

# IS IT TRUE?

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## Intercommunication between the Living and the (so-called) Dead:

AN APPEAL IN FAVOUR OF THE TRUTH AND CONSEQUENT IMPORTANCE  
OF THE PHENOMENA GENERALLY KNOWN AS

## SPIRIT - MANIFESTATIONS.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A Number of Quotations in support of the Author's Views, from  
popular and reputable Sources.

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BY A WORKING MAN.

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"Millions of spiritual beings walk the air  
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep."—MILTON.

"This will offer you the proof of a better world than ours, wherein you will live after having left your body in this, and wherein a God, infinitely good, will reward you a hundred-fold for the evils it was profitable for you to suffer in this world of grief. I am about to prove to you that your relatives, your friends, therein await you with impatience,—that you can, although on this globe, enter into communication with them, speak to them, and obtain from them the information you may desire."—ALPHONSE CAHAGNET.

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"Presumptuous scepticism which rejects facts without examination of their truth, is in some respects more injurious than unquestioning credulity."—BARON HUMBOLDT.

"He who outside of mathematics pronounces the word *impossible*, lacks prudence."—ARAGO.

"We are so far from knowing all the agents of nature and their various modes of action, that it would not be philosophical to deny any phenomena merely because in the actual state of our knowledge they are inexplicable."—LA PLACE.

"Before experience itself can be used with advantage, there is one preliminary step to make, which depends wholly on ourselves: it is the absolute dismissal and clearing the mind of all prejudice, from whatever source arising, and the determination to stand and fall by the result of a direct appeal to facts in the first instance, and a strict logical deduction from them afterwards."—SIR JOHN HERSCHEL.

"It is a strange thought; but possibly some truths may have been knocking at the door of human faith for thousands of years."—ROBERT CHAMBERS.

"Lord Bacon, were he now living, would be the man to solve the mysteries that branch out of mesmerism, or (so called) Spirit Manifestations, for he would not pretend to despise their phenomena for fear of hurting his reputation for good sense."—SIR E. BULWER LYTTON.

"If the phenomena attested by so many unimpeachable witnesses are facts, we want them *all* to lay the foundation of a sound philosophy. It would certainly mislead us, were we to receive only those which accord with our religious bias, or with our individual and peculiar views of the Spirit-life."—BENJAMIN COLEMAN.

"Scientific men should learn from experience to be cautious in affirming the limits of the possible. Those who have erected theories about the impossible have not unfrequently built a monument to their own folly and shame. \* \* \* One age laughs at an idea, the next adopts. The impossible of yesterday is the familiar fact of to-day. In an age when steam is our conductor, and electricity our messenger, and the sun our portrait painter; when the every day facts of life would have been a fairy tale a hundred years ago; who especially with the knowledge that spiritual forces are working around and within us will have the presumption to affirm that it is impossible for spiritual beings so to operate upon ourselves and surrounding objects as to make their presence evident even to our senses."—*Spiritual Magazine*.

..... "We yet want those who, with philosophical genius, will apply a philosophic spirit and patience to the subject."—  
WILLIAM HOWITT.

..... "I may here, perhaps, be permitted to digress for a moment from my narrative to consider this question of special conditions, which it is claimed are essential to the production of a certain class of spiritual phenomena, but with which the cavilling sceptic invariably quarrels. I hold that it is an unphilosophical state of mind, and one which unfits a man for calm and fair investigation, to insist as a preliminary that his prejudices shall be satisfied. In every situation, and in every act of our lives, we are dependent on conditions. We can effect, under suitable and harmonious arrangements, that which we should find it impossible to accomplish under the slightest variation from them. The chemist requires his darkened room to produce certain results, and the photographer is obliged to have two extremes to bring out his picture. How unreasonable, then, is it to attempt to ignore, as many do, unmistakeable palpable facts in Spiritualism, because they are not done to order. Assuredly, the man who allows his prejudices to interpose, who stands out on the pride of intellect plain, and refuses to imitate the humility of the great Newton in the pursuit of truth, misses a golden opportunity by neglecting Spiritualism, of increasing his wisdom, and, as I believe, his future happiness."—SPIRITUALISM IN AMERICA, BY BENJAMIN COLEMAN.

"I do not wish that the thought I here intrude should assume to any person a disrespectful form; but it appears to me that, if we approach this question as men, having no faith in a future Spiritual Existence, our unyielding scepticism would be much more consistent."—F. N. BRODERICK.



# AN APPEAL

ON BEHALF OF

## Modern Spirit-Manifestations,

BY A WORKING MAN.

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"Before you condemn this, or any other novelty, sit down five minutes and ask yourselves what you *know* about it."

"Laughter at strange things is often as much a proof of ignorance as of knowledge; and I believe it is so in this case."—REV. ARTHUR AUGUSTUS REES.

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Friends and fellow workers,—In addressing the following pages to you, it is important at the outset that you should rightly understand the object I have in view. I do not for a moment purpose assailing your religious convictions. My desire is to call your notice, not to matters of faith, but to certain phenomena which claim to be worthy your most serious attention. I do not ask—I do not expect, you to give credence at once, on my authority, or on any man's authority, to such astounding announcements as are comprised in the subject of these pages. But that which I do seek—that which I do hope, is to win you to a perception of the full importance of this great question; to urge in you a desire to ascertain whether these marvellous manifestations are really based on truth, or whether they are to be ascribed to error, self-delusion, or fraud. Do you deem the question too foolish, or too absurd for serious consideration? Are you perfectly indifferent to the importance of the subject? Do you—practical men—join in the short-sighted cry of "Cui

Bono"—to what good will it tend? \* Is it possible that you, who often endure and suffer so much in the present, have no interest in the grand future? Should circumstances force you to seek a new home in a far-off land, would you start on your journey without a thought or care concerning the characteristics of that country you would purpose adopting, or the strange mode of life you would there be compelled to follow? Does the knowledge that each one of us must voyage out to the mysterious land of promise create no desire in us to learn something of its peculiar condition, its many glories, and the marvellous life that there awaits us? Perhaps you will, in a spirit of mingled pity and reproach, call me an enthusiast, and say that my arguments will never convince you of such absurdities. I am not insensible to my own deficiencies, yet shall I much regret if my powers prove wholly incompetent to open your perception to a due importance of this inquiry. I cannot, will not, believe that the subject, if fairly laid before you, would fail to claim your interest, or that your prejudices and antipathies would quite paralyze your reason. Have not most of you dearly-loved relatives and friends who have already passed into the mysterious future? Probably some of you have, laid beneath the turf, the objects of your holiest and deepest affections. Connected with these sacred memories, have you not one question ever present, painfully persistent, and irre-

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\* This question, uttered with so much vehemence by those outside the circle of inquirers, finds, but here and there, the faintest echo from those who have entered into an examination of the phenomena. Any attentive reader will find the question sufficiently answered in the following pages. But I have not devoted time I could ill spare, and risked capital, for the purpose of placing this subject before those who have no yearnings after positive evidence of an eternal world and of the continued existence of those loved ones who have passed into it. Neither do I offer it to those who are *perfectly* contented with the evidence they already possess of the reality of a spirit world and of a life beyond the grave. Individuals thus happily constituted may well afford to leave the present Spirit-manifestations alone to those who really require them—those who, having hope, and, it may be, intense desire, yet have many agonizing doubts.

pressible—"Where are the dead?" Do you here interpose—"I am violating the sanctity of hidden feeling—I am trenching on the precincts of hallowed memories?" If so, believe me I tread with tenderest steps as I bear to your affections a priceless treasure of everlasting joy. And here let me observe that nothing but the memory of many absent dear ones could stimulate me to the effort I herein make in behalf of the cause of spiritual inquiry. But, to return. If you credit me with truthfulness, you will believe it is in no callous spirit that I thus appeal to you, in the cherished memory of your missing loved ones, to grant the possibility of the proposition quoted on my title page. With those memories crowding up before you I cannot think you will tell me, in the language of certain professors, that you "do not wish to be convinced."

An opinion has been expressed by some well meaning writers on this question, that it is inexpedient and unnecessary for the general public to require personal experience of the truth of these much talked of Spirit Manifestations, thereby implying that *their* testimony and *their* experience ought to satisfy alike the doubts of the incredulous and the cravings of the faithful amongst the great working public. Adverse critics have not failed to reproach the leaders in this movement with suspiciously confining their ministrations to the halls and mansions of the wealthy, to the exclusion and neglect of those classes who stand so much in need of "tangible proofs, present and existing, of a life beyond the grave." While gratefully acknowledging the services of all those who have laboured in the cause, I feel that I ought not to let this opportunity pass without respectfully, yet strongly protesting, in the interest of the many, against the introduction of any exclusive theory. I fail to see the necessity of appealing to the faith of any class at all in the matter; and in fact it is the offer which these manifestations hold out to each and to every one, irrespective of wealth, social position, or



intellectual capacity, which constitutes its grand feature, and renders it impossible to over estimate the value and importance of the movement. Further, it appears to me scarcely consistent that those who are fortified with a long series of personal experiences should turn round to the less favoured many and expect ready credence from them. The facts, in themselves are so astounding, so immeasurably beyond the generally received notion of what is possible, that mere testimony to their truth must ever fall coldly on the reasoning faculties of the public. I do not oppose the suggestion thrown out, that the humble classes should not seek personal experience, because I wish to ignore the danger, in such a case, of spiritualism being prostituted to unholy purposes; but, because, in the first place, the suggestion, the tendency of which is to exclude the many from deriving the full measure of solace and joy which these great truths impart, manifestly implies an injustice towards those who require more the aid of a kindly helping hand than obstructions thrown in their path. In the second place, the same objection would apply with equal force to the study of all important subjects, not excepting sacred revelation. Thirdly, such a course is sure to engender suspicions as to the reliability of the facts. And lastly, it is necessary if Spiritualism is to make the rapid strides predicted by Mr. Howitt, and so much to be desired by all: not only must this restrictive theory be utterly abandoned, but some well devised plan for inviting the many to a practical examination of the subject should be adopted. Mr. Howitt, who has in this the rare faculty of seeing things in an impartial light, is evidently impressed with the fallacy and injustice of denying to others *that* self-evidence of the facts which each demands for himself. But after all, restrictive theories can never be carried out. Spiritual manifestations are no more to be confined to the palace and the mansion, than are the glorious truths they reveal to be appropriated by any one class to the exclusion of the rest.

And here I would wish to call your attention to the bold and untiring efforts of Mr. Howitt to popularize this great question, and I cannot express my personal gratitude to better purpose than in commending his writings to all who value a definite reply that will silence for ever that question which has echoed through all ages, and risen from the silent, but throbbing recesses of every heart,—“Where are the dead?” Mr. Howitt, in his earnest, truthful, ringing tones, that should penetrate all who are not wholly dead to thought and feeling, answers: “Here—all around us—awaiting our call.” Have you human affections and jauntily boast no interest in the question? Are you men, and deride, without enquiry, the reply?

Some there are, who, being desirous of throwing discredit on this movement, and who are unable to dispute the overwhelming evidence of the reality of spiritual phenomena, will urge upon you the opinion that it is of Satanic origin. It is not my purpose to discuss this point at present. It may be that evil as well as beneficent spirits are permitted to approach us, but I would ask you as men not to be disconcerted if such be the case, rather let us take comfort from the circumstance that it does not touch the real and invaluable fact of spiritual existences, and the power to hold converse with them. If it should turn out that Satan himself is the prime agent in these phenomena, it should infuse fresh energy into the inquiry: surely it is as necessary to learn somewhat of the power and workings of the Evil-One, as it is to recognize the goodness and wisdom of God. Other opponents will bring to your notice certain theories and doctrines, purporting to be derived from spiritual sources, for the purpose of exhibiting what they designate as “the erroneous and absurd character of spiritual revelation.” I do not see the force, nor the justice of so dealing with the question. It is puerile to bring forward unpalatable parts either as objections to inquiry, or as evidence to disprove the whole fact. I would earnestly solicit you not to be held back

from entering the inquiry, nor to be influenced, at least without long and serious consideration, by any of the many antagonistic theories and doctrines now sweeping over large portions of France, with their counter-parts extending over the free States of the American Republic. All collected evidence, as it appears to me, goes to prove that men and women out of the flesh are no more infallible, no more unanimous, and in some instances, as it would seem, no more enlightened than when embodied in the flesh. This may and does clash with existing ideas, but patient inquiry and calm consideration will probably either lead to the recognition of the erroneous character of such a conviction, or lead us to modify our feelings of aversion to that conclusion. However, for myself, I care but little for the spiritually-evolved doctrines and the turmoil and conflict of opinions that have followed thereon so long as they do not impinge the one great cherished fact—a conscious existence and better life beyond the grave. For the present, at least, let us trustingly confide in the comforting assurances offered by Mr. Howitt in the following joyous accents: “But, happily, every day the voices of the departed are crying in our ears,—‘Here we are all unchanged in love, unchanged in identity, unchanged in anything but in the nearer approach to the centre of love,—the all-embracer and recognizer of all individual attachments.’” To you who can join issue with me in my conclusions I would say—while fervently thanking God for this gleam of a brighter world, let us weigh with the utmost caution all theories derived either from spiritual or worldly sources. Let us centre all our attention, devote all our energy, in the endeavour to open out the means whereby each and every one may test the truth and judge for themselves the value of these much despised spirit-manifestations. Once the reality of that grand promise—a future, better life—is opened to the perception of all, we may then indeed hopefully struggle through the darkest days and the deepest agonies of this mortal life.



While tendering this subject to you suggestively, and with a note of interrogation, I yet do so as one who has a firm conviction of its truthfulness. During a period of many years\* my attention has been anxiously directed towards this question of questions—intercommunication between the living and the so-called dead. I have read, all I could reach, for and against bearing on the subject, and cannot avoid the conclusion, that, so far as human testimony can decide, the question is affirmatively proved beyond a doubt. It must, however, appear strange to many impartial minds, that, notwithstanding the almost universal desire amongst us to strengthen and extend the belief in a life beyond the grave, there should exist an amount of prejudice against the examination of this momentous question, more in accordance with that which might be expected from a community of atheists than a professedly Christian public. On all sides incredulity, bigotry, and ridicule, rise up to crush the question, in place of meeting it fairly with inquiry and examination.†

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\* It will partially illustrate my own road to faith by here mentioning that I am indebted for the possession of an unceasing interest in this question to the phenomena generally known as "Mesmerism" or "Animal Magnetism," which was brought to my notice at an early age, under circumstances which left no room for suspicion or doubt. It is a fact also worthy of note that the above named phenomena largely confirms the reality of the present Spirit Manifestations. The eminent French mesmerist — Deleuze, says—"What magnetism rigorously demonstrates is the spirituality of the soul and its immortality; also that souls separated from the body can in certain cases put themselves in communication with living beings, and convey to them their sentiments. The study of the phenomena of somnambulism is in this respect more important than in that of curing diseases."

† I find it at times difficult to shake off the impression that the generally accepted belief in a spiritual existence is, after all, mere empty profession. That the major portion of mankind have no yearnings after proofs of such a future state. Certain it is that if any subject is brought forward tending to throw light upon, or offering the means of elucidating this momentous problem, it is everywhere met with determined opposition. If the subject is really so dear to us, what is the cause, to use the mildest term, for such indifference? Revelation leaves us with nothing but vague and undefined notions, inspiring only the few.

It is matter for sincere regret that amongst religious bodies there should exist a general and persistent indifference to an inquiry that must eventually place beyond dispute one fundamental article of their creed. Our *savans* in general look down from their high places on this great question of the day with supreme contempt; when forced to heed its pressing claims, some will seek to annihilate it with ridicule and the full power of their withering sarcasm. Others will stipulate as to how, when, and where, these alleged denizens of spirit land should come and go, what they should or should not say and do, to merit the claim of their serious investigation. Can absurdity be carried much further, even by pseudo philosophers, than by refusing to believe in the possibility of spiritual manifestations unless they take place at their pleasure, under circumstances they dictate, and, unless the spiritual agents tender their communications in a form and temper in accordance with their own pre-conceived notions of spirit-propriety? That they cannot do so does not appear to suggest to these leaders in knowledge any idea that the spiritual visitant acts under certain laws, concerning which we have yet everything to learn.

