after a long interval, by the many.

The present spiritual movement quickly passed the first of these stages. Its claims were too peculiar and important, many of its facts too astounding, and its evidences too striking, to permit its being long overlooked. It soon spread widely in all directions. It was not a sudden frenzy or fanaticism, though some fanaticism may have been mixed with it. Its disciples were not chiefly among the ignorant and the credulous, nor yet wholly among scholars and men living apart from the bustle and business of the world, filled (it might have been said) with closet-born theories and dreaming fancies. No, they were men of all creeds, classes, and professions. The senator, the judge, the poet, the divine, the man of science—sceptical of all which could not be measured with his instruments, computed by his mathematics, or melted

in his crucible; the keen, calculating, dollar-loving Yankee, and the industrious mechanic, were found together advocating the same cause. Each had his experience to relate, and told his tale, and argued his case in his own way, though with a like result in all. Regard spiritualism as a delusion, if you will. Still its rapid and extensive reception by minds so diversely constituted is itself a phenomenon deserving of a careful consideration. The *Westminster Review* estimates, that in America alone there are more than two million victims of the prevalent "epidemic malady of opinion," and remarks of spiritualism in England, that, "Our readers would be surprised were we to lay before them the names of several of those who are unflinching believers in it, or are devoting themselves to the study or reproduction of its marvels." And though, as we are assured, by the same authority, the policy of the spiritualists is to let spiritualism spread quietly at present, yet the reviewer warns his readers that "should ever the time arrive for the renewal of the movement, the persons at its head would be men and women whose intellectual qualifications are known to the public, and who possess its confidence and esteem."

Of course, those "gentlemen of the press" whose business it is to "do the funny articles" have found in spiritualism abundant materials for the exercise of their vocation. The arrows of their wit have flown thick and fast. Spiritualism, however, still obstinately holds out. Satire has not slain, banter has not

banished it; and the "Ghost of the Cock Lane Ghost" has been invoked to warn it in vain.

The subject certainly has its ludicrous aspects (and what subject has not?). Pray, gentlemen, make the most of them. I have no objection. "A merry heart doeth good, like a medicine;" and in these lean, lugubrious days, I consider you as in some sort public benefactors. Messieurs, may your waistcoats be enlarged, and your shadows and your jokes never grow less! But (stoop lower), just a word in your ears. There are *some* aspects of the question about which the comicalities of the clown are as much misplaced as would have been Joey Grimaldi, in motley, shouting "Here we are" at his mother's funeral, preparatory to turning a somersault, and singing "Hot Codlins" over her grave.

Well, the longest laugh has an end, and this against spiritualism has pretty well died out, though its ghost may still be sometimes heard wandering through the columns of a would-be facetious newspaper article in very miserable fashion. And the question is now passing, I think successfully, through its third and last stage. Indeed, the greater part of it is already accomplished, unharmed by the running fire of periodical criticism, and the heavy artillery of scientific treatises. Let us briefly survey the ground over which it has travelled.

The facts or phenomena are admitted as genuine by all competent judges, the strictest scrutiny having failed to detect the trick or collusion which can explain them. Indeed, the investigation in some

cases has been conducted under circumstances in which such a belief would simply indicate mental opacity and want of brains. The Rev. Charles Beecher, in his "Review of the Spiritual Manifestations," commences with "Omitting as outgrown the theory of collusion!" The Rev. Professor Mahan, says, "The facts must be admitted for the all-sufficient reason that they are true;" while Dr. Rogers writes a book of some four hundred pages, not to upset the facts, which he assumes throughout, but in exposition of a theory which is to explain them as resulting from the action of purely mundane agencies—with what success, I have in a previous chapter endeavoured to show. And Dr. Dods, in like manner, put forth a theory of his own to account for the facts, which theory he has now abandoned, and embraced spiritualism, as alone competent to explain facts which subsequently came under his observation; the above writers, be it noted, being the greatest authorities in opposition to the claims of modern spiritualism.*

The notion of imposture being abandoned, theories of all kinds, mechanical, electrical, magnetic, odyllic, cerebral, with sundry others, ragged and nondescript, appeared in rapid succession. Some were very ingenious, constructed quite artistically, claiming as their authors men of great scientific attainments, and even of world-wide reputation. Each theory, however, ex-

* I may also mention Count Gasparin, who has written two bulky volumes on "*Science versus Spiritualism*," in which he makes the same admissions of the facts of spiritualism, as the writers above quoted.

ploded its predecessor, and was exploded in turn by its successor, where it had not previously "caved in."

"The earth hath bubbles, as the water hath;
And these are of them."

Pretty philosophic bubbles, which, after floating for a time in the atmosphere of public favour, have collapsed, and gone the way of all bubbles.

This, then, is the upshot of the whole : that the pneumatic, or spiritual theory, remains "master of the situation;" the question now being, not whether the phenomena are of spiritual origin, but to what class of spirits they are to be attributed—a question I have already in some measure considered. This result, my brother-spiritualists, is to us no matter for boasting, no ground for conceit. If the issue of the contest had depended upon our skill and cleverness, we should have been beaten in the first encounter. It has been attained despite of the weakness, the follies, and the blunders of its advocates, and through what may be called the exhaustive process; every other hypothesis offered having been weighed in the balance and found wanting. The ball is now at our feet. The game rests with us. How shall we play it?

The future of the cause, so far as human effort here is concerned, rests with us. How shall we improve our opportunity? What are the duties which it devolves upon us, and how shall we discharge them? Let us consider these questions together in the next and concluding chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

SPIRITUALISM AND LAWS OF NATURE. DUTIES OF
SPIRITUALISTS.

There are very few persons, especially in England, who are aware of the range of phenomena which modern spiritualism presents; or, of the extent to which the *rationale* of the subject has been discussed, and the point to which the discussion has now attained. Even the *Times* newspaper, if we may judge from a leading article (Tuesday, May 5th, 1857), appears to have no knowledge of current spiritual manifestations in this country, other than it has derived from a single number of the *Yorkshire Spiritual Telegraph*; and in this respect it fairly represents the majority of its contemporaries.

When our professed public instructors are so grossly, and at the same time so conceitedly ignorant of spiritualism as this article displays, we need not wonder at the general ignorance and misconception which prevails regarding it. While frankly confessing that "*We are all in the dark about popular superstitions,*" the "*leading journal of Europe*" undertakes the not very hopeful task, we think, of enlightening the benighted British public; with what success we

may easily conceive. When the blind lead the blind, we know what is the general result.*

* The *Times* article strikingly illustrates the observations at the commencement of my ninth chapter. The writer of the article says, "We suggest that spiritualism should be 'developed,' as soon as possible, into some more useful phase than it now occupies at present." (Hear, hear.) But what is "the more useful phase" suggested by him. We quote *verbatim et literatim*, merely numbering the various items of suggestion for greater perspicuity.

1. "It would be something to get one's hat off the peg by an effort of volition, without going to fetch it, or troubling a servant."

2. "If table-power could be made to turn even a coffee-mill, it would be so much gained."

3. "Let our mediums and clairvoyants, instead of finding out what somebody died of fifty years ago, find out what figure the funds will be at this day three months."

4. "Instead of calling up Dante, let them call up the winner of the next Derby; instead of entering into a communication with Washington, let them tell us what Outram is doing in the Persian Gulf, or Yeh at Canton."

The suggestive wisdom of the *Times*, expanded into a column and a half of words, "hath this extent, no more." Truly, there are some people in the world who appear anxious to realize in themselves the curse pronounced upon the serpent, "upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life"—so that it were gold-dust I dare say the judgment would be hailed by them as a blessing.

I suppose no one expects consistency from the *Times*; but it is a little strange, that after asserting that "the manifestations of spiritualism are still confined to rappings and table-turning," it should, within the next half-dozen lines declare, that "the hands of spirits have been sensible to the touch, and sometimes even visible," and a little further, quote from an account of a

Hence, while we should not lose sight of the vantage-ground that has been gained in the discussion of spiritualism, and should be prepared to carry it forward to its ultimate; we must also keep in view the necessity of elementary teaching; going over the whole ground again and again, and dealing with the question in its most simple and primitive aspects. "The constant dropping of water wears away stone;" and the constant iteration of truth—the constant statement and repetition of facts will, in time, wear away the hardest prejudices.