It would tend to give confidence in entering this inquiry if you entertained a correct estimate of the general character of those earnest and courageous men and women who stand at the front in this movement, and receive the missiles hurled at them, not simply in an ungenerous spirit, but with all the bitterness and malignancy a most disgraceful intolerance can assume. Look round upon those exponents of spiritualism, and the many renowned in literature, science, and art, who have given in their testimony to the reality of the facts. Are they merely Yankee adventurers? Are they

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Imagination, in a few cases, pictures bright and hopefully the promised future. But what is the condition of the many? Taking only the narrower ground—shall we prefer imagination to reality, when the description we have given to us by those who have passed into that state outrival the grandest flights of the most sublime idealism?

persons of unknown reputation? Do they bear the impress of charlatans, jugglers, professors of legerdemain, and ventriloquists. Are they men and women of the mystic school—their brains cast in the visionary mould? Are they esteemed of doubtful sanity on all ordinary questions? Scrutinize them as you may, an affirmative reply may be confidently challenged. I need scarcely urge upon those amongst you, who freely recognise the difference between thought and prejudice, candour and intolerance, not to be led or influenced by the special pleading and senseless clamour of editors and reviewers. Their arrogant treatment of the subject does not even conceal their gross ignorance of the facts on which spiritualism is raised. Therefore, while I leave you, with all respect, to adopt or to reject my conclusions, do not suffer others who have never approached the question to usurp those duties and that dignity which go so far to make up your manhood. We are each endowed with intellect as we are with organs of vision, and while I am not unmindful of the vast powers each endowment may attain by a long and expensive course of judicious training, I cannot see that any thoughtful mind is incompetent to form an opinion on this great question. It cannot require a long course of training to attest the fact of (for instance) a table moving. It cannot, I think, require a scientific *savant* to decide whether we are holding converse with an intelligent, albeit unseen being. I cannot, notwithstanding all that I have read concerning thought-reading, clairvoyance and similar mysterious powers, throw aside the conviction, that if a mother, wife, or child, stood on one side of a screen and I on the other, that I could not test and recognise their presence beyond all cavil. Draw aside the screen and am I still to be told to doubt the actual presence of the loved ones? If the spiritual nature of these phenomena is not clearly proved, what is there about us the reality of which can be vouched for? If we are to cast aside the conclusions derived from our wide-awake senses, in mercy



to us common-sense folks, will not the *savans* lay down in plain terms the new principle which is to direct our judgment. Until they do so I would urge you, while eschewing the least approach to vanity or to arrogance, not to blindly accept any man's conclusions on a subject of such great interest to every one of us; for such a course exhibits a low and deadened sense of individual responsibility. My impression is, and it is largely borne out by facts, that these astounding phenomena, the result of unseen intelligences, are within the reach of the humblest amongst us, if we will but search for the means with a prayerful desire and persistent diligence at all commensurate with the measureless worth of that which we seek. Therefore I solicit you with all the persuasive powers at my command, to use your own powers of observation, to draw your own inferences, and to delegate to no other mind those duties you owe alike to God, to yourself, and your fellows.

By far the most formidable objection raised against spiritualism, and the one the public have most readily endorsed, is, that its examination involves a dangerous excitement to the mental faculties. In reply, it may be urged that in an age when the public taste demands amusements of the most exciting character; when amongst even the educated, the "sensation novel"—affording a morbid excitement which in certain dispositions keeps the nerves in over-strained tension, and fills the imagination with the improbable and the unreal—is largely, almost universally, esteemed a necessary of life, it may be readily assumed that this objection is mainly endorsed by those who are too indolent or too prejudiced to entertain a question that stands, in its interest and importance to mankind, far in advance of any other question in any branch of human research.

It is worth while to enquire whether this seeming indifference to a great question really sets the subject at rest within us. A moment's consideration must convince the

most obtuse brain that it is perfectly futile to attempt to ignore the existence of the so-called supernatural. There is an inherent feeling within which assures us it is ever near. Notwithstanding the lesson taught from early childhood, that "those who have passed 'to the dim, eternal shore' can never return"—notwithstanding all that logic and philosophy have advanced in a long series of years to discredit the supernatural, those bugbears of the human mind—"Ghosts"—will haunt the imagination at every opportunity. It is customary with those who have charge of youthful minds, when they stumble upon an object which causes terror, or a phenomenon which is startling and inexplicable to them, not to guide them aside from it, leaving the mind in discomfort and dread lest the same object or phenomenon again present itself to them, but to lead them encouragingly into its presence, and by examination and explanation convince them of the harmless character of the terrifying object or startling phenomenon. Is it forgotten that the lesson taught to youth is equally applicable to maturity? If we calmly reflect on this largely-received objection, I think it will appear evident that neither brain nor heart is left in regular and healthful action by an incredulity or indifference which our feelings reject. All that is of value in man's dignity will not, must not, permit that there should exist any phenomenon of nature or super-nature, however startling, which he should not learn calmly to contemplate. In the weakness and confusion of thought, consequent upon ignorance and want of training, we are apt to apply the terms "awful" and "terrible" to certain phenomena of unusual occurrence; but in proportion as we educate the inward and outward senses, those same phenomena merge into subjects we can contemplate with admiration—often leading us from a sense of darkness and impending danger into the genial light of wonder and the glory of the sublime. In considering this most prevalent objection to the promotion of this inquiry,

I think it necessary to a right conclusion that we should persistently entertain much which human nature has to endure --the life-long struggle against crushing adversity--what it will do and suffer for the affection's sake—its periods of anxiously yearning hopes—its weary doubts and agonizing fears—its deep sorrows and wild despair. Surely human nature in this world of trial has need of all that can minister to its better hopes and purer joys. Spiritualism---a living reality, an impregnable fact---offers well nigh all we can hope or wish for in this respect. It must exert a powerful influence for good on our thoughts and actions---it appeals irresistibly to our deepest affections---it confirms our most cherished hopes ---it sweeps away for ever those dreadful doubts---it lightens our sorrows and dispels despair---it removes that terrible, vague, cankering fear of the supernatural---it confirms the great principle of our religious belief, and, blessed thought to millions, removes it from the limits of faith to that of sense! Shall we stand cold, indifferent, or appalled spectators before manifestations that offer to us so much comfort and joy? Do our affections urge no response to the tendered intercourse with our hearts' beloved who have "passed into the world of light?" Shall we turn away in fear and trembling from the dear spirit-forms of mother, wife, children, friends---those who, while in this present life, no barrier, earth or ocean, no personal danger, fear or suffering, could prevent our holding communion with? Shall we refuse to heed their urgent messages, conveying renewed assurances of unceasing love, affectionate council, and words of comfort and of hope? I cannot avoid the conclusion, that the objection to spiritualism as a subject too startling for investigation is, or should be, a gross libel on human nature. Shall it be said that those who fearlessly and patiently earn their daily bread amidst the horrors of the dreary mine—who breast undismayed the fury of the elements—who risk life hourly in the cause of humanity and of science—who meet death face to face on the

battle field—of those myriad human workers, whose fate it is to endure life as man only can, shorn of nearly all its blessings—shrink like cowards from the spirit-presence of those dear relatives and friends of a better world? Are the domains of the future life so uninviting—so terrible—that we dare not raise an inquiring glance, nor place our feet upon the deeply mystic circle which draws so close around us on every side? Shall we stand as though bereft of all that constitutes the man, before facts which take that grand, ennobling thought—a happy, spirit life beyond the grave—out of the dim and often comfortless regions of faith, and render it a tangible and present reality?

In starting, I had no thought of thus extending my own observations; should they, however, lead a few earnest minds to approach the question with a view to solve for themselves this great problem, I shall not regret having laid myself open to a charge of tediousness.

In reading over the lines I have written, many imperfections are either recognized or suspected. However, I trust whatever errors there may be in style or composition, that my expressions will be none the less readily understood by those who may honor these pages with a perusal, and that they will kindly attribute any such errors and deficiencies to my wholly unpractised hand, and the want of opportunities for securing continuous thought and undivided attention. But while making this admission, I must firmly maintain the points I have endeavoured to lay before you. Should it be urged against me that I have appealed to the feelings of the reader rather than to his reason, I would at once admit the charge. I have been far more desirous to stimulate inquiry than to prove any postulate. True, I append to these observations such testimony as appears to me to offer an affirmative reply to the floating question “Is it true?” But, while I am ready, if need be, to stake my life on the *bona fide* character of the Phenomena, I do not even ask you to

accept the testimony I have tendered, as conclusive. I have no design upon your credulity, I offer these pages to you in all good faith; may they at least help to dispel those prevalent puerile objections, and afford you some idea of the claims which this question has upon you for a serious and most searching investigation. I have no knowledge of any subject that appeals more forcibly to our feelings than this. Acting under such a conviction, I have endeavoured to use the affections as a lever with which to open those heavy doors of apathy and prejudice, that the light of a better world may enter in.

Ryde, I. W., May, 1864.

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### THE ANGELS ARE ABOUT US.

The angels are about us, when we think not they are near,  
 And those of angel-natures are to angels wedded here.  
 As we walk with bleeding feet, over life's uneven way,  
 May we know that angels guard us with a love that lives for aye.  
 If we aspire to goodness, with Christ before our eyes,  
 The angels will attend us, when we sleep and when we rise.  
 The just delight in justice, and the juster man appears,  
 The more he draws down angels from the pure and perfect spheres.  
 May we heed angelic whispers, amid the strife of Woe;  
 When all its force of passion lays our feeble virtues low;  
 When Hope is shrouded like a sun, and Life seems leased to care,  
 And all the chambers of the soul are haunted by despair;  
 Let us listen to the whispers of the angels hovering near,  
 And ghosts of Grief like shadows from the soul shall disappear.  
 If we *would* have faith and virtue—the creed that Jesus taught;  
 His maxims in our lives must glow like jewels in a court.  
 Our lips may sound the name of Christ, and yet our hearts may own  
 The world's material idols, gold, iron, wood, and stone.  
 Oh! may we draw down angels from the spirit spheres of bliss,  
 To sanctify our faith, as we live for God in this:  
 May we know that faith and goodness, like dew upon the flowers,  
 Shine brightly in the angels' eyes, whose joys increase with ours,  
 The angels are about us when we think not they are near,  
 And those of angel-natures are to angels wedded here.

May 4th, 1864.

J. H. POWELL, in the *Spiritual Times*.

THE "MORNING STAR" NEWSPAPER ON  
"MODERN SPIRITUALISM."

" 'Spiritual Manifestations,' as they are termed, are regarded by the majority with incredulity; by some they are denounced as the fruits of deliberate imposture. On the other hand, a very large body of believers not only allege that they continually occur under given conditions, but also hold that they are to be ascribed to the operations of a purely spiritual agency. In the investigation of the subject these two points may be conveniently kept apart. The genuineness of the phenomena must be established before any necessity can arise for endeavouring to assign to them a cause. We are quite aware that there are many who will treat with contempt the suggestion that the matter is worthy of serious investigation. The human mind has an unhappy tendency to ridicule all that it cannot comprehend. The egotism which sets up its own finite comprehension as the test of possibility rejects with scorn every thing alien to its experience or antagonistic to its preconceived ideas. It can scarcely be necessary to urge that such a mode of dealing with alleged facts is not only grossly unphilosophical, but would, if generally adopted, prove a positive barrier to the elucidation of important truths. As the world has grown in age, new wonders have been constantly crowding into view—so marvellous, as to excite incredulity on their first discovery, but now become so familiar, through habit, as to awaken no surprise. Candid and impartial research can alone distinguish realities from illusions, and discriminate between genuine phenomena and the effects of fraud. . . . . In England and America thousands of men and women, esteemed for their piety, their intellectual ability, and their social worth, aver that they have been eye-witnesses, not once, but repeatedly, of very strange manifestations, which can scarcely be accounted for by the operation of any known natural agency. They tell us they have seen heavy tables lifted up a foot or more from the ground and held for some moments suspended in the air; men raised from their chairs and floated across the ceiling of the apartment; accordians and guitars, held in the hand, played upon by unseen fingers; bells carried about a room and rung at intervals by an invisible power, and passed from hand to hand of the quiescent circle; intelligible sentences written upon slates and slips of paper placed beyond the reach of any present; luminous hands appearing in the air, lifting articles from the floor and placing them upon the table; and a host of other marvels to all appearances equally beyond the grasp of ordinary credibility. These things are said to have been witnessed, not by one individual at a time, but by a dozen or more, all of whom aver that they saw the same things at the same moment. They are alleged to have taken place rarely in the dark, occasionally in semi-obscurity,



but in the greater number of instances in fully lighted rooms. .... Spiritualists complain that the use of the phrases 'Spirit Rapping' and 'Table Turning' has tended to give the general public a very low and inadequate idea of the scope and object of this class of phenomena. According to their doctrine, these strange freaks which are played with material objects are designed solely to arrest attention, and convince the sceptical that unseen agencies are present capable of holding communion with mortals; and that, this end having been obtained, the real purpose of that which they regard as a beneficent dispensation acquires its needful scope and comes into full play. This purpose they hold to be the communication from departed beings to their surviving relatives of messages of solace, of warning, of encouragement, and of council—conveyed occasionally by audible voices, but much more frequently in an alphabetic form. .... If the extraordinary narratives, of which we have summarised a few of the most salient points, were vouched for only by men utterly unknown, or of dubious credibility, they might scarcely be deemed worthy of serious attention. Even then we could scarcely avoid the reflection that the idea which constitutes the postulate of the Spiritualists, so far from being novel, has had adherents in every age and every nation. The belief in the possibility of intercourse between spirits and mortals has found a place in almost every religious creed held by man, and pagan traditions and biblical records alike bear witness to supernatural communion. .... The principal witnesses who testify to the reality of these manifestations are literary men of note, merchants, lawyers, physicians, and divines; ministers of divers sects, men and women of unblemished repute, artists, poets, and statesmen. Of minor witnesses the name is legion. .... This much we know—that in America and in our own country there are many whose sanity no one doubts, whose general veracity no one would impeach, who aver that they have seen strange things with their own eyes. . . . If we stamp all those who declare they have witnessed these so called 'Spirit Manifestations' as liars, of course the enquiry will be at an end. If, on the other hand, we are willing to believe that, in the narratives which have been given us, they have honestly recorded the impressions produced upon their eyes and ears, we shall next have to consider to what causes these phenomena may fairly be ascribed. Four hypotheses have been put forward: fraud, self-delusion, the operation of some undiscovered natural law, and Spiritual Agency. The idea of fraud, as a general explanation of the Manifestations, may, we think, be fairly discarded. Imposture there may have been in cases where money was to be gained; but seeing that many of the most striking manifestations testified to, took place in private houses, where no paid medium was present—this being especially true of the intellectual communications purported to come from departed relatives—it is difficult to believe that those who formed the circle could have been fools enough to practise a deliberate cheat upon

themselves for no object whatever, to say nothing of the blasphemy against the holiest affection which was involved in simulating a message from a deceased parent, wife, or child. It is not easy to understand what invisible mechanism would take a man out of his chair, float him round the ceiling, and then replace him in his seat; and that must be a very knowing apparatus for the production of raps which would spell out to an unknown foreigner the name of his step-son, who had been some years in the grave. But in purely private circles—the vast majority of those which are held—fraud is clearly out of the question. If self-delusion be the chosen explanation, then we ought to have it explained how it happens that the same delusions operate upon a dozen or more persons at the same time; or to take a stronger case, how Mr. Coleman and his companions all fancied that they saw the medium in her arm-chair placed upon the table, and he imagined he lifted her off, while they only thought they saw him do it. If the operation of an unknown natural law be the solution adopted, it must be one law capable of producing all the phenomena recorded, for they appear to present themselves in very indiscriminate order at various séances. It is a current, but very grave error, to suppose that the most startling of these physical manifestations are opposed to known natural laws. It is generally said, for example, that the lifting of a table from the ground—one of the commonest of the alleged phenomena—is opposed to the laws of gravitation. Clearly it is not, if an unseen force be applied to it, powerful enough to counteract its attraction. An unseen force is no novelty in nature. Life is unseen—electricity is unseen—heat is unseen, until, by igniting matter it gives birth to flame. But this force must be one, capable of accounting for all the effects. It will not do to say that this phenomenon results from hysteria, that from magnetism, the other from thought-reading, the fourth from the od force, whatever that may be. If the Spiritual theory be resorted to, a vital point arises, is it a good or an evil agency? The advocates of the Satanic theory have this great stumbling block to get over, that the advice given in the messages communicated, is said to be universally good, the sentiments moral, and the doctrine piously Christian; and it can scarcely be supposed that the Author of Evil would labour for his own discomfiture. There may be a mixture of good and evil agencies, then we ought to discover how we are to discriminate between the two. For ourselves we express no opinion on the subject; all we wish is to see the matter fairly investigated, with a total absence of that spirit of ridicule which is always offensive and proves nothing, and which is in the present case especially out of place. With the question of ‘*Cui bono,*’ we have nothing whatever to do. The first question to be solved is ‘is it true or is it not?’ The second, ‘whence is it?’ If the first be answered in the affirmative, then, even should the second remain without reply, we may tranquilly leave the rest to the good providence of God.”

## A CLERGYMAN'S VIEW OF SPIRITUALISM.

"I am a clergyman of thirty-eight years' standing in the Established Church, and have been a firm believer in what is commonly, though most incorrectly, called the supernatural. I have that firm faith simply because I believe the Bible; and how any one, professing to reverence that sacred book, can deny, as so many do, the possibility of any spirit manifestation, or spirit agency in human affairs, has ever been to me matter of profound astonishment. At the same time I am not what you would call a 'Spiritualist,' for I have doubts—strong doubts—of the lawfulness of seeking (at least habitually) those manifestations now so common, especially by means which to me seem very like incantations. I confess, however, I have felt my 'spirit stirred within me' at the way in which this highly interesting and solemn subject is treated by certain reviewers, and I often ask myself, 'Are these men Christians or heathens? or, can the sacred name be allowed to them in any—even the lowest sense?' I do not like to answer such questions in the way I think and feel, lest I should appear uncharitable; but of this I am persuaded, that if those writers only knew the contempt and disgust with which their profane scoffs and witless jests are regarded by the thoughtful portion of their readers, they would at least be more careful and choice in their modes of expression. Though not a 'Spiritualist' (in the modern sense of the word) I can, I trust, discern what is really good in those from whom I am obliged conscientiously to differ; and that 'Spiritualism' so called, both has done, and is doing, a vast amount of good I most readily and gratefully acknowledge. What I say now I have not hesitated to say many times from the pulpit—'I infinitely prefer the credulity (if we must so term it) of the honest and earnest Spiritualist, to the hard, dry, contemptuous self-sufficiency of the Materialist. For the one there is hope—he has the 'root of the matter' in him, and he may be led to better things, and guided unto the *whole* truth. But for the other there is no hope, save in the miraculous efficacy of that grace which he so ungratefully derides.' . . . For these and other such-like reasons, I have strong doubts of those spirit manifestations, and am disposed to view them as inevitably leading to that 'demon worship' which, as I read my Bible, is to characterize the Apostacy of the last days. But of the facts of those manifestations—as detailed by so many highly respectable and creditable witnesses—I entertain not a shadow of doubt. I am, therefore, so far as the facts are concerned, an impartial witness; for, if I have any prejudice, it is against and not for the manifestations in question; though I trust, in a very different spirit, and on widely different grounds from the profane scribblers above alluded to.

"If this should fall into the hands of any of my brethren of the same ministry, I respectfully and earnestly intreat them to beware how they speak and act in this matter. We are in the actual

presence of a tremendous power, which is surely and rapidly developing itself in our midst. It is our special duty to ascertain what and whence that power is, to thoroughly investigate those alleged manifestations, and if there be good in them, to make free use of that good in our ministrations; if there be evil, to point out wherein that evil lies, and guard our flocks against it. I have done this myself, and if you deem it worth insertion, I subjoin a brief account of my own experience, for the guidance of others of my brethren who may be disposed to follow my example. For obvious reasons I withhold my name from the public, but give you free permission to reveal it (though in truth little known and of no weight) to any serious enquirer. A reference to the clergy list will satisfy them of my identity. .... I happened very lately to mention these former experiments of mine to a brother clergyman, and he replied that he did not doubt my word, but that he could not (was not able to) believe unless they were witnessed by himself personally. We agreed to test the matter, and in company with a respectable neighbour (a layman) we did test it---three of us, alone, in the retirement of my own study. .... Many other very extraordinary things occurred upon this occasion, but these are enough for my present purpose, which is chiefly to warn my brethren in the ministry to beware in what spirit and on what grounds they oppose themselves to this movement; for if they join in the senseless outcry of 'humbug,' 'delusion,' and 'imposture,' then assuredly they, of all other people in the world, will be most answerable for its onward progress. On it will go, in spite of all such foolish and senseless outcries, if not all the speedier on their account; and, whether it be for good or for evil, all those official instructors of the people who now hark in with such opposers, will be driven ere long and altogether, from the office of teachers by being left without any one to teach. Though still myself of the same opinion as to the ultimate results to which the whole movement is tending, I must honestly confess that from my own experience, as well as from that beautiful and exquisitely touching chapter, 'In Memoriam' of Mr. Home's book, I think much more favourably of it than I did before. Whilst the movement remains under the guidance of such leaders as it appears to have, there is every hope that it will continue to do good. .... So far as the movement goes to overthrow the hateful tyranny of materialism, and the 'profane and vane babblings, and opposition, of science, falsely so called,' spoken of by St. Paul, I, for one, heartily wish it all possible success. I believe I may add with truth, that the number of thoughtful persons---both lay and clerical---who would as heartily join with me in that wish, is vastly greater than is at all supposed; only they are withheld, by false shame and fear of ridicule, from expressing their real sentiments."---From the *Spiritual Magazine*.

## WILLIAM HOWITT'S TESTIMONY TO THE TRUTH AND VALUE OF SPIRITUALISM.

*(Extracted from various letters and papers.)*

..... "A Spiritualism which converts men to a knowledge and faith in Christ must be a true and good Spiritualism, and, therefore, admits of no denial. But it is said, 'The being of a God and the immortality of the soul are truths which no more require a revelation from Heaven, than a revelation is required to prove that we are flesh and blood.' If this be true, how happens it that the far greater portions of the civilized world of to-day believe in neither God nor immortality. Have those who make the assertion ever gone amongst the millions upon millions not only in this country, but all over the continent, especially in Germany, France, and Spain, who are the most confirmed and positive of Materialists, denying altogether immortality, and, for the most part, a God? If there need one thing, therefore, more palpably than another, after nearly two thousand years of Christianity, and above four thousand of Judaism, it is the necessity of proofs, present and existing proofs, of these things, which modern Spiritualism alone supplies. All these good people who flatter themselves that these great truths were sufficiently demonstrated one thousand eight hundred years ago, must have a wonderful faculty of going about the world in which they live without perceiving its real condition. They tell us that certain men, having got up into the higher regions of Spiritualism, all mere physical or lower manifestations of it are needless. This is a partial blindness, to which not merely the most cloudy mystics are liable, but even those who have themselves ascended from the lowest step of the great Jacob's ladder to the highest. It is thus that Harris, having ascended through all the physical and psycho-physical degrees, kicks down the ladder by which he ascended. All these good people imagine that because *they* are satisfied of the immortality of the soul, of the being of a God, and the truth of Christianity, every body else must be, or ought to be. To those who are creeping about in the slimy swamps of Materialism and Sensualism, God puts down the foot of his Jacob's ladder, that they may get upon it and look up, and see that its steps ascend to Heaven; that the angels of Divine ministration are ascending and descending upon it, and that God Himself stands at the top and beckons all men, even the lowest, the most debased, the most blasphemously denyant of His very existence, to ascend, through the many and purifying gradations of that great ladder to Himself, and to the regenerated of all times. Once there, once on the higher steps, they will no longer need the lower steps, but the unfortunates at the bottom, the blind, the debased, the philosophically poisoned and petrified, will need the very lowest step just

as much as ever. It is modern Spiritualism which shows the wisdom and the necessity of this ascendidg scale. It shows that there is no way of jumping either into Heaven or into the highest regions of Spiritual purity and grace all at once. As in all creation, God works in this by a process of gradual growth and development: it is not by a sudden flight, but by an ascending and laborious scale, that the dwellers in the sensual swamps of time, heavy-laden with earth's mires and deceits, must raise themselves; and in vain will fancied saints who are got up, not into Heaven's clearness, but into the clouds, call upon God to pull up His ladder. So long as there are men little better than reptiles on this earth, so long will the foot of His Divine ladder—which is the ladder of Him who is no respecter of persons, and who came to seek and save all that are lost—be left standing on the very lowest spot of earth, that the very lowest of His creatures may lay hold of its foot, and raise themselves by His mercy and grace to a place amongst the highest. ....

“People fondly imagine that *science* is to unravel this mystery. Yes; but not physical science. Physical science must deal with mere physics; it is but knowledge in the caterpillar state. It is physical science, knowledge with its spiritual eyes open, endowed with its spiritual wings, that must learn and teach it. Science not like a broken weapon, of which only the wooden handle is left; but science complete, compact, unfractured, while the spiritual blade is yet in the handle, keen to pierce through bone and marrow to the spiritual substance. .... Those who will learn spiritualism must have ‘the vision and the faculty divine’ given them; no probes, nor lancets, nor stethoscopes, no machinery of jars, and batteries, and chemical tests, will ever touch the spiritual. As well may a fish attempt to breath with the eagle the air of the mountain top. .... When Christ came to display His miracles, He did not ask for scientific men to come and explain them. .... He chose men of plain sense and healthy observation, enslaved to no theories, blinded by no prejudices, to witness and record a series of plain though astonishing facts. And His great gospel to us Gentiles added his testimony that ‘not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble,’ were amongst those who could see and admit these matters of fact. And it never will be otherwise to the end of time. The pioneers of knowledge, those who will go before the multitude and clear the way of truth, will not be the heavy dragoons of physical science, with their *impedimenta*, their baggage waggons crammed with ponderous theories; .... It does not need Æsop to tell us that the dung-hill cock of mere physics will always turn over with a contemptuous beak, and spurn with its spurred heel the diamond of spiritual truth. ....

“How frequently we have had to listen to this class of borrowed arguments. ‘Why,’ said the learned heathen, ‘did not God come as God?’ ‘Why,’ say the Anti-Spiritualists now, ‘do



not His Angels come openly as Angels? Why do they confine themselves to modes of communication as strange to the wise now as Christ's mode of coming was to the wise then? And all this time, in England, thousands and tens of thousands were daily sitting down in their families and circles of intimate friends, and were quietly, and as people of common sense, successfully testing those angels under their own mode of advent, and finding them real. And both in America and here, as well as in most of the continental nations, this private mode has been the great mode of enquiry and conviction. Not one man in a hundred has ever seen a public medium. Public mediums have, in reality, only inaugurated the movement: it has been, of necessity, carried on by private and family practice. In this domestic prosecution of Spiritualism, equally inaccessible to the vulgar sorcerer and the interested impostor—where every person was desirous only of truth, and many of them of deep religious truth—the second stage of spiritual development, the more interior and intellectual, has been reached by a very large community. For there is, indeed, a very large section of society who are sick of mere empty profession, or still more disgusted with the dreary cheat of scepticism, and who have been long yearning for some revelation of the immortal hopes of earlier years, in some substantial and unmistakable form. They have found this in the daily visits of their departed friends, coming to them with all their old identities of soul, of taste, or common memory of glad or trusting incidents, of announcements of Christian truth, and of God's promised felicity. They have listened again and again to the words of their beloved ones, bidding them take courage for there was no death, no place for darkness or death; but around them walked their so-called departed, ready to aid them and comfort them in their earth's pilgrimage, and to receive them to immediate and far more glorious existence.

“That great cry which has, at one time or other, ascended from the universal human heart, for positive and personal assurances of the reality of the Christian promises, and the reunion of beloved friends, had been going up from their's, and they had felt how comparatively small is the value of all the evidence given to others, and especially to the ancient world, weighed against one such evidence *to themselves*.

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\*“I am glad to see Mr. Hughes,—‘Tom Brown,’—in a ‘Tract for Priests and People,’ speak brave words for the Bible. He admits the frightful growth of infidelity amongst our youth, and he thinks he can charm them back to belief without faith in the historic evidence of Christianity. I admire his enthusiasm but, I prophesy his failure. I, too, have mixed a great deal with the young, both in this country and abroad; I have gone, too, much among the working classes, and found at home and abroad the same deadly infidelity. . . . . Men of this age are not trouts to be tickled

with artificial flies. They demand not logic but facts. They are true Baconians; they care nothing for the postulates of any Aristotle; they demand nature, that they may draw their own inferences. As I said in the *Critic*, long ago,—‘Sceptic materialists always turn round with this pertinent remark, ‘It is all very well to tell us of miracles, and a history occurring 2,000 years ago; but if God then condescended to convince souls of the reality of a spirit-world, by unquestionable physico-spiritual manifestations, why should He not now? Is God grown old? Is He less regardful of humanity? Do not preach to us, but give us *proofs*.’ And man not being able to produce those proofs, never did convince the sceptic; and till they do produce them, never will. I rejoice, sir, that you and other clergymen are now disposed to approach these proofs in any degree. It is not for me to say how long, or how carefully, or with what opportunities you have examined these phenomena, but I have examined them steadily, cautiously, perseveringly, and with ample opportunities, for more than six years; and I am prepared to say and to prove, that the so called spiritual phenomena are produced by direct spirit agency, and that the Odyle force is totally inadequate to elicit them. Whilst, therefore, prepared to support your proposition that there is a power proceeding from the world of mind which does controul the action of matter, and completely knocks on the head all the reasonings of the Rationalists, I am equally prepared to show that the ignorance does not lie on the side of the Spiritualists, but on that of those who, yet bound in the fetters of a materialist education, tremble to advance beyond the precincts of physical law.

“Amongst the facts which I have to give you, let us first determine this. The Odyle force, then, is a mere physical, unreasoning force, and consequently cannot adduce or refute arguments. . . . . Now it is useless to tell us that the Odyle force, acting somehow mysteriously on the brain, can produce these results. It cannot enable people to draw, and write, and play exquisite music, who have no such power or knowledge in their brains. . . . . It cannot come from other brains, for there are often no other brains present. If it could do such things it would be *Spirit*, endowed with volition, skill, and knowledge, and there would be an end of the dispute. The condition, therefore, of those who ascribe these powers to Odyle force, is that of one ascribing the telegraphic message to the wire,—and not to the man at the end of it. Odyle force may be the wire, for spiritual communications are, and ever have been, made through and under certain laws, as all God’s works always are,—but it certainly is not the intelligence at the end of it: as I shall soon show. They who believe in the Odyle force, and not in spirit operating upon or through some such force, believe in the stair-case, but not in the room for which it was erected. . . . .

“And in fact, are you not all Spiritualists? . . . . . have not all good men and women in all ages been, more or less believers in the open evidences of the fact? What say the works and lives of the Reformers,—of Luther and Melancthon? Of your own bishops

and clergy, many of them educationally denying present miracles in their works, but recording them as special providences in their lives. What of a Bishop of Gloucester, who records an apparition? What of Bishop Seale of Norwich, with his 'Invisible World?' What of John Wesley's father, and the occurrences in his parsonage at Epworth? What of Wesley himself, and the records of his 'Armenian Magazine?' What of Fletcher, of Madely? What of the avowed doctrine of continued miraculous power in God's Church, in Hooker's 'Ecclesiastical Polity?' Are not all these full-length Spiritualists, admitting and showing evidences of these things? New modes of evidence may have been added to meet the necessities of the times, but the principle is absolutely the same. And let me ask you, do you think that the three millions of Spiritualists in America, and the many millions in Europe and elsewhere, including the whole population of the East, the native region of revelation, who have been always, and are, confirmed, unshakeable Spiritualists, are likely to be all 'ignorant,' so ignorant as not to be able to distinguish between the operation of a magnetic fluid and those of living and intelligent souls? ..... Whilst the Odylists and Automatists speculate about an action on the brain, we cut the matter short, and say, there stands the spirits themselves, seen, heard, felt and conversed with. .... Having now shewn you why I reject Odyle as the agent in these transactions, I will proceed to the facts from my own experience. More than six years ago I began to examine the phenomena of Spiritualism. I did not go to paid, nor even to public, mediums. I sat down at my own table with members of my own family, or with friends, persons of high character and serious as myself in the enquiry. I saw tables moved, rocked to and fro, and raised repeatedly into the air. I saw a small round table, whenever touched by a medium, lay itself down, and crawl as self moved, all round the room; and this was continued daily for a fortnight, the table refusing to perform any other motion. The absurd spirit which was supposed to be moving it, was then solemnly exorcised in the name of God, and the table was immediately all right. A most sensible and obedient Odyle you must think. I heard the raps; sometimes a hundred at once, in every imaginable part of the table, in all keys, and various degrees of loudness. I examined the phenomena thoroughly, though I knew every person present treated the enquiry not only with a serious but sacred feeling. Silly, but playful spirits, came frequently, and drew the most laughable life scenes upon paper, and told the most rhodomontading stories. I heard accordians play wonderful music as they were held in one hand, often by a person who could not play at all. I heard and saw handbells carried about the room in the air; put first into one person's hand and then into another's; taken away again by a strong pull, though you could not see the hand touching them. I saw dining and drawing room tables of great weight, not only raised into the air, but when placed in a particular direction, perseveringly remove themselves, and place themselves quite differently. I saw other

tables answer questions as they stood in the air, by moving up and down with marvellous softness. I heard sometimes blows, apparently enough to split the table, when no one could have struck them without observation, and breathed perfumes the most delicate. As for communications professedly from spirits, they were of daily occurrence, and often wonderful. . . . . Our previous theological opinions were resisted and condemned, when I and my wife were alone. This, therefore, could be no automatic action of our brains, far less of the brains of others, for they were not there. We held philosophical Unitarian opinions, but, when thus alone, the communications condemned them, and asserted the Divinity and Godhead of our Saviour. . . . . Many persons that we know, draw, paint, or write, under spiritual agency, and without any effort or action of their own minds whatever, some of them having never learned to draw. Several of my family drew and wrote. I wrote a volume without any action of my own mind, the process being purely mechanical on my part. A series of drawings in circles, filled up with patterns, every one different from the other, were given through my hand, one each evening; the circles were struck off as correctly as Giotto, or a pair of compasses could have done them; yet they were made simply with a pencil. Artists who saw them were astonished, and, as is generally the case in such matters, suggested that some new faculty was developed in me; when, lo! the power was entirely taken away, as if to show it did not belong to me. The drawings, however, remain, but I could not copy one of them in the same way if my life depended on it. A member of my family drew very extraordinary and beautiful things, often with written explanations, but exactly in the same mechanical and involuntary manner. In fact, most of these drawings are accompanied by explanations spiritually given, showing that every line is full of meaning. I may add that I have never visited paid mediums, but I have seen most of the phenomena exhibited through Mr. Home, Mr. Squire, and others. . . . . "I wish some of your negatives could have seen what I, and Mrs. Howitt, and Mr. and Mrs. Wilkinson, saw at the house of a lady in the Regent's Park, and the like of which some of our most distinguished nobility have seen there repeatedly of late. . . . . We had the clearest and most prompt communications on different subjects through the alphabet, and flowers were taken from a bouquet on a cheffonier at a distance, and handed to each of us. Mrs. Howitt had a sprig of geranium handed to her by an invisible hand, which we have planted, and is now growing; so that it is no delusion. . . . . My wife's silk dress was pulled so strongly that she thought it would tear out the gathers, and was rustled so loudly, that it was not only heard by all of us, but might have been heard in another room. My wife's handkerchief was taken from her knee, and brought and whisked against my hand at the opposite side of the table; I thought with the intention of my taking it, but the spirit would not allow that, but withdrew it a little, then whisked my hand with it anew,

and then flung it into the middle of the room. The dress and the handkerchief were perfectly visible during these operations, but the motive power was invisible.