"Popular superstitions" is the great bugbear of the *Times*, and of most respectable people—the "dweller on the threshold" of investigation, which scares them from all nearer approach. In my judgment, there is scarcely anything which displays so much intellectual weakness and moral cowardice as this superstitious fear of being thought superstitious. There is no superstition in admitting a fact. If it be true, that the spirits of our departed relatives and friends revisit the earth, and in various ways hold intercourse with us, there can be no superstition in

seance at the Tuilleries which originally appeared in the *Morning Post*, as follows, "The presence of the latter (Dante) was immediately made manifest by the written answers returned to the questions of the inquirers." With the writer of this article it is clear that "the latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning." Well, Jove sometimes nods, and, we suppose even the *Thunderer* of Printing House Square, must occasionally have his "forty winks."

believing it, or in availing ourselves wisely of the means of communication thus opened, and of the knowledge which we may thus receive. But it would be great folly, if nothing worse, to shut our eyes to the facts presented, to blink the truth, and then cry out on the "popular superstition" of our neighbours who would not so stultify themselves. Let us "speak truth and shame the devil," and — the *Times* newspaper.

Our "superstition" has at least something new in it. It courts inquiry, it challenges investigation, it seeks the light, it bases itself upon facts, and—wonderful to tell—it has priestcraft of every kind arrayed against it. Yes! spiritualism is the outgrowth of facts. It is a tree whose roots are in the earth, whose branches grow toward heaven, and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. Disprove the facts, or explain them satisfactorily upon other principles, and we will abandon our "superstition;" the tree will wither, for the sap will be dried up: we will join those who cry, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground," and be among the first to lay the axe to its root. We are satisfied that spiritualism should be judged of by the established principles of human testimony; examine it as you would any alleged fact of cotemporary history, or any discovery in physical science. Our "superstition" is of that kind adopted and enforced by the great Lord Bacon, being simply, an induction from known facts.

But science has sufficiently disproved these things! Has it? Please to tell me *what* science. Point out

M

where and *how*, and I will acknowledge myself your debtor ;—till then, pardon me, enlightened *savans*, if I set this down as an idle cry, repeated from mouth to mouth, without knowledge, and without inquiry ; one of the baseless “ popular superstitions ” of the nineteenth century.

What science ? The inquiry is a modest one, but it rarely meets any response save oracular utterances about “ *laws of nature*,” “ *the order of the universe*,” and like phrases. Now I venerate the man who unfolds the laws of nature in any of its manifold and wondrous departments ; to me, he stands forth as an interpreter of the mysteries of God ; but the arrogant egotism which simply indulges in empirical platitudes about them is not to be respected—is not respectable. These phrases, however, are always a safe card to play off against spiritualism, they are a dainty bait, only use it skilfully ; “ put the worm on the hook tenderly as though you loved it ” (as that “ quaint old cruel coxcomb ” Izaak Walton has it), there are some gudgeons sure to snap at it. But it is grievous to find distinguished and really useful men, ignorantly or heedlessly falling into the fashionable cant and clap-trap, following in the wake of vulgar prejudices, which they thus perpetuate.

To this notion that spiritual manifestations are contrary to the “ laws of nature,” may be traced much of the prevalent supercilious and off-hand treatment of spiritualism and indisposition to investigate its claims among our present public instructors. Thus in *Chambers's Journal*, No. 110, the writer of an

article on "The Spirit Faith in America," gives a very interesting and impartial statement of the facts of spiritualism gathered from a file of the *New England Spiritualist*, admits the "good faith," the "religious earnestness and sincerity" of its witnesses and professors, honestly avows that, "We cannot come to such a view of human testimony, as to suppose it possible that thousands of people can wilfully enter on a certain self-consistent system of deception, which they will support for years without any one confessing or denouncing the trick. The multitude who say they hear and see such and such things must be impressed with a sense of their reality, or they would never pronounce as they do." After making these admissions, the writer goes on to observe, "If this be a world of *natural law*, as most enlightened persons believe it to be, it is *impossible* that such things can be realities; they must be some form of delusion or fallacy." What the precise form of this "delusion or fallacy" is, the writer does not inform us, further than by remarking "We believe it to be one of a very peculiar and subtle character, arising from a certain mode of operation of the brain, and singularly deceptions in its character and results." This remark is sufficiently mysterious, and may contain a great deal of wisdom, like Lord Burleigh's shake of the head; but it is my misfortune that at present I don't see it.

The author of "The Constitution of Man," in the introduction to the recent edition of his work "On the Relation between Science and Religion," adverts to "the prevalence even among the educated classes, of a

belief in spirit-rapping and table-turning," and thereupon, delivers himself in this wise, "The same class of persons possessed so little knowledge of the *laws of physical nature*, and so little reverence for the power and wisdom of Him who established them, that they indulged in the wildest dreams of tables being moved and made to perform wonderful evolutions by mysterious influences, *in contradiction to the order of nature* revealed by previous knowledge and experience." To prevent misunderstanding, he explains the sense in which he uses the term "laws of nature" to be as follows: "Every object and being in nature has received a definite constitution, and also powers of acting on other objects and beings. The action of the forces is so regular, that we describe them as operating under laws imposed on them by God; but these words indicate merely our perception of the regularity of the action."

Very well! But do we know "the definite constitution of every object and being, and its powers of acting on other objects and beings?" Do we know all the "laws of nature?" Have we them catalogued and numbered, ticketed and pigeon-holed, ready to be produced at the shortest notice? Is it quite certain that what is called a violation of natural law, is not in fact the operation of some law not understood—a deeper law in which other laws are included? I may for instance be told that it is contrary to the law of gravitation for a heavy body, say a round table, to rise from the floor without the application of force; but is force absent, because it, or the agent applying

it, is unseen? If unseen spirits are present, who, through the medium of imponderable fluids, or otherwise, are able to act—that is, exert force, upon solid bodies, wherein is the violation of natural law? Whether a table does so rise, is a question of fact to be determined upon evidence. I, in common with thousands, testify to have been many times an eye-witness of such rising; and further, that this force has been directed by some intelligent, though to us invisible operator, as evidenced by responses and communications telegraphed to us by the table as his instrument; the intelligence so conveyed clearly not being our own. This then being a fact, we may be sure that, like every other fact, it is subject to the operation of law, whether that law is perceived by us or not, the lower material law giving place to, or rather being included in, the higher spiritual law.

That the educated and philosophic even of this generation do not understand “the order of nature” in one of its most important departments—that of the action of the human mind through the brain as its organ, is indeed the burden of Mr. Combe’s lamentation in the book before us. Concerning another department of “the order of nature”—Electricity,—an eminent authority, Mr. Rutter, remarks, “It is probable that we are acquainted with only detached and widely separated parts of its phenomena. The laws which control its combined and ceaseless operations, and by which the greater part of its work is performed, are, perhaps, so remote from our view, and so far beyond the reach of our perceptions, that we may

never with certainty know anything of their existence." These considerations should, I think, make us modest in pronouncing authoritatively upon what is, and what is not, in "the order of nature." As the last-quoted writer observes, "Those who talk oracularly about the course of nature, and the laws of nature, and who try to make it appear that everything which cannot be explained by an immediate reference to their own exposition of such laws, are not entitled to belief, have a great deal yet to learn. Such persons ought to become pupils before they set themselves up for teachers."

I think, too, we greatly err if we suppose that the laws of nature, or the forces of nature, operate like dead machinery; these laws are various in kind—mechanical, dynamical, chemical, vital, spiritual; and we find that the lower law is ever subordinated to the higher; thus the physical or chemical laws which, when unchecked, resolve our bodies into their constituent elements, are suspended and held in check by the vital laws which control the animal economy. We also find that the most potent forces in nature are those farthest removed from the gross forms of matter. Water wears away the hardest stone, the electric fluid rives the solid oak. Man makes the stone, the water, the electric fluid, alike subserve his purposes. Spiritual forces control material ones. If, then, mind governs matter—if, as we daily see, man overcomes the forces of gravitation and inertia—evolves and applies latent material forces in accordance with his volition, it seems to me that *spirit-power* is amply sufficient to

produce far more astonishing phenomena than any of the recent spirit-manifestations, and that these are "in perfect harmony with the laws of nature as revealed by previous knowledge and experience." It is not that the physical laws of nature are denied, but that a new factor is introduced into the calculation. Hence, we do not, as Professor Faraday charges us with doing, "throw up Newton's law (gravitation) at once." We admit with the professor, that "we can neither create nor destroy force;" that "we cannot annihilate matter in respect of that very property which characterises it as matter." But when *we see* phenomena take place, which, as the Professor assures us, imply these things; then, if *we* cannot effect them (and we know we cannot), it seems not unreasonable to infer that they are effected by some other power which can. Whether the power in question *creates* a force, or employs existing forces of which we may not be cognizant, is a question I do not pretend to determine. I ask only, that before judgment is given the evidence be fairly examined. Let it be shown, either that the cause assigned has no existence, or that it does not operate in the case at issue, or, that it is inadequate to account for the effects produced. The *modus operandi* by which spirits, divested of animal corporeity, act upon matter, is another and an open question, upon which discussion would be gladly welcomed; but the fact itself is one to be determined not by any *ipse dixit*, but by admitted rules of evidence. I see no reason why the testimony of living witnesses should be ignored, while other testi-