"Then the spirits went to a shrine of bronze idols, belonging to the lady of the house, who brought them from India. Some of these are very heavy. They pitched them down on the floor, and with such violence that the clash might have been heard all over the house. The larger of these idols,—perhaps all—of that I am not certain—unscrew, and the screws work exactly the opposite way to our screws; but the spirits unscrewed them, and pummelled the heads of the idols lustily on the floor, saying through the alphabet, 'you must all do your best to destroy idolatry, both in India and in England, where it prevails in numerous ways. Idolatry of rank, idolatry of wealth, idolatry of self, idolatry of mere intellect and learning, &c., &c.' The different parts were thrown under the table, that you might tread them under foot, and two parts of the idol Mahadeo, of heavy bronze, were placed on the table by a visible hand. The head of the idol felt to me to weigh four or five pounds.

..... I have seen writing done by spirits by laying a pencil and paper in the middle of the floor, and very good sense written, too. .... And here I could give you a whole volume of the remarkable, and even startling revelations made by our own departed friends at our own evening table; these friends coming at wholly unexpected times, and bringing messages of the most vital importance,—carrying them on from period to period, sometimes at intervals of years, into a perfect history. But these things are too sacred for the public eye. All Spiritualists have them, and they are hoarded amongst the treasures which are the wealth of the affections, and the links of assurance with the world of the hereafter. Now, I ask, what right have we, or has any one, to reject the perpetual, uniform, and voluntary assertions of the spirits; to tell them that they lie, and are not spirits, but merely Odyle, or some such blind and incompetent force? Nothing but the hardness and deadness of that anti-spiritual education which has been growing harder and more unspiritual ever since the Reformation, could lead men to such absurdity."

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### THE SCEPTICAL "HOW?"

(By the Rev. Thomas Starr King.)

..... "One of the chief obstacles to faith in that great truth (immortality) to the sanction it should give to our noblest sentiments, to the nobility it should lend to life, to the restraints it should lay on sin, and the cheer it should give the soul, is that men cannot send their imagination forward into a spiritual world and have it feel a foothold there. Their thoughts cannot locate it. They cannot form any conception of the modes and habits, the joys and pains, of an unbodied existence. All their winged speculations, like Noah's exploring dove, return weary to their

tossed and drifting minds, and leave them still in doubt. They hear arguments about a future life that for the moment seem plausible; they read assurances of it in the Gospel that have the rhythm of authority; they listen to the confession of it in prayers, and to the sweet breathing of it in hymns, and it seems to come into natural and pleasant companionship with devout aspirations and elevated moods;—but they stand by a dying bed, and watch the ebbing breath, and when it stops they ask *where* is the spirit fled? or how could such a wondrous miracle be wrought as the liberation of the soul from its feeble tenement, and our senses take no note of it? They see a frame bowed with age and infirmities, and wonder how an unwasted soul can be hidden in such a tattered robe. They stand in the still enclosures that hold the community of the dead, and ask *how* can it be, if the doctrine of immortality be no delusion, that of all who have died since Adam, not one has returned to sweep away uncertainty, and report something of the place and the occupations of that dim realm? ..... Who has told us that there cannot be any other avenues between the soul and matter than the touch, the taste, the ear, and the eye? Who has told us that all which *exists right about us* is reported by the limited apparatus furnished to our nerves? Conceive, for a moment, that the human race had been created without eyes. Of course, in that case, all the realities of nature would have been included in what the touch and the senses of hearing, smell and taste, conveyed to the mind. Let some being come and try to awaken a conception of a different property of matter, and a different phase of the universe, from those which the four senses recognized, and speak of a state in which objects might be perceived far beyond the reach of the arm—yea, even millions of miles away, and what would these people say? They would not understand him. Their imagination could not interpret such a state. The eloquence of the stranger would be damped by the query, ‘*How* can such a power of apprehending the existence of things at a great distance be given to beings who cannot stretch their hands three feet from their bodies?’ God gives each one of them a pair of eyes, and the air is flooded with light, the world is bathed in colours, and the brain is steeped in beauty, and takes in the image of the firmament.

“Is it a wild speculation that another sense might be added to our scanty stock that should enlarge our knowledge of God’s works and ways as splendidly as earing would to a race without ears, or vision to a universe of the blind, and make the horizon of the impossible or the mysterious retreat immeasurably beyond the line where it seems to rest? Let us not be hasty in urging with an air of triumph a sceptical ‘*how*.’ I do not know that it is wild to imagine that a sense might be given us which would enable us to see *through* things as easily as we now look *at* them; to see causes as plainly as we now perceive results, to behold the soul and read its thoughts, and understand its superiority to the body, and comprehend at once how it can live independently of its vesture, as we



now note the structure, motions, and hue of the frame; to apprehend *all* the operations of nature as we now apprehend a few of them, and feel as immediately the presence, love, and holiness of God, as we now feel the presence and temperature of the air. Why, tell me, would such a faculty be more wonderful than that present power that enables me to have knowledge of a constellation that is myriads of leagues in space, or that mysterious capacity by which the present motions of my pen become instant ideas to your mind? ..... Is the statement that there is an enduring spirit within us, entirely distinct from the corporal organization, and which the cessation of the heart liberates to a higher mode of existence, any more startling than the statement that in a drop of water, which may tremble and glisten on the tip of the finger, seemingly the most feeble thing in nature, from which the tiniest flower gently nurses its strength while it hangs upon its leaf, which a sunbeam may dissipate, contains within its tiny globe electric energy enough to charge 800,000 Leyden jars, energy enough to split a cathedral as though it were a toy? And so that of every cup of water we drink, each atom is a thunder storm?

"Is the idea of spiritual communication and intercourse, by methods far transcending our present powers of sight, speech, and hearing, beset with more intrinsic difficulties than the idea of conversing with a man 1000 miles off, as quickly as with a man by your side, or of making a thought girdle the globe in a twinkling? And when we say that the spiritual world may be all around us, though our senses take no impression of it, what is there to embarrass the intellect in accepting it, when we know that, within the vesture of the air which we cannot grasp, there is the realm of light, the immense ocean of electricity, and the constant currents of magnetism, all of them playing the most wonderful parts in the economy of the world, each of them far more powerful than the ocean, the earth, and the rocks—neither of them at all comprehensible by our minds, while the existence of two of them is not apprehensible by any sense?"—*From the Gospel Banner.*

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### THE ENGLISHWOMAN'S DOMESTIC MAGAZINE ON "MODERN SPIRIT MANIFESTATIONS."

"The term, 'modern manifestations,' has been adopted to express the various means by which the denizens of spirit-land, who have 'shuffled off this mortal coil,' seek, in the present day, to hold communication with those who are in the flesh. Whether there be any truth or not in this alleged intercommunication between the quick and the dead—these wondrous sights and sounds with which the spirits of men and women of the buried past seek strange communion with the souls of men and women of the passing present—it is a subject which may not, *must not*, be dismissed with that catch-a-weasel-asleep sort of shrug with which any thing out of the common or beyond the pale of ordinary

and immediate comprehension, is now received. The whole matter is too grave and of too serious a nature to be peremptorily dismissed without an enquiry of the most searching kind—not made in an antagonistic spirit of prejudice that is determined to resist conviction, but with an earnest desire to see whether these things be so or not. It is easy to spatter anything however truthful—and any body, however good and wise, with the mire and clinging clay of ridicule. Many a promising scheme, many a brilliant thought or design, that would have been fraught with lasting benefit to mankind if it had been carefully worked out, has been nipped and blighted by the chilling frost of sarcasm; but there is no argument in a jeer, and a smart and caustic jest will not go far in pulling the truth of this matter out of the very deep well in which it is hiding itself. Modern manifestations are of a two-fold nature, they are visible and invisible, appealing chiefly to the sight and hearing. Chief among the demonstrations that are palpable to mortal vision are the appearances of brilliant coruscations of coloured light, and the transparent luminous hand, and the visible movement of articles of furniture, and even the human body, without any apparent agency. The sounds are endless in variety, varying from slight raps, resembling the pecking of a fowl against a piece of wood, to thundering blows that might proceed from the hammer of mighty Thor, or the grim smiths of limping Vulcan, which shake the house in which such manifestations take place to its very foundation. . . . . When all that has been heard, and said, and done, has been winnowed by careful and impartial inquiry, grains of golden truth will be undoubtedly gathered up, and a key discovered that will unlock another secret of nature, and elicit the laws by which our connection with the unseen world around us is governed. Yet this is certain, if some of the messages given through media of credit have been trivial and of little worth, the great majority have been healthy in tendency—enjoining Christian love and charity, and purity of life—giving comfort to the mourner, healing the diseased, and convincing them that doubt.”

#### PROFESSOR DE MORGAN ON THE (SO-CALLED) SPIRIT MANIFESTATIONS.

“ Mere littérateurs and writers of fiction may be pardoned for a little tendency to the visionary and unreal, but the fact that the well known author of the standard works on Formal Logic, the Differential Calculus, and the Theory of Probabilities, should figure with his lady in the characters of believers in spirit-rapping and table-turning, will probably take most people by surprise. There is perhaps, no contributor to our reviews who is more at home in demolishing a fallacy, or in good humouredly disposing of an ignorant pretender in science, than Mr. De Morgan. His clear, logical, witty, and whimsical style, is readily traced by literary readers in many a striking article in our critical journals. He is, probably, the last man whom the sceptical in such mysteries would expect to find on the side of Mr. Home and Mrs. Newton Crossland. Yet we must record the fact.”—*The Publishers' Circular*.

“ I am perfectly convinced that I have both seen and heard in a manner which should make unbelief impossible, things *called*

spiritual, which cannot be taken by a rational being to be capable of explanation by imposture, coincidence, or mistake. So far I feel the ground firm under me. But when it comes to what is the cause of these phenomena, I find I cannot adopt any explanation which has been suggested. If I were bound to choose among things which I can conceive, I should say that there is some sort of action of some combination of will, intellect, and physical power, which is not that of any of the human beings present. . . . . The spiritualists, beyond a doubt, are in the track that has led to all advancement in physical science: their opponents are the representatives of those who have striven against progress. . . . . What I reprobate is, not the wariness which widens and lengthens inquiry, but the assumption which prevents or narrows it; the imposture theory, which frequently infers imposture from the assumed impossibility of the phenomena asserted, and then alleges imposture against the examination of the evidence. . . . . The spiritualist appeals to evidence, he may have enough, or he may not; but he relies on what he has seen and heard. When he assumes that there is a world of spirits, it is no more than all nations and ages have assumed and many on alleged record of actual communication, which all who think him a fool ought to laugh at. If he should take the concurrent feeling of mankind as presumption in favour of such a world—a thing which may be known—he is on more reasonable ground than his opponent, who draws its impossibility—a thing which cannot be known—out of the minds of a very small minority. He may be wrong, then, and I hold him too hasty: but his error is one which cannot be ascertained except by further use of his own method; he may work his own cure, if cure be needed. But the opponent philosopher, if *he* be wrong, is obnoxious to all that can be said against wrong reason. He takes a mode in which he can only be right by accident, and in which he can only guard against error by also guarding against truth.

“Ten years ago, Mrs. Hayden, the well-known American medium, came to my house *alone*. The sitting began immediately. Eight or nine persons were present, of all ages, and of all degrees of belief and unbelief. The raps began in the usual way. They were to my ear clean, clear, faint sounds, such as would be said to *ring*, had they lasted. I likened them at the time to the noise which the ends of knitting-needles would make if dropped from a small distance on a marble slab, and instantly checked by a damper of some kind: and subsequent trial showed that my description was tolerably accurate. At a late period in the evening after nearly three hours' experiment, Mrs. Hayden having risen, and talking at another table while taking refreshment, a child suddenly called out, ‘Will all the spirits who have been here this evening rap together?’ The words were no sooner uttered than a hail-storm of knitting-needles was heard, crowded into certainly less than two seconds; the big needle sounds of the men, and the little ones of the women and children being clearly distinguishable, but perfectly disorderly in their arrival.

"The things which I have narrated\* were the beginning of a long series of experiences, many as remarkable as what I have given; many of a minor character, separately worth little, but jointly of weight when considered in connection with more decisive proofs of reality; many of a confirmatory tendency as mere facts, but of a character not sustentive of the gravity of the spiritual world. .... The whole question may receive such persevering attention as shall worm out the real truth: or it may die away, obtaining only casual notice, until a new outburst of phenomena recalls its history of this day. But this subsidence does not seem to begin. It is now twelve or thirteen years since the matter began to be every where talked about: during which time there have been many announcements of the total extinction of the 'spirit mania.' But in several cases, as in Tom Moore's fable, the extinguishers have caught fire."—*Extracted from Professor de Morgan's preface to Mrs. de Morgan's book, entitled "From Matter to Spirit."*

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PASSAGES FROM MRS. DE MORGAN'S BOOK—FROM  
MATTER TO SPIRIT.

..... "One thing is certain, if these phenomena are not the result of imposture and delusion, the study of them involves questions worthy the deepest consideration of the Theologian, and the man of science. Whether they have any claim to be considered in the higher point of view, it is the object of the following pages to show. .... There is a general, and not unreasonable dislike to paid mediums, among those who cannot find out how far such mediums *could* impose upon credulity; hence the question is often asked: 'What can be done to enable us to see these things for ourselves?' To this there is only one answer, 'You must earnestly and patiently try for yourselves.' .... When parties form circles without the presence of a practised 'medium,' great wonders must not be expected at once. There is a process of development required for even the lowest manifestations, by which I mean those having reference to the external senses of touch, sight, and hearing. Those who mistrust the mediumship of strangers, must take the longer, but more satisfactory course of gradual development. .... The 'tipping' appears to be the easiest method of communication for the unseen influences, as it is the most readily attained by the circle of experimenters. By it, as indeed by *all methods*, very strange and absurd communications are sometimes given. I have seen instances, and have been told of others, in which long incongruous strings of names and titles have been spelt out; such as Richard Cœur de Lion, Pythagoras, Byron, Cheops, and Mr. Fauntleroy, the list perhaps ending with T. Brown, or J. Smith. The givers of these names seem to delight only in

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\* I am most reluctantly compelled to omit the larger portion of the Professor's most interesting experiences.

buffoonery and abuse, and perhaps, after playing absurd and mischievous tricks for days, and even weeks, will seem to come in a body, giving all their names with the information that they have come to say 'Good bye, for ever!' After this their names or sobriquets do not appear again. Of course it would not be to the purpose to try, in the present state of the enquiry, to account fully for these strange proceedings. . . . . A great deal of nonsense, as has been said, is often written at first by mediums. This is reverted to by way of caution. . . . . The name of a great poet was once given to me by the hand of a very young medium, and I, who was then inexperienced in the whole proceeding, asked for a *complete* little poem in three verses, for a friend. The child, of course, could have no idea of what was coming, as my request was a sudden thought, but in about five minutes three verses were written with very great rapidity, describing the approach of an army, a battle on the bank of a river, which ran red with the blood of the combatants, another battle on hills whose *greenness* was especially noticed, and a third when the flowers were in bloom, and the chief was dead. The metre was uncommon, and though the lines were grotesque they were not unharmonious. One of our greatest living authors pronounced these three stanzas to contain a poetical element which could not have proceeded from the mind of a young child. . . . . The applicability of this rhythmical production to the three battles of Alma, Inkerman, and Balaclava, was afterwards apparent. But they were written before the Crimean war broke out. . . . . From the beginning of my experience in these manifestations, two circumstances had struck me forcibly as forming an element of the question as to their nature. The first of these was the *invariable* assertion that they were caused by '*spirits*,' and that these spirits had once lived in the body on earth. The other circumstance was that, whatever the name given and through whatever means or mediumship it came, the phraseology always agreed with the relationship claimed. To make my meaning more intelligible; suppose that writings are given purporting to come from the sister or brother of a person present, and that a family party, in which all kinds of relationships are found, compose the circle. The writing, in mentioning members of the family to each other, will always specify them correctly by the relationship subsisting among them. For example: A supposed brother writing to his sister about her son by the hand of a stranger medium, will speak of her son as 'my nephew,' and to the son, of 'my sister,' 'your mother,' &c. I never saw this fail. It seems difficult to believe that any *unconscious* action of the brain can, without the least premeditation, produce expressions which fall into such coherence of meaning. . . . . Now, having shown ample reason to believe that all the manifestations emanate from *one* source, we must settle which of the three (subjectivity, imposture, satanic influence) is the moving power. Unconscious cerebration, self-delusive, or any other mental vagary, can produce writing and drawing; it cannot

make intelligent sounds audible to eight or nine people at one time, nor can it cause the movement of furniture with or without an intelligent aim. . . . . With respect to raps and movements, then, the ocular delusion or general delusion theory must be abandoned; so must the unconscious cerebration. As to the Origin of Evil, who has been flattered by being supposed to be the chief actor in all the manifestations; of his and all other agencies I need only say, on the highest authority, 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' . . . . .

"There is a deep meaning in the fact that the lowest spirit manifestations, or those in which the action of spiritual electricity on material substances is displayed, appeared soon after the means of communicating by earthly electricity were completed. We do not despise the child who first tried to catch up a thread by a piece of amber or sealing wax, for the knowledge growing out of that simple experiment led to results which are yet far in the future. Neither should we undervalue the raps and movements, strange and childish as they appear: they form but the lowest step of a ladder whose base is on the earth and whose top rests at the feet of the Lamb in the centre of the Throne."—"From Matter to Spirit," by Mrs. De Morgan.

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### THE "TRUTH-SEEKER" ON MODERN SPIRITUALISM; ITS THEORIES AND MANIFESTATIONS.\*

"Whatever conclusion we may come to for ourselves as to the truth or falsity of the theory and the reputed facts of Spiritualism, one thing is clear—Spiritualism is to hundreds of thousands a reality and power. Not only have the half-witted, the excitable, the acutely nervous, and the romantic been influenced by it as by some fantastic charm, but cultured and experienced minds have felt and owned its mysterious power. To upwards of two millions of men and women, who can have no reason for self-deception, these spiritual manifestations, that furnish jests for the sceptical and a moral for the prosy, are the ground of their hope, the solution of their doubts, and the inspiration of their lives. While some, it is true, have been led into wild or fantastic excesses, others have grown in wisdom and increased in charity, developing all the peaceable fruits of righteousness. 'Some fire must be at the bottom of all this smoke, and thus much at least appears, that in a cold, hard, and material age, the human soul in great masses of men has shot up in ardent longings and yearnings after spiritual realities, after a stronger faith, and a more apprehensible connection with God and the spirit-world.'

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\* For the entire article, see the *Truth-Seeker* for May and June, 1864.



“ Apart from evidence and before experience we can see nothing either absurd or impossible in the occurrence of *some* spiritual manifestation. The *impossibility* of such manifestation, indeed, should not be mentioned by believers in the realities of the spirit-world; least of all by believers in the Christian doctrine of the presence here of that ‘great cloud of witnesses’ who, as ‘ministering spirits,’ survey and influence the affairs of time. The absurdity of such manifestations will, of course, depend upon their kind;—and it would not be difficult to show that only the apparent puerility of certain modern spiritual manifestations has led to the repudiation of the possibility of *any* such manifestations by Christian people who, in other circumstances, would logically and perhaps spiritually be unable to say a word against at least their *possibility*. At all events, putting aside the *kind* of manifestations that have so lately amused the flippant or shocked the reverent, we should like to ask the believer in the Old Testament and the believer in Christianity, with its doctrines respecting ‘ministering spirits who are sent forth to minister to those who are here the heirs of salvation,’ how he can venture to assert the impossibility of *some* manifestation from those who thus tend our path and influence our lives. ‘Those who oppose modern spirit-manifestations, before they are aware find themselves fighting against the Bible, and labouring to show how those manifestations recorded in the Bible which are like modern manifestations, may be accounted for by referring to trick, &c.’

“ We are not about to announce our conversion to Spiritualism, or our belief in its theories and reputed facts. We are only pursuing our vocation—seeking for truth; and we are persuaded that there is just as much want of logic, faith, and consistency on the part of Christian disbelievers in Spiritualism as there is want of sobriety and common sense in many of the disciples of Mr. Home.

“ It is astonishing to observe what a vast and solid basis for the theories of modern Spiritualism is found both in the Scripture and in the writings of seers and poets and theologians from the earliest time. It is singular that nearly all the thinkers of the world have been Spiritualists *out of practice*—Spiritualists in feeling, in theory, and belief. It is more singular still, that whenever one of these has announced a proof of the universal faith, charges of fraud or expressions of pity have been the only reply. From the Psalmist who cried—‘the angels of the Lord encamp round about them that fear Him,’ to Washington Irving who said—‘Even 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,’ poets and seers have held the same great truth of the nearness of the spirit-world, and of the reality of spiritual influence upon the minds and the affairs of men. The strange thing is that he who ventures to seek the realization of this is at once cried down as a witless person or a rogue.

"The Bible—the Old Testament especially—is all intensely spiritual—full indeed of testimonies to the reality of spiritual influence in the affairs of man. We can understand men rejecting both these and those—the ancient and the modern—but we can see neither the logic nor the consistency of those who believe in the Old Testament appearances and only sneer at modern ones as impossible and absurd. We suspect that there is a great deal of truth in this shrewd observation of a leading Spiritualist—'Science and philosophy have grown too materialistic to admit any spiritual agencies outside of sacred history, and have excepted the Bible only out of courtesy or policy.'

"It is a great mistake to suppose that modern Spiritualism is altogether an affair of tipping tables and tricky spirits. It is a mistake even to suppose that it is necessarily connected at all with these outward manifestations. The higher forms of Spiritualism dispense with these altogether, and 'the witness of the spirit' within is all-sufficient for those who purely 'walk by faith.' There is, in fact, just as much natural diversity among the advocates of and believers in Spiritualism as among any other disciples of a new and singular faith. The early Christian Church itself was the birth-place of theories of mind and life as monstrous as anything in modern Spiritualism. In that young Church were found the sentimental, living the life of Christianity as a rosy or heroic romance, the excitable who welcomed the new kingdom of reformation, the sorrowful who clung to its consolations, and the thoughtful who essayed to rise to the height of this new great argument. What refined, ingenious, and witty objections against Christianity might have been founded on the motley throng within its pale! It took long ages to bring the fine gold out—to lift the new faith into the calm atmosphere of sound reason and the fine pure light of a wise and reverent love. And even now the Christian Church is the home of fancies as puerile, of dogmas as monstrous, of hopes as fantastic, and of theories as absurd, as any to be found among the two or three millions who live by the theories and the manifestations of modern Spiritualism. 'Its believers have come out of all the other sects, and represent every phase of society, character, culture, and opinion; and, as a matter of necessity, there are crude, complex materials among them.'

It is only fair, too, to give the system credit for not being committed even in its highest forms, to perfect accuracy in the manifestations it receives. This is very much lost sight of by the critics, and with results that tell most unfairly against mediums and believers. If we judged fairly and generously of the whole case for Spiritualism we should perhaps find less to ridicule even in what we call the absurd communications said to be received from the spirit-world by certain mediums. If the whole thing were a trick would the trickster attempt to palm off these clumsy communications as the messages of spirits? How can they be accounted for then? All the mistakes here grow out of the erroneous supposition that

only wise and good spirits are at hand, and that these can communicate perfectly through a medium. Now the very opposite of this is nearer the truth. The wisest and noblest spirits are the least approachable, except by the noble and the wise, and when approached they can only pour their treasure into earthen vessels. Our inconsistency and unreasonableness are singular here. We can admit that God's spirit dwells with all good and earnest seekers, and yet see how some men possess and live by that spirit! Does it not teach us the great essential truth that *we can only hold and transmit a spiritual gift in the manner and to the extent of our own capacity?* It is the one spirit of God that works in all sincere hearts, but how diversely!—even, in some cases, with manifestations almost revolting to finer minds. Now if the spirit of the perfect God can be thus brokenly manifested by the imperfect receivers of it how much more likely is it to be so in the case of those spirits who, through mediums, seem to convey unworthy messages to earth! The Spirit of God and the spirits of the glorified are not to be blamed or slighted, but the poverty and darkness of the medium of the higher light is to be fairly allowed for. Besides; there are other spirits, neither very wise nor very good—there being just as great a diversity of intelligence and character in the spirit-world as here. These spirits often interfere, and spoil by their officiousness what otherwise might have been both useful and good.

“The whole question of mediumship, in fact, needs fair and generous treatment. Communications from the spirit-world are, if genuine at all, simply an affair of ‘impression.’ If, therefore, the medium is only partly impressible, or if he is for the time being out of health, or if he is not *en rapport* with spirits exactly kindred with his own, or if certain influences in the circle baffle and interfere with him, or if inferior spirits intrude upon his ideas and emotions, to that extent his use is gone, and his power to carry on a concentrated and truthful communication with the spirit-world is, for the time being, spoiled. The rationale of Spiritualism, then, as to mediumship may be thus summed up:—‘Man, as the image of God, is a miniature, a compound embodiment of the universe, material and spiritual, terrestrial and celestial, human and divine. Or in him are represented on the finite plane all the attributes ascribed to Deity. Just so far as these attributes are cultivated and unfolded in keeping with the laws of nature, just so far he becomes a medium for all the elements in the natural world; just so far as he lives in harmony with the laws of the spirit-world, just so far he becomes a medium for the influences and inspirations of that world, and attracts spiritual beings to his aid; just so far as he lives in keeping with the laws of God, he becomes God-like in power, and an angel or messenger of God.’

“There is a childish fear in some minds, out of which grows one form of opposition to Spiritualism—a fear that perhaps *Satanic* influence may have something to do with it. We have no serious refutation of this to offer. It is in itself as puerile as anything to

be found in the system it opposes. To fear the Devil may not be as healthy a thing as to believe in God, but it is at least quite as absurd, one would think, and it is certainly a poor thing to tell the Spiritualist that it is impossible for good angels to manifest themselves in any way, even though they are 'ministering spirits,' but that the emissaries of Satan alone have the gift of proving their reality. But if anything were wanting to dissipate this fear, we have all we need in the fact that the aims of Spiritualism are all beneficent, and that all its *higher* tendencies, or, at least, aspirations, are useful and pure. 'Through all our mediums,' says one who has a right to speak, 'these spirits inculcate principles and practices indicating no infernal purpose, but rather missions of mercy, purity, justice, benevolence, humanity; and, under their influence, thousands have been redeemed from unbelief, sorrow, and despair; from passions, appetites, and propensities, over which nothing else could triumph—sent on their way rejoicing in the guardianship of angels, and the glorious hope of demonstrated immortality.' 'Let those who join your circles endeavour to realize what it is to hold intercourse with the spirit-world. It requires some preparation of heart, mind, and life. If your desires are not above the ordinary plane of selfishness and sensuality, you will find nothing of a satisfactory or elevating nature. If you would attract elevated manifestations and influences, let your aims be of a corresponding character. To commune with the beloved and beatified is to enjoy privileges of priceless value, and we cannot expect to enjoy such without some cost, some sacrifice, some trial, some earnest and persevering effort.' . . .

"We have allowed ourselves, in this article, to speak almost as believers in the works lying before us, and the manifestations that have been reported and described to us. We have done so, wishing to give fair play to a system that seldom gets it, and believing that this is the only way to state a doubtful matter with fairness and generosity. We are far from accepting Spiritualism as it presents itself to us to-day, in its material manifestations, but we are quite as far from sympathy with that noisy and narrow kind of orthodoxy which begins by not knowing how to be sensible, and ends by not understanding how to be consistent, and which has given only too much reason for the rebuke of an able advocate of Spiritualism, with whose words we conclude:—'For more than a quarter of a century, the Christian press and Church were filled with prayers and predictions that God would open the heavens anew, that the Holy Ghost would come down with power, that Jesus Christ would descend in glory and majesty, that angel armies would marshal themselves for fresh battles with earth and hell, &c. But the very first faint sound coming in response to these prayers and predictions sent terror into the heart of modern Christendom. While in the very act of praying, and predicting that some celestial manifestation of power and majesty might be made, lo, a feeble sound was heard on the altar floor or pulpit-case, and priest and people were seized with alarm; they turn pale with affright, their

prayers shake them, and they take them back; they pray God to forgive them for asking more than they were prepared to receive.' ”

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### AT LAST.—DOCTORS ASHBURNER AND ELLIOTSON !

“Dr. John Elliotson is a distinguished physician, and has made many valuable contributions to medical science. . . . .

“So far back as 1828 Dr. Elliotson said of mesmerism and clairvoyance,—‘Having never seen the magnetic phenomena, I have no right to pronounce judgment; but before I can believe these wonders I must see them.’ Nine years later, in 1837, he said,—‘He had only seen enough of mesmerism to assert it was true.’ And it was not until 1844 that he completely satisfied himself on all points, and boldly proclaimed his convictions to the world. About this period he established a periodical called the *Zoist*, which was chiefly devoted to the cause of mesmerism and clairvoyance; as the *Spiritual Magazine* is now the recognized journal in this country for disseminating the facts and philosophy of Spiritualism. In the *Zoist* Dr. Elliotson fearlessly maintained his position against all comers, and he was, I believe, supported but by one man of eminence in the medical profession, Dr. John Ashburner. A storm of indignation arose from their less enlightened professional brethren; and both these worthy men were made martyrs to their honest convictions of a truth which has added another step to science, and which they have happily lived to see established beyond the power of ignorance or malevolence to destroy.

“Shortly after Spiritualism had been generally recognized in America, one of the then best known mediums, Mrs. Hayden, visited England, and the two mesmeric Doctors had the opportunity of testing, through her, the reality of the alleged phenomena. Dr. Ashburner saw enough to satisfy him at once that Spiritual manifestations were no delusion, and from that time, now ten or twelve years ago, to the present he has been one of the most prominent and intelligent of its advocates.

“Dr. Elliotson, on the other hand, who was less satisfied than his confrère, with characteristic honesty and boldness, denounced Mrs. Hayden as a charlatan, and Spiritualism as an imposture. The pages of the *Zoist* teemed with eloquent denunciations, and explanations accompanied with wood-cuts to show how the raps were made. Remarking that ‘anything approaching to this imposture in impious audacity we have never witnessed. We have felt it our duty boldly to raise our voice in condemnation of this vile and unblushing imposture.’ . . . . . Yes, it is a fact which will be hailed with satisfaction by all—and in a special degree by Dr. Ashburner—who like myself have borne the burden of the fight,

that Dr. Elliotson has at length had the good fortune to be satisfied by the evidence obtained recently through the remarkable mediumship of Mr. Home. 'I am,' Dr. Elliotson said to me, and it is with his sanction that I make the announcement, 'now quite satisfied of the reality of the phenomena. I am not yet prepared to admit that they are produced by the agency of spirits. I do not deny this, as I am unable to satisfactorily account for what I have seen on any other hypothesis. The explanations which have been made do not satisfy me, but I desire to reserve my decision on that point for the present. I am free, however, to say that I regret the opportunity of obtaining satisfactory evidence was not afforded me at an earlier period. What I have seen lately has made a deep impression on my mind, and the recognition of the reality of these manifestations, from whatever cause, is tending to revolutionize my thoughts and feelings on almost every subject.'

"What an honest manly confession is this of the worthy Doctor!"  
—*Benjamin Coleman, in the "Spiritual Magazine."*

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## THE AMERICAN PHILANTHROPIST, W. LLOYD GARRISON, SAYS OF SPIRITUALISM—

["I have studied the question of Spiritualism wherever I have gone (in America), and the result is most satisfactory. There, the great fight is over, and you hear little, comparatively, said of it, but you find it in all the churches. It has given *new evidence*, new life, and a new heaven to Christianity there."—*Robert Chambers.*]

"As the manifestations have spread from house to house, from city to city, from one part of the country to the other, across the Atlantic into Europe, till now the civilized world is compelled to acknowledge their reality, however diverse in accounting for them—as these manifestations continue to increase in variety and power, so that all suspicion of trick and imposture becomes simply absurd and preposterous, and as every attempt to find a solution for them in some theory relating to electricity, the odic force, and clairvoyance, and the like, has thus far proved abortive, it becomes every intelligent mind to enter into the investigation of them with candour and fairness, as opportunity may offer, and to bear such testimony in regard to them as the facts may warrant, no matter what ridicule it may excite on the part of the uninformed or sceptical. As for ourselves we have been in no haste to jump to a conclusion in regard to phenomena so universally diffused and of so extraordinary a character. For the last three years we have kept pace with nearly all that has been published on the subject, and we have witnessed at various times many surprising manifestations, and our conviction is that they cannot be accounted for on any other theory than that of spiritual agency."

## DR. CAMPBELL'S "CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER."

"The conclusion of the whole matter is this: we believe in the existence of angels and devils, in the existence of the spirits of men both good and bad; we believe that all are capable of acting in their disembodied state on the minds of men still in the flesh; we believe in the possibility of intercourse between man and these disembodied intelligences whether good or bad; we believe on the authority of Scripture that spirits are capable of entering human bodies, of speaking through them and acting in them; and hence we believe in the possibility of spirits operating on matter in the way of rapping out the letters of the alphabet, or in the way of writing with the pencil. We see nothing in Scripture or in the nature of the case that militates against these conclusions. All that we require is proof, *indubitable, sensible proof*, from our *own eyes and ears*. On that condition we at once give full credence. We would also treat respectfully the testimony of intelligent, upright, and honourable men; but we should require personal experience to work out complete conviction.