mony, apparently because it is old, should be accredited; but if the fact generally is so, as it seems to be, an appeal in confirmation of the foregoing statement can be made to facts, which in words at least, the Christian world still professes to accept. When, for instance, as we read in the New Testament, an angel delivered Peter from prison and from chains, and when an angel rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulchre, was there not in each case a control exercised over material forces by an incorporeal spirit? Nor is the fact in the slightest degree altered, or the argument weakened, by the admission that these things were done by miracle. For what is a miracle? "A violation of natural law," say you. What then! do you not believe in the regularity of the action of "nature's laws?" Have you "so little reverence for the power and wisdom of him who established them" as to believe in the "wildest dreams" of doors and chains and stones being moved by "mysterious influences in contradiction to the order of nature?" Do you not see, my friend, that this is playing fast and loose with the question, that it is an abandonment of the ground of opposition originally held? The best reasoners and theologians take up a ground very different to this, and one fully accordant with the views I have here endeavoured to set forth. Thus, the Dean of Westminster, in his "Notes on the Miracles," says, "*That language, however commonly in use, is yet wholly unsatisfactory, which speaks of these wonderful works of God (Christ's miracles) as violations of a natural law. Beyond nature, beyond and*

above the nature which we know, they are, but not contrary to it. Nor let it be said that this distinction is an idle one. * * * The true miracle is a higher and a purer nature coming down out of the world of untroubled harmonies into this world of ours, which so many discords have jarred and disturbed, and bringing this back again, though it be but for one prophetic moment, into harmony with that higher. * * * We should term the miracle not the infraction of a law, but behold in it the lower law neutralised, and for the time put out of working by a higher; and of this abundant analagous examples are evermore going forward before our eyes. Continually we behold in the world around us lower laws held in restraint by higher; mechanic by dynamic, chemical by vital, physical by moral; yet we say not, when the lower thus gives place in favour of the higher, that there was any violation of law, or that anything contrary to nature came to pass; rather we acknowledge the law of a greater freedom swallowing up the law of a lesser. Thus, when I lift my arm, the law of gravitation is not, as far as my arm is concerned, denied or annihilated; it exists as much as ever, but is held in suspense by the higher law of my will. The chemical laws which would bring about decay in animal substances still subsist, even when they are hemmed in and hindered by the salt which keeps those substances from corruption. * * What in each of these cases is wrought may be against one particular law, that law being contemplated in its isolation, and rent away from the complex of laws, whereof it forms only a

part. But no law does stand thus alone, and it is not against, but rather in entire harmony with, the system of laws; for the law of those laws is, that where powers come into conflict, the weaker shall give place to the stronger, the lower to the higher. In the miracle, this world of ours is drawn into and within a higher order of things; laws are then at work in the world, which are not the laws of its fallen condition, for they are laws of mightier range and higher perfection; and as such they claim to make themselves felt, and to have the pre-eminence and pre-dominance which are rightly their own. * * * The miracle is not a discord in nature, but the coming in of a higher harmony; not disorder, but instead of the order of earth, the order of heaven: not the violation of law, but that which continually, even in this natural world, is taking place, the comprehension of a lower law in a higher; in this case the comprehension of a lower natural, in a higher spiritual, law; with only such modifications of the lower, as are necessarily consequent upon this."

To these weighty remarks, we will add only a few from the Rev. C. Kingsley: they are none the less valuable for occurring in a popular novel. "Who told you, my dear young friend, that to break the customs of nature, is to break her laws? A phenomenon, an appearance, whether it be a miracle or a comet, need not contradict them because it is rare, because it is yet not referable to them. Nature's deepest laws, her only true laws, are her invisible ones. All analyses, whether of appearances, of causes, or of

elements, only lead us down to fresh appearances—we cannot see a law, let the power of our lens be ever so immense. The true causes remain just as impalpable, as unfathomable as ever, eluding equally our microscope and our induction—ever tending towards some great primal law, manifesting itself, according to circumstances in countless diverse and unexpected forms—till all that the philosopher as well as the divine can say, is—The spirit of life, impalpable, transcendental, direct from God, is the only real cause. It “bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth.” What, if miracles should be the orderly results of some such deep, most orderly, and yet most spiritual law? * * * The difficulty lies only in the rationalist’s shallow and sensuous view of nature, and in his ambiguous, slip-slop trick of using the word natural to mean, in one sentence, ‘material’ and in the next, as I use it, only ‘normal and orderly.’”

Let me earnestly invite the reader to ponder well the principles set forth in these quotations, in their application to present-occurring spiritual phenomena, and to the objection thereto under consideration, ere he pronounce with the writer in Chambers’, that spiritualism is “impossible,” or with Combe, that it “is in contradiction to the order of nature.” If he allows them to have their due weight, I think he will, at the least, admit, that the case is not closed and put out of court; that the last word has not been spoken; that there is nothing in our present knowledge to

preclude the need or use of further investigation. This granted, it surely is but reasonable to ask him further, not to prejudge the question while professing to investigate it;—neither to wilfully ignore facts, nor make them speak only the language of a foregone conclusion. Let him bear in mind the caution of Bacon, to take heed that experiment be not dragged along as a captive, constrained to accommodate herself to his decisions. In the language of Faraday, “If we are led, either by simplicity, or vanity, to give an opinion upon matters respecting which we are not instructed, either by the knowledge of others, or our own intimate observation; if we are induced to ascribe an effect to one force, or deny its relation to another, knowing little or nothing of the laws of the forces, or the necessary conditions of the effect to be considered; surely our judgment must be qualified as ‘presumptuous.’”

Let us not deceive ourselves with phrases, or foolishly play with them as counters in a game. Every fact which helps us to a better understanding of God’s material or spiritual universe, should be treated as a sacred thing—a direct message from Him, to be tampered with at our peril; let us reverently ask what it teaches, and thankfully receive its lessons, however strange we in our ignorance may regard them. Thus, and not by words only, can we best show our trust in the “laws of nature,” and our “reverence for Him who established them.” “Let us cease to consider the supernatural as being either the *suspension* or the *contradiction* of material external

laws, but, as the *manipulation* according to law of *spiritual internal laws*. We shall not then find ourselves exclaiming, "Why should the Divine Being permit His laws to be *suspended* or *contradicted*, for this or that insufficient end?" and then, on the strength of our own assumptions, refusing to examine into facts!"

In my last chapter, I proposed to consider in this, the inquiry, "What are our duties as spiritualists, and how may we best fulfil them?" I can now only indicate what it seems to me should be our guiding principles of action, leaving methods and details for consideration elsewhere; simply remarking here, that we cannot be too careful as to the way in which we present the subject to the consideration of others, first impressions being generally the most powerful and permanent. We should temper zeal with discretion: light and heat are alike necessary. I think then, that those principles may be summed up in two words: *development* and *extension*. It is our duty to gain the fullest possible knowledge of spiritual philosophy in all its extent and bearings, to communicate that knowledge to others, to cultivate suitable dispositions in ourselves, and in them; and to make our conduct and character correspond to the truths we have received; so that our faith may be judged by our works, and thus ourselves become "living epistles, known and read of all men."

It will not profit to know that a mine has been discovered, unless we extract its wealth, separating the dross from the pure gold: and when we have done

this, let us not, like misers, hoard it uselessly, but employ it freely, remembering that "there is that scattereth but yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth only to penury."

Every privilege we enjoy brings with it its own responsibility, but we shall not fear to undertake, but rather, gladly welcome it, when we know that it is laid upon us in love, for the good of ourselves and others; and that if, seeking God's help, we endeavour faithfully to discharge it, our errors and short-comings will be watched, not with stern un pitying rigour, but

" With larger, other, eyes than ours
To make allowance for us all."

Men's judgment of spiritualism is influenced, more than perhaps we think it is, by our own estimate of it. I believe that the low *status* it now occupies in public regard, is very much the result of our own poor meagre conceptions of it, and of its uses. Let us endeavour to elevate our minds to the dignity of the subject, to rise from the observation of phenomena to the understanding of principles; seeking, not the wonder, but the sign, and yet not the sign, but the thing signified; separating in our inquiries the accidental from the essential; looking not alone at the circumstantial, but fixing our thoughts mainly on the centre-stantial; endeavouring to penetrate from the sensuous and superficial, to the innermost of essential spiritual truth.

We can act upon others only in proportion to the

strength of our convictions ; earnestness is the great secret of success. When a great truth takes entire possession of a man's soul, he becomes irresistible, all opposing falsehoods fly before him like chaff from the threshing-floor : such men are God's prophets, the divinely-commissioned teachers of their race.

To awaken the dormant faculties of men ; to arouse their slumbering consciences ; to quicken their souls into vigorous action and revive decaying piety ; to elevate their thoughts above the fleeting shows of time and sense, to the enduring, though to most of us invisible realities of spiritual life ; leading them to feel that we all are, in very deed, children of God, brothers of Christ, heirs of immortality ; and to teach them their relations and duties to man their brother—to God their Father. Such my brother-spiritualists is, I conceive, the high and noble mission which is before us ; and, please God, we will labour for its accomplishment, let those laugh who list.

In bringing this narrative to a conclusion ; I am painfully conscious how inadequately I have expressed even my own feeble conceptions of the great subject we have been considering. There are, too, many points in it which I have barely glanced at, demanding a much fuller treatment ; while many others have been entirely overlooked ; some of these I hope (leisure and opportunity permitting) hereafter to supply. If my earnestness has led me at all to dogmatise, I can only say that such was not my intention ; I am only a learner in these matters, and I wish my fellow-students simply to take my views for what they are

worth, and to set them aside whenever truer and better are presented. With regard to the facts stated in this narrative, I have nothing more to add, than that I have endeavoured to record them truly and conscientiously. My experience here given is not a fancy-sketch, but a leaf from the book of actual life. I have written it not with the expectation that others will be brought thereby to adopt my conclusions, for I would restrain rather than encourage precipitate conclusions on either side ; but from the sense of duty, and in the hope of so presenting spiritualism, that reasonable men might see the propriety of approaching its consideration in that frame of mind which can alone render any conclusion concerning it deserving of serious regard. To those who, — recognising the spiritual character of the manifestations upon which I have animadverted, — see in them, not a good to be hailed, but an evil to be deprecated ; who look upon them as proceeding exclusively from spirits disorderly and satanic, I would now only say in the language of one of their favourite poets—

“ Ye fearful saints fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread,
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.”

And may all who enter upon this inquiry with a sincere desire to know the truth, and nothing but the truth, receive at least as much satisfaction herein, as has been experienced by their friend,

A TRUTH SEEKER.

VERSES,
CHIEFLY WRITTEN IN SEASONS OF
DOUBT AND BEREAVEMENT.

A MIDNIGHT MEDITATION.

RESIGNATION.

HOPE IN BEREAVEMENT.

CONSOLATION.

THE SOUL'S LITANY.

ASPIRATION.

FAITH'S ECLIPSE.

FAITH TRIUMPHANT.

DUTY'S GUERDON.

LIFE'S PURPOSE.

THE ORPHAN CHILD AND HER SPIRIT-MOTHER.

TO ONE IN THE SPIRIT-WORLD.

TO MY POET FRIEND IN THE SPIRIT-WORLD.

A MIDNIGHT MEDITATION.

"There are departed beings that I have loved as I never again shall love in this world;—that have loved me as I never again shall be loved! If such beings do ever retain in their blessed spheres the attachments which they felt on earth; if they take an interest in the poor concerns of transient mortality, and are permitted to hold communion with those they have loved on earth, I feel as if now, at this deep hour of night, in this silence and solitude, I could receive their visitation with the most solemn, but unalloyed delight."—WASHINGTON IRVING.

And do the dead, oh, blessed thought!
To us indeed return again;
With messages of mercy fraught,
Of "Peace on earth, good will to men?"

To guide our wandering feet aright,
To bind and heal the broken heart;
The lamp of faith again to light,
And bid us choose the "better part?"

Forgive us that our faith is weak,
Forgive us if we seem to scorn,
Forgive the erring words we speak,
Forgive us that we idly mourn.

And 'mid the busy hours of day,
And in the vigils of the night,
Be near us, with us, when we pray,
To bathe our souls in heav'nly light.

Let light from out our darkness shine,
And wisdom from our suff'rings spring ;
Let love glow in us more divine,
And faith mount on exultant wing

To meet you, victors at the last,
O'er doubt, and fear, and adverse fate ;
The battle won, the struggle past,
Our souls stand waiting at the gate.

RESIGNATION.

Another link to earth hath broke,
Another loving voice is mute,
Another soul hath now awoke
In spirit-land, to eat the fruit

Of life-long travail. But, ah me!
Though her's the joy, the priceless gain,
Our hearts must bleed, for oh! we
Feel how great the loss, how deep the pain

Of sever'd love! O human love
How strong thou art! And can it be
That love is sever'd? Do souls above
Not clust'ring grow more full and free,

Encircling all they loved on earth?
She is not dead. She hath but won
A fuller life,—a spirit-birth.
O Father, God! *Thy* will be done.

HOPE IN BEREAVEMENT.

(EASTER VERSES.)

She is dead—O bitterest word !

She is dead ! our hearts are riven :
Her loving tones no more are heard
In counsel wise, so kindly given.

We no more on earth shall meet her,
Her—whose prayers for us have striven :
But O ! our souls in converse sweeter
Than e'er on earth, shall meet in heaven.

Death's victor now, on spirit-wing
She hath "scaped the body's prison !"
To join the angel-choir who sing
Before the throne where Christ is risen.

CONSOLATION.

O weary heart, oppressed with care,
And pain, and grief, and bitter woe !
Inly perplexed, nor seeing where
Thy course doth tend 'mid onward flow

Of ceaseless time, presaging ill :
Hush all thy griefs ! And let the calm
From heav'nly spheres thy bosom fill,
And all thy soul, like holy psalm,

To God ascend. Yea ! like the choir
Of seraphs that before his throne
Sing evermore. Let spirit-fire
Purge all thy dross. Let every tone

From angel-harps thy being thrill
Responsive, and all discords cease.
Through blinding tears, God's purpose will
Unfold its love ; and whisper—PEACE !

THE SOUL'S LITANY.

"God is *Light*, and in him, is no darkness at all."—ST. JOHN.

—"Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples, the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for thou knowest. What in me is dark
ILLUMINE." MILTON.

"It is with man's Soul as it was with Nature: the beginning of Creation is—*Light*. Till the eye have vision, the whole members are in bonds. Divine moment, when over the tempest-tost Soul, as once over the wild-weltering chaos, it is spoken: Let there be Light! Ever to the greatest, that has felt such moment, is it not miraculous and God announcing; even as, under simpler figures, to the simplest and least? The mad primeval Discord is hushed; the rudely-jumbled conflicting elements bind themselves into separate firmaments: deep silent rock-foundations are built beneath; and the skyey vault with its everlasting Luminaries above: instead of a dark wasteful Chaos, we have a blooming, fertile, Heaven-encompassed World."—CARLYLE.

When doubts torment, and fears assail, and all our
path is dark as night
Without a single 'star to cheer,—hear our prayer,
O God, for Light!

When in earnest search for truth, striving still to
gain the right,
We stumble blindly on our way,—O God of wisdom,
grant more Light!

When weak and weary, sorrow-laden, cast around thy
arm of might :

When we fail to trace, or trust Thee,—heavenly
Father, Light ! more Light !

When those whom we love the dearest fade from
before our failing sight,
In the shadow of Death's presence : gracious God, be
Thou our Light !

ASPIRATION.

As flame mounts up toward the sky,
As flowers grow upward from the sod ;
E'en so the soul ascends on high,
And upward grows toward its God.

It feels that He hath given it powers
Which cannot mingle with the dust ;
It knows the tide of rolling hours
Can ne'er o'erwhelm it :—God is just.

The Spirit shall to him depart,
When closéd is life's pilgrimage :
God's promise, written in the heart,
Is aye renewed from age to age.

FAITH'S ECLIPSE.

Go! battle boldly with thy doubt,
Nor turn aside in coward fear:
Up, soul! and bravely fight it out,
For Truth is mighty :—God is near.

What! though the conflict may be long,
With struggling sigh and choking tear,
And broken prayer :—God's angel throng
Surround and guard thee :—God is near.

Courage! the purple light of dawn
Illumes the sky: the day is here:
Rejoice, O heart! sing like the morn,
Truth still is mighty :—God is near.

FAITH TRIUMPHANT.

Tell me not that life is rounded
On this our little span of earth ;
Tell me not the soul, sense-bounded,
Must die, and that its priceless worth

Is all romance—an empty breath ;
Its boundless love and God-like powers
To matter chained—the slave of death,
And victim of the fleeting hours.