"This is a limit beyond which our judgments cannot go; we attach no importance to mere material movements, such as Mr. Home's flight in the air, or pieces of furniture being moved or suspended: we set no value on anything apart from *intelligence*. If a harp, a piano, an accordion, or any instrument shall send forth sweet music apart from human hands, we at once acknowledge the presence of *intelligent power*. The tying of knots on handkerchiefs and the removal of objects from one place to another, and such like things, in their measures demand the same recognition. The principle applies with the utmost force to table-talking. That is an affair involved in the deepest mystery. We never saw but one exhibition of this sort ourselves, but it was certainly an extraordinary affair. We heard a multitude of questions put and answered of a character which required wisdom more than human. These are *indisputable facts as attested by our own eyes and ears*. The source of that wisdom we know not; but the questions were beyond doubt correctly answered. On one point the intelligence appeared to be at fault. A question was put respecting a gentleman supposed to be in the country; this was denied, and he was affirmed by the table to be upon the premises. All present were surprised, deeming it a mistake; but on enquiry he was found to be actually there! Explanation of such phenomena we have none to offer, but *we stand by the facts as here stated*."—Dr. Campbell, in the "*British Standard*."



INCIDENTS, &c, FROM THE CORNHILL NARRATIVE—  
 “STRANGER THAN FICTION.”

Mr. Robert Bell, author of “Annotated Edition of the Poets,” and “one of the cleverest literary critics of the day,” was the writer of this celebrated article.

[“As Editor of this (the Cornhill) Magazine, I can vouch for the good faith and honourable character of our correspondent, a friend of twenty-five years’ standing; but as the writer of the above astounding narrative owns that he ‘would refuse to believe such things upon the evidence of other people’s eyes,’ his readers are therefore free to give or withhold their belief.—ED.”—*The late Mr. Thackeray.*]

“‘I have seen what I would not have believed on your testimony, and what I cannot, therefore, expect you to believe upon mine,’ was the reply of Dr. Treviranus to inquiries put to him by Coleridge as to the reality of certain magnetic phenomena which that distinguished savant was reported to have witnessed. It appears to me that I cannot do better than adopt this answer as an introduction to the narrative of facts I am about to relate. It represents very clearly the condition of the mind before and after it has passed through experiences of things that are irreconcilable with known laws. I refuse to believe such things upon the evidence of other people’s eyes; and I may, possibly, go so far as to protest that I would not believe them even on the evidence of my own. When I have seen them, however, I am compelled to regard the subject from an entirely different point of view. It is no longer a question of mere credence or authority, but a question of fact. Whatever conclusions, if any, I may have arrived at on this question of fact, I see distinctly that I have been projected into a better position for judging of it than I occupied before, and that what then appeared an imposition, or a delusion, now assumes a shape which demands investigation. . . . .

“For my first experience, I must take the reader into a large drawing-room. The time is morning; and the only persons present are two ladies. It is proper to anticipate any question that may arise at this point, by premising that the circumstances under which the *séance* took place precluded all suspicion of confederacy or trickery of any kind. There was nobody in the apartment capable of practising a deception, and no conceivable object to gain by it. . . . .

“In a little while, at my request, a question was put as to whether I might join the *séance*. The answer was given in the affirmative, with tumultuous energy, and at the same moment the table commenced a vigorous movement across the floor, till it came up quite close to me. The ladies were obliged to leave their chairs to keep up with it. The intimation understood to be conveyed by

this movement was satisfaction at my accession to the *séance*; which now commenced, and at which a multitude of raps were delivered, the table undergoing throes of corresponding variety. In accordance with an instruction received through the alphabet, we finally removed to a small round table, which stood on a slender pillar, terminating in three claws. Here the noises and motions thronged upon us faster and faster, assuming, for the most part, a new character. Sometimes the knocks were gentle and almost timid, and the swaying backwards and forwards of the little table was slow and dilatory; but presently came another phase of activity. The table seemed to be inspired with the most riotous animal spirits. I confess that, with the utmost sobriety of intention, I know no other way to describe the impression made upon me by the antics in which it indulged. It pitched about with a velocity which flung off our hands from side to side, as fast as we attempted to place them; and the general effect produced was that of wild, rollicking glee, which fairly infected the three sitters, in spite of all their efforts to maintain a becoming gravity. But this was only preliminary to a demonstration of a much more singular kind.

"While we were seated at this table, we barely touched it with the tips of our fingers. I was anxious to satisfy myself with respect to the involuntary pressure which has been attributed to the imposition of hands. In this case there was none. My friends kindly gratified my request to avoid resting the slightest weight on the table; and we held our hands pointing downwards, with merely the nails touching the wood. Not only was this light contact inadequate to produce the violent evolutions that took place, but the evolutions were so irregular and perplexing, that we could not have produced them by premeditation. Presently, however, we had conclusive proofs that the vivacity of the table did not require any help from us.

"Turning suddenly over on one side, it sank to the floor. In this horizontal position it glided slowly towards a table which stood close to a large ottoman in the centre of the room. We had much trouble in following it, the apartment being crowded with furniture, and our difficulty was considerably increased by being obliged to keep up with it in a stooping attitude. Part of the journey it performed alone, and we were never able to reach it at any time together. Using the leg of the large table as a fulcrum, it directed its claws towards the ottoman, which it attempted to ascend, by inserting one claw in the side, then turning half way round to make good another step, and so on. It slipped down at the first attempt, but again quietly resumed its task. It was exactly like a child trying to climb up a height. All this time we hardly touched it, being afraid of interfering with its movements, and, above all things, determined not to assist them. At last, by careful and persevering efforts, it accomplished the top of the ottoman, and stood on the summit of the column in the centre, from whence in a few minutes it descended to the floor by a similar process.

"It is not to be expected that any person who is a stranger to these phenomena, should read such a story as this with complacency. It would be irrational to anticipate a patient hearing for a traveller who should tell you that he was once addressed in good English by an oak tree; and talking trees are not a whit more improbable than moving tables. Yet here is a fact which undoubtedly took place, and which cannot be referred to any known physical or mechanical forces. It is not a satisfactory answer to those who have seen such things, to say that they are impossible; since, in such cases, it is evident that the impossibility of a thing does not prevent it from happening.

"Upon many subsequent occasions I have witnessed phenomena of a similar nature, and others of a much more startling character; in some instances, where the local conditions varied considerably, and in all where the circumstances under which the *séances* took place were wholly inconsistent with the practice of trickery or imposition. This last statement is of infinite importance in an inquiry of this kind. Every novelty in science, and even in literature and art, is exposed to the invasion of pretenders and charlatans. Every new truth has to pick its first steps through frauds. But new truths, or strange phenomena, are no more responsible for the quackeries that are put forward in their name by impostors, than for the illogical absurdities that are published in their defence by enthusiastic believers. Should chemistry and astronomy be ignored, because they were eliminated out of the half-fanatical and half-fraudulent empiricism of the alchemists and astrologers? It is the province of men of science to investigate alleged phenomena irrespective of extrinsic incidents, and to clear away all impediments on their progress to pure truth, as nature casts aside the rubbish on the descent of the glacier. ....

"When I saw a table, at which two ladies were seated, moving towards me without any adequate impulse being imparted to it by visible means, I thought the fact sufficiently extraordinary; but my wonder abated when, on subsequent occasions, I saw tables move apparently of their own volition, there being no persons near them; large sofas advance from the walls against which they stood; and chairs, sometimes occupied, and sometimes empty, shift their places for the distance of a foot or a yard, in some cases easily, and in others with a slow, laborious movement. The catalogue might be readily enlarged, but the accumulation of examples would throw no additional light on the subject. To this particular class of phenomena may be added an illustration of a different order, which, like these, would seem to require mechanical aids, but in this instance of vast power and extent. On the first occasion when I experienced the effect I am about to describe, there were five persons in the room. In other places, where it occurred subsequently, there were seven or more. The architecture of the houses in each case was wholly dissimilar, both as to the area and height of the apartments, and the age, size, and strength of the buildings. We were seated at a table

at which some singular phenomena, accompanied by loud knocks on the walls and floor, had just occurred, when we became conscious of a strange vibration that palpitated through the entire room. We listened and watched attentively. The vibration grew stronger and stronger. It was palpably under our feet. Our chairs shook, and the floor trembled violently. The effect was exactly like the throbbing and heaving which might be supposed to take place in a house in the tropics during the moment immediately preceding an earthquake. This violent motion continued for two or three minutes, then gradually subsided and ceased. Every person present was equally affected by it on each occasion when it occurred. To produce such a result by machinery might be possible if the introduction of the machinery itself were possible. But the supposition involves a difficulty somewhat similar to that of Mr. Knickerbocker's theory of the earth standing on the back of a tortoise, which might be an excellent theory if we could only ascertain what the tortoise stood upon.

"The ordinary movement of a table is that of tilting backwards and forwards, from side to side, sometimes slowly and gently, and at other times with great violence. The fury of the motion is often so alarming that a person witnessing it for the first time anticipates nothing less than a catastrophe, in which the smashing of the table itself may be only a minor feature. . . . .

"Of a somewhat similar character is another movement, in some respects more curious, and certainly opening a stranger field for speculation. Here, still drawing the picture from the reality, we must imagine the company seated at a large, heavy, round table, resting on a pillar with three massive claws, and covered with a velvet cloth, over which books, a vase of flowers, and other objects are scattered. In the midst of the *séance* the table abruptly forces its way across the room, pushing on before it the persons who are on the side opposite to that from whence the impetus is derived, and who are thrown into confusion by the unexpectedness and rapidity with which they are driven backwards on their chairs. The table is at last stopped by a sofa; and as the sitters on that side extricate themselves, a space remains open of a few inches between the table and the sofa. All is now still; but the pause is of short duration. The table soon begins to throb and tremble; cracks are heard in the wood; loud knocks succeed; and presently, after surging backwards and forwards three or four times, as if it were preparing for a greater effort, it rears itself up on one side, until the surface forms an inclined plane, at an angle of about 45 degrees. In this attitude it stops. According to ordinary experience everything on the table must slide off, or topple over; but nothing stirs. The vase of flowers, the books, the little ornaments are as motionless as if they were fixed in their places. We agree to take away our hands, to throw up the ends of the cover, so as to leave the entire round pillar and claws exposed, and to remove our chairs to a little distance, that we may have a more complete command of a phenomenon, which, in its marvellous development at least, is, I believe, new to us all.

Our withdrawal makes no difference whatever; and now we see distinctly on all sides the precise pose of the table, which looks, like the Tower of Pisa, as if it must inevitably tumble over. With a view to urge the investigation as far as it can be carried, a wish is whispered for a still more conclusive display of the power by which this extraordinary result has been accomplished. The desire is at once complied with. The table leans more and more out of the perpendicular; two of the three claws are high above the ground; and finally, the whole structure stands on the extreme tip of a single claw, fearfully overbalanced, but maintaining itself as steadily as if it were all one solid mass, instead of being freighted with a number of loose articles, and as if the position had been planned in strict accordance with the laws of equilibrium and attraction, instead of involving an inexplicable violation of both. ....

"Our party of eight or nine assembled in the evening, and the *séance* commenced about nine o'clock, in a spacious drawing-room. ....

"The company at the table consisted partly of ladies and partly of gentlemen, and amongst the gentlemen was the celebrated Mr. Home. ....

"Perhaps there is no man of our time who is so totally unlike his reputation. ....

"He is himself exceedingly modest in his self-assertion, considering how sorely he is tempted to put on airs of mystical egotism by the rabid curiosity and gaping credulity with which he is notoriously persecuted. It is not easy for a man to preserve any simplicity of life and character under such a pressure of wonder and inquiry, .... Turning from gossip to the man, the contrast is impressive. He unreservedly tells you that he is thoroughly impassive in these matters, and that, whatever happens, happens from causes over which he has not the slightest influence. .... He looks like a man whose life has been passed in a mental conflict. The expression of his face in repose is that of physical suffering; but it quickly lights up when you address him, and his natural cheerfulness colours his whole manner. There is more kindliness and gentleness than vigour, in the character of his features; and the same easy-natured disposition may be traced in his unrestrained intercourse. ....

"Apart from the wonderful consideration of its (the accordion) being played without hands—no less wonderful was the fact of its being played in a narrow space which would not admit of its being drawn out with the requisite freedom to its full extent. We listened with suspended breath. The air played was wild, and full of strange transitions; with a wail of the most pathetic sweetness running through it. The execution was no less remarkable for its delicacy than its power. When the notes swelled in some of the bold passages, the sound rolled through the room with an astounding reverberation; then, gently subsiding, sank into a strain of divine tenderness. But it was the close that touched the hearts, and drew the tears of the

listeners. Milton dreamt of this wondrous termination when he wrote of 'linkèd sweetness long drawn out.' By what art the accordion was made to yield that dying note, let practical musicians determine. Our ears, that heard it, had never before been visited by 'a sound so fine.' It continued diminishing and diminishing, and stretching far away into distance and darkness, until the attenuated thread of sound became so exquisite that it was impossible at last to fix the moment when it ceased.

..... "But we need not speculate on what might be done by skilful contrivances in confines so narrow, since the question is removed out of the region of conjecture by the fact that, upon holding up the instrument myself in one hand, in the open room, with the full light upon it, similar strains were emitted, the regular action of the accordion going on without any visible agency. And I should add that, during the loud and vehement passages, it became so difficult to hold, in consequence of the extraordinary power with which it was played from below, that I was obliged to grasp the top with both hands. This experience was not a solitary one. I witnessed the same result on different occasions, when the instrument was held by others.

"It is not my purpose to chronicle the whole phenomena of the evening, but merely to touch upon some of the most prominent; and that which follows, and which brought us to the conclusion of the *séance*, is distinguished from the rest by this peculiarity, that it takes us entirely out of that domain of the marvellous in which the media are inanimate objects.

"Mr. Home was seated next to the window. Through the semi-darkness his head was dimly visible against the curtains, and his hands might be seen in a faint white heap before him. Presently, he said, in a quiet voice, 'My chair is moving—I am off the ground—don't notice me—talk of something else,' or words to that effect. It was very difficult to restrain the curiosity, not unmixed with a more serious feeling, which these few words awakened: but we talked, incoherently enough, upon some indifferent topic. I was sitting nearly opposite to Mr. Home, and I saw his hands disappear from the table, and his head vanish into the deep shadow beyond. In a moment or two more he spoke again. This time his voice was in the air above our heads. He had risen from his chair to a height of four or five feet from the ground. As he ascended higher he described his position, which at first was perpendicular, and afterwards became horizontal. He said he felt as if he had been turned in the gentlest manner, as a child is turned in the arms of a nurse. In a moment or two more, he told us that he was going to pass across the window, against the gray, silvery light of which he would be visible. We watched in profound stillness, and saw his figure pass from one side of the window to the other, feet foremost, lying horizontally in the air. He spoke to us as he passed, and told us that he would turn the reverse way, and recross the window; which he did. His own tranquil confidence in the safety of what seemed



from below a situation of the most novel peril, gave confidence to everybody else; but, with the strongest nerves, it was impossible not to be conscious of a certain sensation of fear or awe. He hovered round the circle for several minutes, and passed, this time perpendicularly, over our heads. I heard his voice behind me in the air, and felt something lightly brush my chair. It was his foot, which he gave me leave to touch. Turning to the spot where it was on the top of the chair, I placed my hand gently upon it, when he uttered a cry of pain, and the foot was withdrawn quickly, with a palpable shudder. It was evidently not resting on the chair, but floating; and it sprang from the touch as a bird would. He now passed over to the farthest extremity of the room, and we could judge by his voice of the altitude and distance he had attained. He had reached the ceiling upon which he made a slight mark, and soon afterwards descended and resumed his place at the table. An incident which occurred during this aerial passage, and imparted a strange solemnity to it, was that the accordion, which we supposed to be on the ground under the window close to us, played a strain of wild pathos in the air from the most distant corner of the room. ....

"I give the driest and most literal account of these scenes, rather than run the risk of being carried away into descriptions which, however true, might look like exaggerations. But the reader can understand, without much assistance in the way of suggestion, that at such moments, when the room is in deep twilight, and strange things are taking place, the imagination is ready to surrender itself to the belief that the surrounding space is inhabited by supernatural presences. Then is heard the tread of spirits, with velvet steps, across the floor; then the ear catches the plaintive murmur of the departed child, whispering a tender cry of 'Mother!' through the darkness; and then it is that forms of dusky vapour are seen in motion, and coloured atmospheres rise round the figures that form that circle of listeners and watchers. I exclude all such sights and sounds because they do not admit of direct and satisfactory evidence, and because no sufficient answer can be made to the objection that they *may* be the unconscious work of the imagination. ....

"Palpable facts, witnessed by many people, stand on a widely different ground.

..... "The 'failures' which have occurred at *séances* are urged as proofs that the whole thing is a cheat. If such an argument be worth noticing, it is sufficient to say that ten thousand failures do not disprove a single fact. But it must be evident that as we do not know the conditions of 'success,' we cannot draw any argument from 'failures.' We often hear people say that they might believe such a thing, if such another thing were to happen; making assent to a particular fact, by an odd sort of logic, depend upon the occurrence of something else. 'I will believe,' for example, says a philosopher of this stamp, 'that a table has risen from the ground, when I see the lamp-posts dancing quadrilles.