What though the spirit here has birth,
Its course beyond but dimly known ?
What though the steps are based on earth,
That circle round th' eternal throne ?

Our spirit-bark shall cross the sea,
And gain the promis'd land, our home ;
The eye within the soul can see
The far-off glories yet to come.

Heaven-piercing Faith can rend the gloom,
Can point the ascent that saints have trod ;
Can light the darkness of the tomb,
And bid the mourner trust in God.

DUTY'S GUERDON.

"Besides this earth, and besides the race of men, there is an invisible world and a kingdom of spirits: that world is round us, for it is everywhere; and those spirits watch us, for they are commissioned to guard us; and if we were dying under pain and shame, if scorn smote us on all sides, and hatred crushed us, angels see our tortures, recognize our innocence (if innocent we be) and God waits only the separation of spirit from flesh to crown us with a full reward. Why then, should we ever sink overwhelmed with distress, when life is so soon over, and death is so certain an entrance to happiness—to glory?"—
CHARLOTTE BRONTE.

"It is an exquisite and beautiful thing in our nature, that when the heart is touched and softened by some tranquil happiness or affectionate feeling, the memory of the dead comes over it most powerfully and irresistibly. It would seem almost as though our better thoughts and sympathies were charms, in virtue of which the soul is enabled to hold some vague and mysterious intercourse with the spirits of those whom we loved in life. Alas! how often and how long may these patient angels hover around us, watching for the spell which is so seldom uttered and so soon forgotten."—DICKENS.

Yes! the dear one whom I number
With my thoughts of heavenly bliss,
Hover'd round me in my slumber,
And my worn spirit bore from this

Dark, sad world of sin and sorrow,
Upward, up towards heaven's portal,
Strength methought I seemed to borrow,
From that angel-guide immortal.

Who, my spirit-form enfolding,
With heart responsive throbbed to mine,
While th' angelic spheres beholding,
Long gazed my soul in joy divine.

'Twere indeed a glorious mission
To write that new Apocalypse,
But O, the wonders of that vision
Can ne'er be told by mortal lips!

O the deep rapture which did fill
My being in that wondrous trance!
O the soul-music which did thrill
Through all the heaven's vast expanse.

"Rest, weary one, thy toil is done,
Here no sin nor sorrow enter;
Here Light, and Life, and Love are one,
God the everlasting centre.

Mortal, this shall be thy guerdon,
If thou wilt but thy duty do;"
Something like to this the burden
Of their glad song, which ever grew

Still clearer, deeper, more divine:
And all my soul confessed it true;
Yes, mortal! this the guerdon;—thine,
If thou wilt but thy duty do.

LIFE'S PURPOSE.

"I have seen all the works that are under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit. For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart wherein he hath laboured under the sun? For all his days are sorrows, and his travel grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This also is vanity."—ECCLESIASTES, OR THE PREACHER.

"Then, wherefore Life?" I, questioning said,
"Since sweetest love brings bitterest pain;
Spring's rosiest hopes do earliest fade,
And all our toil of heart and brain

Finds speedy end,—Ambition, Fame,
Wealth, Pleasure, Power, the scholar's lore,
The Poet's song,—Fool! Fool! How vain
Are all thy dreams; Time's waves roll o'er

Life's fleeting sands; thou walk'st each day
Mid new-made graves. Death's prison-door
Stands open wide. His fearful sway
Rules every clime from sea to shore."

Here paused I; for methought, a voice,
Like music sweet, made answer then:
"Thy words are wild, I give thee choice
Of wiser counsels. Once more again

To earth I come from out the spheres
Seraphic, yet unseen by mortal eye ;
I come to teach :—to calm the fears
Of earth-born men. For God doth aye

In deepest love still chasten men ;
Life's empty gauds, life's bitter tears,
But teach His lessons : yea, e'en when
Men blindly grope, and all the years

To come seem darken'd, and a thankless boon
The breath of life. Earth is a school
Where God doth send his children : soon
He calls them home ; and then, more full

And clear, purged from all mists of earth,
In radiant streams His light and love
Shine forth undimm'd, and all life's worth
Reveal. Death opes the gates above."

" Knowledge by suffering entereth ;
And life is perfected by death."—MRS. BROWNING.

THE ORPHAN CHILD AND HER SPIRIT-MOTHER.

“May we look among the bands of ministering spirits for our departed ones? Whom would God be more likely to send us? Have we in heaven a friend who knew us to the heart's core—a friend to whom we have unfolded our soul in its most secret recesses—to whom we have confessed our weaknesses and deplored our griefs? If we are to have a ministering spirit, who better adapted?

“Have we not memories which correspond to such a belief? When our soul has been cast down, has never an invisible voice whispered, ‘There is lifting up?’ Have not gales and breezes of sweet and healing thought been wafted over us, as if an angel had shaken from his wings the odors of Paradise? Many a one, we are confident, can remember such things; and whence come they?

“Why do the children of the pious mother, whose grave has grown green and smooth with years, seem often to walk through perils and dangers, fearful and imminent as the crossing of Mahommed's fiery gulf on the edge of a drawn sword, yet walk unhurt? Ah! could we see that glorious form! that face where the angel conceals not the mother—our questions would be answered.

“It may be possible that a friend is sometimes taken, because the Divine One sees that their ministry can act upon us more powerfully from the unseen world than amid the infirmities of mortal intercourse.

“Here the soul, distracted and hemmed in by human events, and by bodily infirmities, often scarce knows itself, and makes no impressions on others correspondent to its desires. The mother would fain electrify the heart of her child; she yearns and burns in vain to make her soul effective on its soul, and to

inspire it with a spiritual and holy life ; but all her own weaknesses, faults, and mortal cares cramp and confine her, till death breaks all fetters—and then first truly alive, risen, purified, and at rest, she may do calmly, sweetly, and certainly what amid the tempests and tossings of life she labored for painfully and fitfully.”—MRS. HARRIET BEECHER STOWE.

“For my part, I cannot regard the departed mother as unmindful of the children she has left. I cannot suppose the child will forget the mother in whose kind arms it lay, into whose loving eyes it gazed in its dying hour. I cannot suppose that the sisterly or brotherly affection which glowed with a sacred warmth while on earth, has grown cold in heaven. I must believe that we still have a place in their memories and affections—that they look with interest on our movements, rejoice in our joys, and sympathise with our sorrows ; and that, if there be nothing to hinder, they will sometimes visit us to minister the help or consolation which it is in their power to bestow.”—REV. W. LANDELS.

Mother, tell me, hast thou left me
Lonely, in this sad world of strife ?
Quite of joy and hope bereft me ?
I am all weary now of life.

Thou art now in realms of glory
With all the blessed ones, they say,
Of whose lives in holy story
You still did read me day by day.

Read how angels came to cheer them,
Came to cheer them while they slept,
How they ever hover'd near them ;
And I, listening, wondered, wept.

Mother! thou on earth didst love me ;
Didst kiss me fondly, call me 'dear ;'
Now, though thou'rt in heaven above me
O ! tell me that thou still art near.

I *am* near thee, *darling*, near thee,
Yes, I—thy spirit-mother, dear :
Still I love thee, —love to hear thee,
And calm thy mind and soothe thy fear.

I am near thee, ever near thee,
To aid and bless thee morn and night :
For I fondly love to cheer thee,
And watch and guide thy soul aright.

I am near thee, *darling*, near thee ;
Still near with all a mother's love :
How I love thee, and *endear* thee
None else can know but God above.

TO ONE IN THE SPIRIT-WORLD.

O loved, revered, whom I have lost,—
Yet lost to meet in happier spheres
When the dark sea my barque hath crost,
And left behind are all my fears ;

My thoughts flow backward to the past,
I wrap me round with mem'ries dear,
I shiver in the winter's blast,
And all without is blank and drear.

Still, though I cannot choose but grieve,
I would not wish thee back again,
Where sin, and death, and sorrow weave
Their shadow dark o'er heart and brain.

Thy worth shall grow to deeper worth,
The circling ages all are thine ;
And powers undreamt of here on earth,
In full-orb'd splendour there shall shine.

There, knowledge, faith, and rev'rence blend,
Love doth more pure and constant burn ;
Serenest heights our souls ascend
As we God's purposes discern.

Yes! even now, my soul doth feel
An influx from that better clime ;
Thy spirit-kiss the truth doth seal,
In earnest of the coming time.

TO MY POET FRIEND IN THE SPIRIT-
WORLD.

Sing to me, friend, of the years that are gone,
When Hope shone o'er our path like the bright polar
star ;

When Youth's pulses beat high and its vision swept far,
As gaily we sung in the joy of the morn.

Sing to me songs of the friends we loved best,
A merry, a happy, a generous band ;
Of the joys that we shared, of the schemes that we
planned,
When the noblest thought was the welcomest guest.

Sing to me, friend, from that deep heart of thine,
All the wonderful song of life's mystical march ;
With its griefs, and its fears, and its hopes which
o'er-arch
The waters of Death, and spaces of Time.

Sing to me, friend, of the bright spirit-band,
They, whose feet have the shores of eternity trod,
The dear angels who guard us, and guide us to God,—
O sing me the songs of the heav'nly land !

* * * *

Sing on, O seraph ! Thy soul-witching strain
Doth a solace, a peace to my spirit impart—
'Tis the music of heaven ; O breathe it again,
It lightens and gladdens my o'erladen heart.

APPENDIX.

THE LAWS OF SPIRITUAL INTERCOURSE.

BY. THE SPIRIT, PHILIP LEMOINE:

THROUGH THE

MEDIUMSHIP OF MRS. P. B. RANDOLPH.

THE LAWS OF SPIRITUAL INTERCOURSE.

INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS BY A SPIRIT GIVING THE NAME OF "HERMES."

Spiritual intercourse is older than the earth. Spirits of men have held intercourse with their earth-born brethren since two spirits were in existence—God and Nature. Of Nature you have but little knowledge, of God you know still less. Ye have indeed made rapid progress, and yet you have only entered the outer circle of the vestibule which leads into nature's vast, vast, vast temple. Ye have each a mission to accomplish; this mission is, the eradication of all ill from your spirits, and the substitution of good instead. Knowledge is the great good; for he who fills his soul with knowledge has a key to those secrets, the knowing of which will enable him, when he shall have passed the outer vestibule, to penetrate the inner, and toward the inmost—God.

Spiritual manifestations are old; many centuries have passed since they have been known and forgotten. Foolish man thinks there is no other birth-place for him but this earth; but untold myriads have had birth in other planets, must have had, because

God's perfection can only be typified in man. Human beings are crystallized individualities of God's spirit.

You are being introduced into the lower heavens and mysteries, but there are countless millions of mysteries beyond. A tremendous thought this, that man begins now to think that life is too short—that the flesh binds up too narrowly his faculties—that he seeks now to put forth his hand and pluck the stars and comets from their orbits—and that he now claims kindred with the gods. A proud day for all; for us as well as for you; for us who can come and teach—for you who can know and understand these things.

PHILIP LEMOINE.

I have been the means of enlightening the world with respect to the brain and the soul. I am willing to speak of this department of *positive* science as it is regarded in spiritual language. I propose to lay down the primates before coming to the ultimates, so that the matter may be understood in its fundamental principles.

Let me premise that immortality rests upon the absolute indestructibility of matter. You draw distinctions between spirit, soul, and body. The spirit is the production of the body. The soul is the intelligent principle indwelling in the spirit and body. This is the only ground of demonstrating the immortality of the soul successfully. Materialists do not recognize the invisible as the only real. The material

is evanescent ; spirit is changeable ; matter indestructible ; soul permanent.

What I shall call spirituo-physical science is necessary to be understood as a preliminary to the subject of spiritual intercourse.

There is in space an ether connecting all worlds—a sea in which they all float : there is an element connecting all men — an absolute spiritual substance emanating from all mankind. A dog will smell his master at a great distance. A corresponding element flows from all animals ; a horse knows the track of another ; a camel knows the haunts of other camels ; a fish knows the haunts of other fishes. Man, in the wild state, has an instinctive sense where he shall find other men. Civilization takes away some of this from man. There is an emanation from every species of every class of animals attaching itself to bodies, and which emanation is recognized by them. This recognition is called sympathy. I will call the element *Sympathia*. It pervades all, but none intermingle. The sympathia from a beast will not intermingle with that from another beast. This is the reason why mongrels do not perpetuate ; there is not a mingling of their sympathias, unless they are the very highest of their species ; then, however, comes a concrete result—not a mongrel.

Men congregate according to certain attractions. Man seeks that kind of society which most satisfies him ; he is attracted by the sympathia of beings on the same plane of being with himself.

There is a two-fold attraction—the one physical,

the other spiritual. A man may be where there are fifty others ; although he does not see their faces, he may, on putting out his hand, feel a peculiar attraction to one and repulsion from another, independently of mentality, where the connecting link is of the higher sympathia—between mind and mind. Those on the lower planes are organized on the same general principles, but less perfect than are the higher. Instead of there being only seven distinct varieties of men, we may say there are really seventy thousand. The difference between them is visible to spirits ; they perceive the distinctive sympathia of each, as lighter or darker.

Oil will not mingle with water, but floats on until it meets with that which is congenial ; and so the sympathia of one individual may not mingle with that of another. The mental, spiritual, and physical sympathia may not join ; the sympathia of the body may mingle, yet not that of the spirit, or the soul. If all coalesce, there is perfect harmony and happiness. Men are not related to their parents solely on account of parental relationship ; there is a difference between consanguinity and affinity ; this latter has relation to spirit and mind. Spirit, mind, and body, are, in a sense, distinct entities :—there is a sympathia of the spirit, another of the mind, and another of the body. Do you demur to this distinction ? Let me remind you that the body is built up of material particles ; that the spirit is the motor of the body ; that the body is the investiture of the spirit ; that the abiding personality is in the spirit, and not in the body. The

body is the outer case of the spirit, as the spirit is the outer case of the soul.

Minds are attracted as bodies are by this "magnetism." There is polarity in all things, in matter and in mind. You can never love, understand, or intimately perceive another, unless you are in intimate threefold *rapport* with him. If there is *rapport* bodily, you *like* him; if *rapport* spiritually, you feel a friendship; if both, cordial friendship; but if mentally also,—if all three join, you *love*. This most frequently takes place between opposite sexes. There is a higher love than this, but of that, another time.

You cannot like a man unless your sphere blend with his; your sphere cannot blend with another man's unless you like him. This sort of attraction extends to spiritual beings out of the body. Those who are truly blended by sympathetic outflow, are attracted. Affinity is an interblending of the sympathetic essences of which each is constructed. You must have affinity in one of these directions to have intercourse with a spirit.

Let us distinguish men, in and out of the body, as belonging to various planes. If you belong, say to plane A, you may establish relations with spirits belonging to plane A. Your spiritual emanations assume a spherical form, and are perceived in the form of spiracles, or molecules, part electrical, part odyllic, ascending through space on the *spiritual* plane A.

The reason why you cannot sometimes have "rappings," and other "manifestations," is, because individuals present belong, say to plane A, and the

medium to another plane, B, C, or D ; and if spirits come they are repelled by their discordant spheres. To produce the "rappings" there must be a connection between the medium's emanation positive, and the table's emanation negative ; the spirit uses his effluence to break contact between the two emanations, and the "raps" ensue. Everything has a peculiar sympathia, even down to dead matter (if the term *dead* matter is allowable, seeing that God lives still in dead matter). There are certain individuals peculiarly constructed physically, or rather chemically : their particles eliminate a peculiar sympathia, capable of coalescing with the sympathia—the odic light—the magnetism of bodies. Now when the emanation of an individual is operated upon by that of a spirit, and the relation between it and that of the body alluded to is disturbed, when the emanations come together again the rap is produced.*

Tables are lifted in two ways. I have first to observe, that some individuals, all indeed, eliminate particles ; the air is filled with electrical elements. There are infinite particles filling space—modal, polar, magnetic ; the atmosphere is electrical. Now these particles can be aggregated. Some spirits are attracted to some individuals. Let us view the table as No. 1, the medium as No. 2, the spirits as No. 3 ; these may, sometimes, form a perfect unity. When

* This was illustrated by the action of positive and negative clouds in causing thunder ; and by other analogies.

this takes place, the three attract as to a point, the electrical particles fly to it, and a physical structure is the result. The spirits can draw together materials sufficient to form even a visible ghost, or letters on the wall as recorded. If they can do this, they can from more scanty materials, create a physical hand with which to raise a table. When individuals have emanations harmonising with those proceeding from tables, and other objects, such may be the effects produced.

When a medium has only the spiritual emanation upon which a spirit can operate by its emanation, then the medium is a writing medium, the spirit operating upon the spiritual hand, clothed with the material hand. If, thirdly, the medium has an attraction mentally to spirits, then, the medium's mind is moved, and through it his brain and depending organs.

The spirits can move the table by means of a spiritual hand. They can move it also another way. They can concentrate all the electrical particles from the air, and those supplied by the medium ; they can move this mass, and thus move the table.