Then, tables? Why do these things happen to tables? Why, that is one of the very matters which it is desirable to investigate, but which we shall never know anything about so long as we ignore inquiry. And, above all, of what use are these wonderful manifestations? What do they prove? What benefit have they conferred on the world? Sir John Herschel has answered these questions with a weight of authority which is final. 'The question, *Cui bono?* to what practical end and advantage do your researches tend?—is one which the speculative philosopher, who loves knowledge for its own sake, and enjoys, as a rational being should enjoy, the mere contemplation of harmonious and mutually dependent truths, can seldom hear without a sense of humiliation. He feels that there is a lofty and disinterested pleasure in his speculations, which ought to exempt them from such questioning. But,' adds Sir John, 'if he can bring himself to descend from this high but fair ground, and justify himself, his pursuits, and his pleasures in the eyes of those around him, he has only to point to the history of all science, where speculations, apparently the most unprofitable, have almost invariably been those from which the greatest practicable applications have emanated.'\*

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### DR. GULLY'S TESTIMONY IN REGARD TO THE "CORNHILL" NARRATIVE, "STRANGER THAN FICTION."

["The scientific attainments of Dr. Gully, and his high character in his profession, and amongst as large a circle as any physician of the day, make it a duty to place his letter on record. It will be an all-sufficient answer to those who ask for the report of a scientific investigator. Since the date of the letter, Dr. Gully has had other and more private opportunities of satisfying himself as to the facts which are now, not only a settled conviction with him, but have led him to enlarge his enquiry as to what they prove."—*The Spiritual Magazine*.]

"SIR,—In Mr. Coleman's letter of the 11th inst., he gives his opinion that the gentlemen who were present at the meetings recorded in the *Cornhill Magazine*, under the head of "Stranger than Fiction," should confirm or confute the statements made in that article. I was one of the persons present at the evening meeting.† The other gentlemen were a solicitor in extensive practice, and two well-known writers of solid instructive works—not writers of fiction—who, by-the-bye, appear to be so used to inventing that they cannot believe that any one can possibly be employed in stating

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\* Preliminary Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy.

† The other gentlemen present were Mr. Robert Chambers, of *Chambers' Journal* Mr. Robert Bell, and, I believe, Mr. Wilkinson.

facts. It will be seen that the joke about 'fools of fashion' does not apply to the gentlemen alluded to, but that we were all workers in callings in which matters of fact, and not of fancy, especially come under observation. Further, it may be useful to some persons to know that we were neither asleep, nor intoxicated, nor even excited. We were complete masters of our senses; and I submit that their evidence is worth a thousand conjectures and explanations made by those who were not present. Scores of times I have been much more agitated and excited in investigating a patient's case, than I was in observing what occurred at the evening meeting in question.

"With this state of senses at the time, and revolving the occurrences in my mind again and again, since that time, I can state with the greatest positiveness that the record made in the article, '*Stranger than Fiction*,' is, in every particular, correct; that the phenomena therein related actually took place in the evening meeting; and, moreover, that no trick, machinery, sleight-of-hand, or other artistic contrivance produced what we heard and beheld. I am quite as convinced of this last as I am of the facts themselves.

"Only consider that here is a man, between ten and eleven stone in weight, floating about the room for many minutes—in the tomb-like silence which prevailed, broken only by his voice coming from different quarters of the room, according to his then position—is it probable, is it possible, that any machinery could be devised—not to speak of its being set up and previously made ready in a room, which was fixed upon as the place of meeting only five minutes before we entered it—capable of carrying such a weight about without the slightest sound of any description? Or suppose, as has been suggested, that he bestrode an inflated balloon, could a balloon have been introduced inflated large enough to hold in mid-air such a weight? Or could it have been inflated with hydrogen gas without being detected by ears, eyes, or nose?

"It seems to me a much stronger sign of credulity to believe either of these suggestions, with our present knowledge, than to adopt the wildest statements or dreams of what is called Spiritualism. Let it be remembered, moreover, that the room was, for a good part of the evening, in a blaze of light, in which no balloon or other machine sufficient for the supposed purpose could be introduced; or, if already introduced, could remain unobserved; and that, even when the room was comparatively darkened, light streamed through the window from a distant gas-lamp outside, between which gas-lamp and our eyes Mr. Home's form passed, so that we distinctly perceived its trunk and limbs; and most assuredly there was no balloon near him, nor any machinery attached to him. His foot once touched my head when he was floating above.

"Then the accordion music. I distinctly saw the instrument moving, and heard it playing when held only at one end, again and again. I held it myself for a short time, and had good reason to know that it was vehemently pulled at the other end, and not by

Mr. Home's toes, as has been wisely surmised, unless that gentleman has legs three yards long, with toes at the end of them quite as marvellous as any legion of spirits. For, be it stated, that such music as we heard was no ordinary strain; it was grand at times; at others pathetic, at others distant and long-drawn, to a degree which no one can imagine who has not heard it. I have heard Blagrove repeatedly, but it is no libel on that master of the instrument to say that he never did produce such exquisite distant and echo notes as those which delighted our ears. The instrument played, too, at distant parts of the room, many yards away from Mr. Home, and from all of us. ....

"To one whose external senses have witnessed these things, it is hard to increase the insufficiency of those attempted explanations which assert the use of tricks and machinery. As I said before, it requires much more credulity to believe such explanations than to swallow all the ghost stories that ever were related. I may add that the writer in the *Cornhill Magazine* omits to mention several curious phenomena which were witnessed that evening. Here is one of them. A distinguished *littérateur*,\* who was present, asked the supposed spirit of his father, whether he would play his favourite ballad for us, and, addressing us, he added—'The accordion was not invented at the time of my father's death, so I cannot conceive how it will be effected; but if his favourite air is not played, I pledge myself to tell you so.' Almost immediately the flute notes of the accordion (which was upon the floor) played through 'Ye banks and braes of Bonnie Doon,' which the gentleman alluded to assured us was his father's favourite air, whilst the flute was his father's favourite instrument. He then asked for another favourite air of his father's, 'which was not Scotch,' and 'The last Rose of Summer' was played in the same note. This, the gentleman told us, was the air to which he had alluded.

"I have thus borne testimony to the truthfulness of the facts related by the writer in the *Cornhill Magazine*, whom I recognise as having been my neighbour during the meeting. And I have endeavoured to show that, as regards the principal and most wonderful phenomena, there could have been no contrivance by trick or machinery adequate to produce or account for their existence. How, then, were they produced? I know not; and I believe that we are very—very far from having accumulated facts enough upon which to frame any laws or build any theory regarding the agent at work in their production. Intelligent phenomena, such as the music played at request, point to intelligent agents; and spiritual bodies that have quitted fleshly bodies may be at work. I, for one, wish that it were proved to be so; for a more solemn discovery than that of a means of communication between embodied and disembodied sentient beings cannot be imagined. It giddies the brain to think of the possible result of such a discovery. But, whilst I obstinately

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\* Mr. Robert Chambers.

stand up for the integrity of my senses during my observation of the wonders above related, my inner senses cannot but observe many gaps that must be filled up before the bridge between the spiritual body's life here in the flesh, and its life elsewhere out of the flesh, can be finished. Meantime the facts must be patiently and honestly accumulated, and enthusiasm must be banished from the minds of the enquirers. And as regards the denials, and abuses, and jests of the non-enquirers, let it be remembered that scurrility and laughter never discovered or disproved anything whatever in the world's history.

"Respecting the purely physical phenomena, such as the raising of weights, whether of human bodies or tables, it *may be* that we are on the verge of discovering some physical force hitherto undreamed of; who shall say that we know all the powers of nature? Here, too, dispassionate inquiry must go on, regardless of the noise outside; regardless, too, of the ignorant and malicious prejudice which would blast the reputation of those who enquire in a direction opposite to that prejudice.

"Enquirers, unlike routine people, must be prepared to rough it among their fellow-creatures. And I suppose that I, for having asserted that I have five senses as yet unimpaired, and for having testified to what the majority disbelieve, shall come in for my share of pity or abuse. Let it be so, if it helps on a truthful search.—I am, sir, yours faithfully,

"J. M. GULLY, M.D.

"Malvern, Oct. 14."

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## Introductory to the following Paper; and a Sketch of Personal Experience.

["It appears to me that the question of intercourse with the spirits of departed persons, the various conditions necessary to accomplish such intercourse, and the laws which govern it, also the means of identifying the spirits, may be properly and profitably investigated *simply as a science*, and altogether aside from religious questions."]

["If Spiritualism were of no 'use,' religious thinkers and men of science are bound to enquiry concerning it; for it has been well said by one who is not only a learned man, but a Christian clergyman, 'Testimony has been so abundant and consentaneous, that either the facts must be such as they are reported, or the possibility of certifying facts by human testimony must be given up.'"—S. C. Hall, F.S.A., *Editor of the Art Journal*.]

This pamphlet had thus far been set in type, when I accidentally learned that a Paper on the subject of Spirit-

Manifestations had been recently read by a gentleman of this town, before the Isle of Wight Philosophical and Scientific Society. On obtaining a perusal of the paper in question, it appeared to me to offer such a valuable acquisition as local and unquestionable testimony to the truth of the phenomena, that I immediately sought and obtained permission to present it to the public in these pages. Those of my friends and readers who are desirous that this question, so generally ridiculed or ignored, should receive the attention of the thoughtful portion of the public, that the truth may be elicited, and be eventually so broadly displayed as to become apparent to the most casual observer, will, I doubt not, appreciate the manner in which the writer puts forward the claims of this question, and will perceive that he is animated by the real spirit of the truth-seeker, as exemplified in his act of permitting his paper to appear beside my own, thus seconding my own feeble utterances in behalf of a thorough investigation. I may further observe, and I hope without giving offence to any, that the conservative tendency of the Society of which this gentleman is a member, has often been a subject of local comment. The readiness with which he submits his investigations to public examination will, it is hoped, tend to dispel such an impression.

It will be seen that the writer's *present* views, in regard to the source of these remarkable phenomena, are at variance with my own. But his object, plainly enough, is not to propound any theory, but to call attention to the subject, with the hope thereby of eliciting the truth. Having given long attention to the subject, I may perhaps be pardoned for expressing the hope, nay conviction, that, if he continue to pursue the investigation, he will sooner or later have to recognise and acknowledge an INDEPENDENT intelligence hidden in these astounding facts. It is, however, due for me to state, from my own experience as well as from the combined testimony of others, that early experiences, or partially developed media, are generally of such an unsatisfactory character as to leave room for much conflicting thought. My own experience, short and unsatisfactory enough, will offer an illustration and a caution.

Desiring to test the truth of the announcement given on two occasions from the alleged Spirit World, to the effect that I was a "drawing" or an "impressionable" medium, I sat in a quiescent state, with pencil in hand, on many occasions with no further result than the exhaustion of a fair stock of

patience, and a corresponding loss of the very little faith which I derived from the unimpressive manner in which the announcements had been made. At last I was rewarded by witnessing my hand impelled along the paper without, as it appeared to me, any voluntary action of my own will. On sitting down the following morning, the pencil described large semi-circles, then it formed large ovals and circles, with something like the figure 8 in the centre, the pencil being carried over the same track with such long-continued repetition, only relieved by an occasional reversal of its course, as to be painfully wearisome. I don't know whether it is a usual characteristic in these experiences, but this tendency of the influence to pass and repass over a certain limited track, and to rotate in large or small circles, has been to me a remarkable feature of the phenomenon. And I have observed that, in proportion to the strength of the influence, this feature was more or less developed. For instance, when the influence was weak, the pencil would traverse over again the letter just formed, as though gathering fresh strength, or waiting the action of some impressionable action on the mind before it could proceed. The tendency to continued circular action in the tails of letters, and in the letter O, has often caused me annoyance when I have been pressed for time. But I anticipate; allow me to return. At subsequent sittings, bold zig-zag lines were made, and rude designs formed, with waved and more or less deeply indented edges. At other times, the pencil would be impelled round the extreme edge of the paper for a number of times, forming an uneven ditch-border, then a childish-looking scroll would be thrown round this line, and sometimes an attempt being made to ornament the four corners. The closest observation has failed to convince me how far my own mind operated to produce these results. At times, the pencil would move in accordance with my desire; at other times, it would persist in a directly contrary course, with the perversity and wilfulness of a wayward child. After the novelty had worn off, these proceedings appeared simply curious, if not even childish; but all my strenuous efforts to invoke intelligent communications failed to produce even a single letter, for perhaps 14 days. One morning, however, before breakfast, upon holding the pencil, and earnestly desiring to be informed if the influence I experienced was the result of spiritual agency, I was startled to see the pencil form my own family name. I asked for Christian name, and

"Henry" was written. I desired to know the relationship, and the pencil formed "Brother your," inclosing the two words in an oval line. In reply to subsequent questions, it was written that he died going to some place, which the influence seemed unable to impress upon me, on the "18th of December, 1863." I may remark that I have no knowledge of the death of my brother, having been cut off from communication with him for the past three years, through the operations of that terrible civil conflict in the West. It is worthy of remark that the influence asserts (and the question has been often repeated) that he did not die a violent death. In reply to a solicitation for a message to my father, the absurd request was written that he was to go out to bury him. Further communications convince me that there is no reliance to be placed in the dates given in connection with certain events known to myself. If all this is some involuntary action of my own brain, is it not strange that my hand should be impelled to do that which is against my desire, and to write sentences I know to be absurd, and sometimes untrue? And yet how can I reconcile these absurdities and errors with the workings of an independent spiritual intelligence? The *Truth-seeker* says, "Mediumship is simply a matter of impression." There is a class of the phenomena, such as independent physical manifestations, which this idea does not fully explain, but in those embraced in my own experience the term "impression" conveys to me the readiest explanation. This ("impressionable") mediumship, excepting where it exists in the most powerful degree, appears to be the least satisfactory of any. If my own earnest desire had influenced the development of this power, I do not think it would have resulted in such phenomena.

It appears to me that in the degree in which the influence is able to impress upon the medium its wishes or ideas, more or less intelligent and correct messages are received. Hence I have repeatedly found that when there has been difficulty in impressing my mind, there has often been no deficiency of physical power to move the hand, which would continue to form a meaningless jumble of letters; sometimes, however, there would be a dead halt, or hesitation, and even a re-tracing of the previously-formed letters. However, my experience must be taken only for what it is worth—a caution to early experimentalists. But for Mrs. de Morgan's warning to the inexperienced, I should probably have thrown aside further investigation as unworthy of attention. As it



is, I wait patiently for a development of increased power, and more reliable symptoms of independent intelligence.

Lest any casual reader should open these pages, and proceed to jump to the conclusion that my experience offers a fair example of what mediumship really is, I will observe that there are numberless writing-mediums, who can hold an animated discussion while this influence takes possession of the person's hand, and write intelligent communications with amazing rapidity. Again, there are numerous instances of such strong and peculiar mediumistic power, that when a pencil, or pen and paper, is placed *out of reach* of the medium, the pencil or pen may be seen to be agitated over the paper without any visible agency, and well-written, sensible communications given, and sometimes beautiful drawings made in a few seconds of time,—utterly beyond the capacity of any human being to produce in the time.

The writer of the following paper states, without reserve, that he bases his present conclusions solely on those phases of the phenomena which he has witnessed during his short probation. Therefore it is scarcely necessary for me to reply at length to those points which he conceives are irreconcilable with the spiritual theory. Take, for instance, the following class of objections: why the spirits do not supersede the detective, and denounce the perpetrator of this and that frightful tragedy? why they do not reveal the secrets of camps and governments, and settle disputed incidents of history? why they will not, even to please those awful dignitaries of Printing-house-square, announce the price of Consuls a month in advance, or render service to their sporting interests by revealing the winner of the coming Derby? why they do not reveal some of the perplexing mysteries of science, and lay open, to all who seek, the deeply hidden things of nature: These kind of speculations appear to arise quite as naturally in the mind of the philosopher as in that of the plebeian, but they appear to me to be very profitless, especially in the earlier stages of the enquiry. All such speculations do not touch the fact that there is an intelligence which *does* reveal things unknown to any of those present, nay, even things unknown to any living being, but which has afterwards been verified. The writer with candour admits much may be said against his conclusions, and, further, he tenders to your special notice two valuable letters as bearing strong testimony against his present conclusions. With these observations, I commend you to the paper in question.

Those Spiritualists whose ample experience in the various phases of the phenomena has removed every particle of doubt from their own minds, will, I hope, in considering the writer's perplexity, share the generous feeling expressed by the Poet Tennyson in the lines—

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

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**A Paper Read May 2nd, 1864, before the Isle of Wight Philosophical and Scientific Society, on the (so-called) Spirit-Manifestations, by JOSEPH PAUL, Esq., F.R.G.S.**

“The subject which I have the honor to bring before you this evening is one which, I am ashamed to say, I have till lately regarded with an obstinate scepticism, as unphilosophical as it was discourteous towards those friends who kindly attempted to enlighten my ignorance. Instead of saying to myself, ‘Men of the highest intelligence and strictest integrity assure me of the truth of certain facts, I will examine them for myself,—I was rather inclined to say, The thing is plainly impossible, it is therefore utterly useless to bestow time upon its investigation.’ The time came, however, when circumstances almost obliged me to be present at what is called a *séance*, during which the phenomena which I am about to describe were exhibited. I attended the meeting with the full hope and intention of convicting the exhibitors of imposture, by discovering the sleight-of-hand by which they deceived their visitors; but, like the ‘fools who came to scoff, and remained to pray,’ I was convinced by what I witnessed that, to a certain extent, the statements which had been made to me were correct, and a force existed in nature, and could be called into action—either by means of the living principle generally, or by that of mankind in particular—which was not yet recognised in the current philosophy, and that an opening existed to a new field of discovery.