Now, how to proceed to receive communications from spirits. Sit at a table half-an-hour a day. There are many spirits around you, but who cannot move or rap. A spirit may rap for one, and not for another ; not being on the same plane. Many feel surprised that the spirits of their relatives do not communicate directly through themselves ; but relationship in itself is really adverse to the production of these effects. Consanguinity and affinity differ. No rapping me-

dium can attract a spirit beyond his own plane, and the spiritual company kept by the medium is determined by his own nature. Be not surprised at the occasional appearance of low, lying spirits, rapping and tilting at your tables. You may ask why such intrusion can be permitted? Men in society are restrained by laws, but if they choose to contravene these laws, they do so at the risk of consequences. It is the same in the spiritual world: spirits do contravene laws, and they take the consequences.

After sitting at the table some time, let your mind go forth, and keep your mind before the spirits; it will surely invite some spirit in sympathy and affinity, who may come and rap, or move the table, or otherwise communicate with you.

Music is produced, as is the music of the *Æolian* harp. Remember, the spirit-world is a *real* world, where everything is done as you do here.

(In reply to the thoughts of some present; let me say here, that thoughts are expressed, and things done at your tables, precluding entirely the idea of the medium's thinking, or doing them. It is not surprising that there is a predominancy of falsehood in spirit-communications; there are ten uneducated, brutish men, entering spirit-life, to every one decently developed.)

I said, that the spirit-world is a real world; we have spiritual houses, spiritual fruits, &c., for spiritual individualities. I must allude again to the distinction between spirit and matter:—Spirit is where particles are so distant that light passes through. You do not

dispute the reality of your atmosphere through which light passes also. There are spiritual musical instruments, made of spiritual substances, which instruments can be made to vibrate. The vibrating forces are electrical and magnetic. There is an electrical current continually going to the North Pole; above that is another continually going to the South Pole—the current of magnetism from East to West. There is the dia-magnetic current *positive*, and from West to East; and the dia-magnetic current *negative*, or the dia-magnetic, and the dia-electric.

Electricity is ponderable under certain conditions: spirits make their instruments of this, and the higher elements can be made to vibrate them. Spirits can also speak, if there is material enough in a given place or circle with which they can construct the requisite organs.

Understand that there are three kinds of mediumship; no man can be a physical medium alone, and come in contact with the noblest spiritual truths.

I have now to treat of the mental phase of the subject.

You pass your hand over the face of a man, and you *demagnetise* him:—you remove the man's atmosphere, and bring him into contact with the spiritual atmosphere. The lungs and skin draw in the physical atmosphere; but there is within the outer case, a spiritual set of organs belonging to a spiritual body: this spiritual body draws in its pabulum from the spiritual atmosphere, as the body does from the physical atmosphere.

The magnetizer removes the sphere belonging to the magnetizee, and the latter comes in contact with the super-physical, astral, deific, inner, spiritual atmospheres:—the medium of the inner sight. If the magnetizer has no faith, the magnetizee sees and understands for himself. But there is no such thing as absolute positive clairvoyance; this begins at zero, and ends—nowhere! The same inner sight of which man is capable, and which is called clairvoyance, belongs also to spirits in their several degrees; inner and more inner; beginning at zero with man—ascending in degree with spiritual beings, with celestial beings, ideodic beings, deodic beings, and so on and on, upwards, reaching to the inmost more and more. This is one kind of spiritual manifestation, and, when perfect, the best; it is the best because it is the *man* who sees everything clearer.

But if this state is exceeded, the magnetizer throws a cloud from his own mind on to the clairvoyant; the magnetizee becomes the passive instrument of the magnetizer; and the latter influences and impresses his own soul's thoughts and ideas; and, as it were, on a spiritual railway, the thoughts of the positive magnetizer roll into the negative soul of the magnetizee: the magnetizee is *then* truly the negative and reactive of the magnetizer.

Spirits hold intercourse in the same way. The whole process of spiritual magnetisation is explicable in this way. The mind of the medium comes in contact with the mind of the magnetising spirit.

Thoughts are truly things of various forms. A

spirit in the body propels a ray, visible to spirits and clairvoyants, — a flat ray, such rays are not thoughts, but a railway on which thoughts travel.

When you speak, your voice is not your thought which you express; the voice is sound produced by you for transmitting to a receiving individual.

The voice or sound is not a thing of form, but thoughts are truly things of form: some thoughts are round, some angular — *auger-like*, and are received according to the affinity between the mind emitting and the mind receiving them. My thoughts come to you in a *round* form; if you are receptive of these thoughts they enter your mind *roundly*: if they meet repulsion, they bound off from your minds; if your minds are in a less repellant state, they assume the *angular auger-like form* and *bore* their way through the negative resisting medium, and sooner or later penetrate, and fix themselves inevitably in your minds. You speak truly, and not merely figuratively, of “a cutting remark,” “an acute thought,” “a sharp rebuke,” “a thundering expression;” “a burning thought.” Thoughts do all these things in fact, and not in figure of speech. They do warm, and cut, and bore, and explode in the mind receptive of them, according to their nature.

A spirit comes here, magnetises, reduces a medium into a condition like that of the magnetizee. He transmits his thoughts, thoughts breathing, burning, or cold, or lovely, or thundering. Sometimes a thought is a long time penetrating. Every thought is immortal, and as they are true so they *must* be received.

A spirit views a medium and magnetises, or rather demagnetises him, and the effect is in proportion to the state of the medium. If high, so the effect ; if not high, he says, " This medium is adapted for so and so," and the spirit may confine himself to quickening the spirit of the medium for the reception of certain thoughts, or the doing of certain things. But the medium may be played upon as the magnetizer plays upon the brain of his subject, as in the experiments of phreno-magnetism ; and thus new thoughts may be given, and he may get into other spheres and other seas of thought.

There is another kind of inspiration higher still. There is a correspondence between the higher and the lower, the physical and the spiritual realities. The medium shall see a rose, and find what the divine principle is within it ; this will open a new universe to him. But after this, the medium may be taken still further by a higher spirit ; and another higher still, and still another higher ; till ages cannot compass the circle of knowledge attained to. This is the divinest, because it approaches nearest to God. In this way the great oceans of God's truths are revealed.

My discourse commenced with the natural, and went on with the spiritual ; it shall now relate to celestial spiritual intercourse.

First, everything is relative, nothing positive ; the soul that feels its want will get it satisfied. A, B, C, D, E, are spirits who correspond with individuals on planes, say, of the same denominations. A is an astrological being. The causes producing him lie far back in nature. B is scientific ; C philosophic ;

D intuitive; E logical. All these have a peculiarity and special bearing with truths, and which truths have a reciprocal correspondence with A, B, C, D, or E. Now, spirits come and tell you of one thing and another, varying according to their ideas and position; mental, and otherwise. What they tell you must not be received as absolutely true, although it may be so. A spirit analyses and synthetises from his own stand-point; there are more elevated stand-points than he has attained to; but if he cannot attain to these, he cannot know so well as those who can. A man who visits a city, knows the objects in it better than one who simply reads of it.

A spirit acts under laws of limitation and restraint. A spirit can only give the truths he knows. A spirit gives the truths as he sees it—A, B, C, D, E, each according to his plane.

A man says, spirits have told me so and so, and he believes them because they correspond to his own plane; it is, therefore, that what *they* say seems to him better than anything else.

But you say, "A soul must really see things as they really are." Spiritualism is not intended to exhibit things as they really are.* It is intended to

* The reader will perceive that this remark is qualified by the observations which follow. I understand the meaning to be this—that it is not the mission of spirits to think for us—to teach dogmatically, or to impose their opinions authoritatively; but rather, to stimulate us to independent thought and inquiry. If this is not clearly conveyed in the text, it arises from the imperfect manner in which these discourses are reported.

destroy the authority which claims to exhibit to men spiritual things as they really are, and which does, or would, enforce such claims. Spiritualism is intended to quicken man's faculties, to discover the truth of spiritual things for himself. Suppose a man were to come to you and say, "I have just seen an elephant walking on a tight-rope, and a man swallow a sword as long as himself, and I have seen such and such a church with the foundation in the air, and the steeple on the ground." You say you know this man to be honest and truthful, but possibly mistaken; he may have looked at things through a medium, which made the objects so appear to him. Before *you* take in to yourself what he tells you, you prefer to see for yourself; what he says corresponds with nothing in your own soul. So, never believe a spirit, unless what he says corresponds with something in your own soul.

There are spirits in the natural, in the spiritual, and in the celestial planes—negative, passive, positive. The first class corresponds with the circle which attracts spirits in affinity with it. They will give you no truth distasteful to you of the circle. They will tell you of anything you like; they will give you poetry, and while you love it, and hug it to your breasts, they will laugh at you. Secondly, one plane above that, are spirits who love you—you draw them; they give the truths they see from their plane. Thirdly, above them, is a plane, of which the spirits give you truths, clear, plain, and logical; and you receive their truths if they prove in harmony with what in your soul you know to be true.

The first class of persons corresponding with A, receives things on authority. The second class corresponding with B, receives things as it desires them to be; their circle is an altar on which to receive spiritual offerings. The third class, corresponding to C, judges for itself on scientific data, attracts spirits who say you are to receive truths which are capable of demonstration by reason and analogy.

Prove the truths of classes No. 1, and No. 2, as No. 3 indicates; and if they conform logically to reason and data, you may accept them.

The mission of all three is, to make man reject authority, and be always a law unto himself, an analysing and synthetising being. Man stands between matter and God; when anything mystical comes, suspect it; call for the proof. If the explanation is clear, accept it, but do not take it upon any *ipse dixit*. If you understand and accept the principles upon which anything is enunciated, of course, to you, it is truth-based.

DETACHED OBSERVATIONS IN REPLY TO REMARKS AND QUERIES.

A man is a man in this and the next world; his points of difference from others constitute his identity, and will through time and eternity; and in this difference he corresponds to some principle in the universe;

and so every man sees things and truths from his own stand-point and light.

Spirits discriminate embodied spirits by colour :— if there is more crimson in a man than scarlet, crimson spirits will communicate with him ; if more of scarlet, scarlet spirits will communicate ; if pink, there will be a mixture of influences. Spirits tell a man's nature by the colour of his emanation, which colour is to them, not figurative, but real. The red man is a physical philosopher, who can talk by the hour of the structure of an acorn, or give the names and position of the various strata of the earth, without faltering ; or, who has the constituents of all the known gases at his finger's ends ; he may know any, or all of these things, and wish to know nothing more. A man of a lighter red, may know not so exactly of these things, but he seeks to know their *uses* in relation to his fellow-creatures. Where the red inclines more to pink, *that* man has more of the poetic quality than the others : if the pink is lighter and brighter, he is a higher poet ; delighting in personifying the agencies in nature, and recognizing angelic forms in clouds,— but you would only call him an imaginative man. Spirits judge from the general sphere. You know that colours are combinations of primaries ; from each part there is a distinctive colour, but the united colour gives the character.

The clairvoyant, although a resident in the physical world, understands things in their spiritual relation to him. When spirits return to earth, their condition is

affected by the physical state of the world, as the clairvoyant is by the spiritual world, in his relation with spiritual realities. Remember also, that spirits once were men as you are ; and therefore, have more facility in recognizing physical relations, than the clairvoyant has, in respect of spiritual realities.

The process between operator and subject (in magnetism) is this, all bodies are surrounded by a physical, and a spiritual atmosphere ; you dismiss the former of these ; tear it down, keep it down, and thus liberate the spiritual sphere, and the subject comes in contact with the spiritual atmosphere, seeing all spiritual things in relation to himself. There is no positive clairvoyance. You may see a thing, or be told a thing, and you will relate it to another in your own way, and so of every one according to his nature and peculiarities. A man may see to-morrow what he does not see to-day. Look at any other time, at any object or scene, and you will see it differently to now. Ride along a road daily, for years, and at the tenth year you will see things you never noticed before. The same of clairvoyance. Therefore, it is relative, not positive. There is a difference between you and me. I synthetise, you analyze. Some spirit above me sees things differently to me, and another higher spirit will regard him as a child ; he too may be regarded as a zoophyte to the seraph ; and others from the deep profound, will say of this, " Poor child." The Æon, the Ideon, see differently still, and they are still but at the beginning of the vast chain of being.

There are sympathetic links between one soul and

another. There are connections between souls in the body and souls out of the body—the connecting links extend from man on the earth, to spirits in the spheres, to beings above them, until we come to those who surround the eternal throne. Affinity constitutes this chain.

IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION ABOUT POSITIVES
AND NEGATIVES IN THE CONSTITUTION OF
CIRCLES.

Positives and negatives should sit side by side, as the positive and negative metals are placed side by side in a voltaic battery. The medium *in posse* should be in the most negative position. The most positive should face the most negative. Neutral, or passive individuals make the best mediums.

What do I mean by passives, positives, and negatives? Every particle of an iron filing is polar, has its magnetic and electrical poles, yet each particle is negative as a whole to the battery. Everything in the universe has the qualities of passive, positive, and negative. The human nerve is one side positive, the other side negative. Every part and particle of man's body is positive and negative. Man is a battery in a certain sense. Death is a cessation of the molecular action of this battery, producing life.

One man is electrical; pale, sallow. The man with a full face, thick lips, bounding gait, is magnetic. He

is positive to the pale man ; but both are positive and negative to other men. The magnetic is positive ; the electric is negative in constituting your circles ; set your most positive, or magnetic, opposite your most electric, or negative.

There are sympathies, physical, as well as mental and spiritual, between the embodied and the disembodied. You know that the magnetizee can affect the magnetizer ; so does a medium affect a spirit *en rapport* with him ; and there is action and reaction between them.

Spirits may have been impregnated with every sin, may have habituated themselves to dissolute habits. Spirits cannot get the stimulants they had been accustomed to, but they may establish *rapport* between the dissolute in the body and themselves. They can establish physical and magnetic relations between themselves and the embodied.

If you really suspect a spirit to be evil, do not at once proceed to exorcise and drive it from from you—perhaps to despair, as if it had no spark of goodness left, and there was no possibility of its becoming better ; but rather offer to God a mental prayer that it may be led to stand aside, and profit with yourselves, by the teachings of higher and better spirits.

MEDIUMSHIP.

Every human being on the earth sustains some sympathetic relation with some one in the spiritual

spheres ; and according to the facility of flow between the physical and mental, so will be the facility of mediumship. Withdraw your mind from all things and direct it to some loved spirit, and you will invite communication and establish ethylic magnetic *rapport*.

There is a progressive law commencing from God through the spiritual spheres outward. The atmosphere surrounding you is filled with spirits rejoicing that man is becoming more and more purified. From these come thoughts to you. We only hold the same relations with mediums as you do. They stand between us midway. Whether they choose to do so is with themselves. They should be free, otherwise they would be useless.

It is not the medium's spirit that speaks : his faculties are held in subjection. We free his soul from the trammels of the body and bring it into *rapport* with celestial principles and spiritual realities.

In mediums through whom the physical manifestations are made, fluorine predominates.

The exercise of the different qualities of a medium should be alternated, they are not antagonistic.

To us, time is conditions : we do not measure time as you do.

Every one of the virtues and qualities existing in God, in degree exists also in man. Man can learn as much by *going into*, as by *going out of* himself.

The day will come when there will be no vile spirits in the hells of Swedenborg. The condition of all will be improved, inviting higher influences, and leading to "peace on earth, and good will to man." The laws of God and nature, positive and negative, ever operating in the same direction, the result must be, that error and sin will vanish, and there will be a new unfolding.

Death. Every individual is triple=body, soul, and spirit. Man, or the soul proper, has a dwelling-place in the spirit. The soul is the God in the man; the express image of the Maker undeveloped. Spirit is the interior reality of the body. The body is the connecting link joining soul and spirit with the outer. The spirit has spiritual organs. You extract spiritual elements from matter; you re-form the concrete with the abstract to keep the soul in relation with the outer. When by disease, decay, or accident, the soul and spirit become positive to the body, and the functions cease in the body, then, a new action takes place between the matter of the body and the spirit—negative and repellant. Let us regard sleep a little:—In sleep, the conscious principle leaves its throne, the brain—and infiltrating itself into the medulla oblongata, enters the nerves and solar plexus, supplying this with positive life; and there, feeds upon the fine material extracted from the ingesta, upon refined spiritualized materiality.

Now let us look at death again.

When the positive knowledge is in the spirit that

it can no longer maintain its relation with the body, it calls in all its forces, passes out as a cloud through the back of the brain, then it draws out its negative principle: the connecting link, or "navel string," is cut, and it is born into a new life, as the infant is born into the rudimental sphere. Consciousness returns to the soul in about three days.

Have your manifestations conducted in a straightforward honest manner. An honest man will investigate evidence, weigh it, and decide on it honestly to himself.

Seek evidence, each one for himself, rather than let others come and seek it for you to come and sceptically criticise it. Form circles for yourselves. Ah! if gold could be had by forming circles, circles enough would be formed. But this is only a road to knowledge—yet it is a royal road, and well worth the time and trouble of following, when by it you can ascertain the truth of your immortality.

FINIS.