“With this conviction, I resolved to abandon the subject which I had intended to investigate before this Society, when my turn should come to read a Paper before it (*viz.*, ‘the Polarization of Light’), and to submit to it instead the very little which I had been able to ascertain on the subject which had so forcibly aroused my attention.

“I confess that it has required a considerable degree of moral courage to enable me to adhere to my resolution. I might be certain that the measure with which I had meted, should be measured to me again; that, as I had regarded the votaries of the new science with a comfortable consciousness of superiority, and of compassion for their mental weakness and credulity, so I must, unless I

stilled my convictions, be contented to be regarded by some as a dupe, and by others, perchance, at least as a hoax, if not as an impostor. But, gentlemen, I have not hesitated to advocate what I am convinced to be the truth, at whatever risk; and I am not without hope that I may meet with some candid spirits who may be ready to enter without prejudice upon this branch of science. We are avowed members of a *Philosophical and Scientific Society*. I have often been inclined to criticise this title,—to consider it tautological, and to advocate the rejection of one of these epithets; but, after all, I am doubtful whether it may not be successfully defended. We are a *scientific* society, inasmuch as we cultivate the *knowledge* of nature; we penetrate, by experimental research, the hidden mysteries of nature and science, and we endeavour to become acquainted with facts, and to classify them, so as to prepare them to conduct us to their common origin. I might explain my meaning by a reference to the bee-hunters of America. These men, in order to find the concealed stores of honey in the vast forests, adopt the following plan. By means of a honeyed bait, they capture several bees, and, after supplying them with an ample store of sweets, and taking them to as many stations at some distance from each other, they set them at liberty, and, with a pocket compass, take the bearings of their respective paths in the air; where several of these paths converge towards one point, they calculate the position of that point, and thus arrive at the luscious stores which they seek. So it is that, by carefully observing varied facts, and by arranging them in classes, the man of science prepares the way for the philosopher, who is led by their converging lines of evidence to the discovery of general causes. The scientific man collects and arranges facts,—the philosopher establishes theory. Now, gentlemen, I invite you to the more humble of these pursuits. I will lay before you, very briefly, the results of the few observations which I have been able to make—(I say briefly, because I am anxious to leave ample time for the discussion of the subject by the members and visitors present)—and I shall invite you to satisfy yourselves, if practicable, of the correctness of my statements. If I have to relate things which appear to be impossible, remember what was once the apparent impossibility of many things which are now ‘familiar to our mouths as household words.’ Were it not for the *fact* that it is so, would it not appear impossible to millions that a message could be sent many hundreds of miles in a few seconds? or that the fleeting image of the camera-obscura could be fixed, and a picture of an object be made in a fraction of a minute, infinitely transcending in accuracy and detail a similar one otherwise produced by the patient labour of months of a talented artist? Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that a mechanical force exists connected with vitality analogous to its chemical effects? We know that animal and vegetable life are very far more fertile in the production of specific compounds than the ordinary chemical forces. Organic chemistry, though restricted to the combinations of half-a-

dozen elements, comprises bodies which can be expressed by constant symbols of chemical equivalents, and which far exceed in number and complexity those comprised under the head Inorganic Chemistry, although the latter treats of the compounds of the whole 62 elementary bodies. Life produces combinations quite unattainable without it, and, in many instances, overpowers and holds in check the ordinary results of chemical affinity; and I contend now that life and volition are capable of exerting a mechanical force, independent of muscular action (although, perhaps, referrible to the same source), which is, as yet, as inscrutable as the chemical force which they are known to exercise.

"I wish it were practicable to illustrate my meaning by experiment, as I should endeavour to do if treating upon any other scientific subject; but the eliciting of the force I refer to, cannot be effected under all circumstances, nor often without such an exercise of patience, as is incompatible with such an occasion as the present. Still, the very difficulty attending its exhibition, instead of affording an argument against its reality, leads, on the contrary, to a presumption that when it does appear it is genuine,—that it cannot be feigned or excited at will.

"The form in which the force has been exhibited under my observation was as follows:—Several persons of the same, or of different sexes, being seated round a table, placed their fingers upon the table, and patiently waited for the result. After a time, varying from ten minutes to more than an hour, the table began to be moved, at first gently, afterwards more violently, the motion being sometimes an apparent attempt to turn on its vertical axis, sometimes to *tip*, as it is called—that is, one side of the table to rise, as though the table were about to fall towards the other side,—at other times, pulsations were apparent, attended by sound, to which, by those who in my opinion have rather hastily formed a theory, the name of spirit-rapping is given; and lastly, on two occasions, I have seen the table rise from the ground, and remain for some time suspended in the air. This has been attended, in every form, by an unmistakable manifestation of intelligence, which was apparently extraneous to any of those sitting at the table,—I say apparently, because, on that subject, I am still sceptical, and I shall take occasion presently to give my reasons for being so.

"There is one thing to be noticed, however: the power of exciting the force which produces these effects, does not exist in all alike. In some persons it resides in a high degree, so that their presence at the table for a short time is sufficient to cause the movements, which are, besides, more vigorous than when these persons are absent; such persons have been called 'mediums,' from the idea that they are selected by the spirits of the departed to communicate with the living. I do not believe that the spirits of the departed have anything to do with the matter; I think it is a purely natural phenomenon, and that the term 'medium' is objectionable,—still, with this protest, as the term has come into general use, I will adopt it.

"The first occasion of my witnessing the phenomena to which I have referred, was in last January. I then met my brother, and two other gentlemen who are connected with this town, and we repaired to the apartments of Mrs. Marshall, a well-known medium, of No. 10, Upper King Street. We found Mrs. Marshall to be an ordinary-looking woman, distinguished by little but a considerable tendency to *embonpoint*, and a philosophical disregard of aspirates. Mrs. Marshall has a daughter-in-law, a Mrs. Marshall, jun., who is likewise a medium, and not so portly as her senior. Our first care was of course to examine the table which was to do such wonders—to search for concealed springs, levers, wires, and strings; but we searched in vain. The table was an ordinary old-fashioned circular tea-table, about three feet in diameter—a 'pillar-and-claw table' as an auctioneer would call it, and, with the strictest scrutiny, nothing peculiar could be discovered in it. We sat down, six in number, round this table (the two women side-by-side), and, placing our hands upon it, awaited the result. I expected that strict silence would be enforced; nothing of the kind—the operators chatted away as though gossiping was their only cause of meeting. After waiting from ten minutes to a quarter-of-an-hour, I felt a pulsation in the table under my fingers (of course, it *might* have been the pulsation of my fingers upon the table), but immediately afterwards, Mrs. Marshall said 'It is coming,' and it appeared that the same pulsatory sensation had been experienced by all at the table. Shortly afterwards, the table tilted on one side, as though it were about to fall into my lap, and the medium asked, 'Is there a *spirit* present?' I beg again to remark that I am not responsible for the good woman's phraseology; what she called a spirit we may call by any other name we choose. I shall tell you by-and-by what I think it was. However, Mrs. Marshall asked, 'Is there a spirit present?' and immediately three raps were given upon the table—three raps always indicating Yes, and a single rap No. I cannot remember by whom all the questions were put,—sometimes by one, sometimes by another; but I will mention a few of them, with their answers:—'Do you wish to speak to any one?' , , , \* 'Whom do you wish to speak to?' The table was instantly tilted towards me. 'Is it to this gentleman you wish to speak?' , , , 'Will you speak by the alphabet?' , , , 'Who shall hold the alphabet? shall I? shall I?' , , , 'Who are you?' 'FATHER.' 'What was your name?' 'CHARLES JAMES WATSON.' But the medium explained that grandfathers' spirits called themselves father, and my maternal grandfather's name was James Watson. A number of other questions were asked, some serious, and others jocular. To the former true answers were returned, to the latter answers which were palpably false. Now upon these answers I would observe that they could not have emanated from the medium, who might have

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\* The commas represent the knocks given in reply.

been supposed to produce the knocks, since what truth there was in them could not by any possibility have been known to her, as they referred to family affairs, but they were known to be true to my brother and myself; and that those which were false and absurd were in answer to bantering questions, and even suggested by them. You will be pleased to bear this in mind, as I shall refer to it again when discussing the notion of the answers being given by departed spirits. The movements which had hitherto been caused in the table were, a slight attempt at rotary motion—tippings, as they are called—and rappings, but now another and far more astounding effect was produced. Upon the question being asked, ‘Can the table be lifted from the ground by the spirit?’ The answer was , , , and immediately the table rose from the ground to the height of about a foot, and remained suspended in the air during some seconds. I carefully examined the table above and below, and am ready to affirm most solemnly that nothing touched it below, and that the only contact which existed between it and the women mediums (who, it must be remembered, did not sit upon opposite sides, but upon the same side of the table,) was by their fingers being placed above it, while the only mechanical effect of the four visitors’ hands which were kept upon the table, must have been to press the table downwards. Supposing the possibility of the mediums’ hands being, by some means or other, adhesive, and that they could have, through the adherence of their fingers to the table, have raised it on their side, it is a simple matter of computation that the fulcrum and the weight being given, and the distance of the centre of gravity of the weight from the fulcrum, the force they must have exerted to raise the table, as it was raised, must have amounted to several hundred-weights.\* In order to afford time for closer and longer scrutiny, the question was asked, ‘Would the table be held suspended in the air while we counted twenty?’ The answer was , , , and again it rose into space, notwithstanding the pressure of our fingers, and at each word of counting, one, two, three, &c., bobbed a little downwards, as if itself counting, till the number twenty was reached, when it was dashed to the ground with such emphasis as startled the experimenters, and must have rather shaken the structure of the table. It was afterwards suggested that a much larger and heavier table—a loo-table—which stood in the corner of the room, should be substituted for the light one with which we had hitherto experimented, and, upon the trial being made, movements were produced quite as striking as those which I have already described. At last, five knocks were given , , , , , which were interpreted

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$$* \quad P = \frac{W (WF)}{P F} \quad W = (\text{say}) 30\text{lb.}$$

$$P F = \frac{1}{2} \text{ inch,} \quad W F = 24 \text{ inches,}$$

$$\therefore P = 12 \text{ cwt. 6-7ths.}$$

by the medium to mean that the alphabet was called for, when the letters G O O D B Y E were rapped out. After this unmistakable dismissal of our party, it was in vain for us to attempt to elicit any raps, tips, or risings; the table's strength had departed, and it had become like another table.

"I paid a subsequent visit to the Mrs. Marshalls, but this time in the company of my nephew, the Rev. S. B——. I had mentioned in that gentleman's company what I had witnessed at my former visit, and, as he expressed a wish to see and judge for himself, I appointed a day and hour with him and with Mrs. Marshall, when we should attend for that purpose. Then, as before, tippings and rappings were produced, and alphabetical answers to questions, as well as spontaneous messages; but we did not succeed in raising the table from the ground. The first so-called spirit addressed itself to *me*, still calling itself, as before, my father James Watson, and intimated its anger with me, because I did not believe the absurdly-false answers which I have referred to; the next addressed itself to my nephew, and professed to be his mother (my wife's sister, who had died about a year before), but Mr. B—— refused to have his adored mother's name mixed up, as he said, with such mummery; then it was intimated that his grandfather's spirit was prepared to answer questions. He was told correctly how many brothers he had, and how many children each of them had, but was informed that he himself had two children,—the fact being that he had but one, a second, however, being shortly expected. His grandfather then departed, and another spirit announced his presence by the usual rocking of the table. When asked what was his name, the answer was, St. JOHN—not 'Saint,' but 'St.'—and as no questions were put to his holiness, he volunteered to give some information—first, 'You will prosper in your work,' and some other such vapid sentences; then he rapped out that Septimus would go to India in six years. 'In what capacity?' 'As a Bishop.' 'A Bishop of where?' 'Of Calcutta.' I am not quite certain of the correctness of my recollection of the last answer; it was some place in India, I am certain. My nephew, I must mention, had gone to the *séance* with a full conviction that the table-movings were produced by those who made a gain of the exhibition, and that conviction was not removed by his visit, though he did not suggest any means by which the effects he witnessed could be produced, and he was certainly amused, as well as myself, by the information he had received as to his promotion.

"I may remark one significant piece of information received in connection with the latter *séance*: Mrs. Marshall, upon our arrival, brought the table into the room where we were, in which there was no fire, from an adjoining room, and remarked that 'the experiment would have succeeded better in that room, as there was a *good fire there*.' This may serve as one 'bee' to lead towards the discovery of a true theory.

"I have since been in correspondence with two gentlemen who



take an interest in the subject. One was 'Investigator,' who issued an advertisement in the *Daily Telegraph*, inviting persons who had observed facts in Spiritism to communicate with him. I wrote to him in consequence, describing what I have now been relating, and stating that I should be thankful for any information on the subject. I will read the reply which I received from that gentleman, who, it will be seen, attributes the phenomena in question to the agency of the spirits of the dead. I omit the name and address of my correspondent:—

“ ‘Dear Sir,—

“ ‘Your favor (to ‘Investigator’) duly came to hand a day or two since. I too, like yourself, first saw the spiritual manifestations at Mrs. Marshall’s, but I found that, by regular and patient sitting, I could get them in my own house, and without any professional medium. For some few months past, myself and wife have had regular converse with these unseen intelligences by means of tilts, raps, and writing.

“ ‘Your theory of some unknown force, capable of producing mechanical motion, I also once had, but was obliged to abandon it when I found I was dealing with *intelligence*, and an intelligence most clearly not emanating from any one at the table, as often, when only our two selves are sitting, we get information which we even never knew, but afterwards on enquiry have been able to verify.

“ ‘My impression is that *spirits*, both *good* and *bad*, do communicate as is stated. I further believe also that, according to the frame of mind you sit down in, so you get good or evil-class spirits (I have repeatedly noticed this); and I still further think that most of the strong physical manifestations are caused by evil spirits.

“ ‘I do not even say that it is wise (or right) to cultivate this peculiar power, but shall be better able to judge after further investigation; in meantime, I shall be happy to hear from you, and will cheerfully give you any information in my power.

“ ‘Yours truly,’ &c.

“I next communicated with Professor de Morgan, who I had been informed had entered into some researches on the subject. I should mention what is probably well known to some of the gentlemen present—that Professor de Morgan is one of the first mathematicians of the day, and the author of several works of high repute on Mathematics and Logic; certainly, he is one of the last persons in the kingdom to be charged with credulity. I described to him what I had seen, and asked whether he had witnessed similar manifestations, and whether he had been able to detect any juggling tricks on the part of the mediums, or thought the movements I described attributable to any known force. I took the liberty of addressing the Professor as an old disciple of his, having many years before attended his mathematical lectures. His reply was as follows:—

“ ‘Dear Sir,—

“ ‘I am perfectly satisfied that phenomena such as you describe are genuine, and this from what I have seen, and heard on evidence which I cannot doubt. What they arise from I cannot tell.

“ ‘The physical phenomena which you describe are beyond all explanation, but still there may be physical forces we know nothing of. The mental phenomena are vastly more difficult; there must be, so far as we can see, some unseen intelligence mixed up in the matter. Spirit or no spirit, there is at least a reading of one mind by something out of that mind.—Yours truly,

“ ‘A. DE MORGAN.’

“To complete the description of the experiments which I have witnessed, I may mention that, subsequently to the proceedings which I have described, I have experimented with perfect success at home. On these occasions, all objections on the score of possible imposture on the part of a professional medium have been obviated. Three or four of us were employed in searching for truth, with a full understanding that we were bound in honor not to attempt any trick or hoax upon each other. In my own room, and experimenting with my own table, the same jerks and tippings took place as I had witnessed in King-street, but we have had no rapping. The table has sometimes appeared quite unruly, butting with violence against one of the operators. The signals of the spirits (so-called) have been given by jerks made in the direction of the diameter of the table,—in fact, elementary tips, or others in a tangential direction, as though a differential attempt were made at turning the table on its axis. I have never seen a continuous rotary motion; in fact, the table has never been moved under my observation more than three or four degrees of its circumference. In experimenting upon a little round table which stands in my study, I caught another ‘bee.’ The table has a crack half-way across its top, and passing very nearly through the centre, and the signals given by this table were neither diametrical impulses like the first I mentioned, nor tangential in one direction like the second, but bitangential, if I may so express it,—that is, every signal consisted of a double impulse, one tending to turn the table to the right, and the other to the left,—such a motion as we might give to a sieve, if we were obliged to use it without shaking it from side to side. I call this a second ‘bee,’ because, when combined with other facts, it may possibly direct us to the proper theory. I consider the fact fully established that, by the process I have described, a force is elicited which is perfectly distinct from all forces hitherto discussed by scientific writers. At present the subject is involved in profound mystery, but I have no doubt that the investigations of candid searchers for truth will at length be rewarded by the discovery of some simple principle, which will suffice to account for the varied phenomena which have been recounted. Not many years ago in the history of science, philosophers

were puzzled by the strange and eccentric motion of the planets. A planet was observed to advance a certain distance towards the east, then stop for a time, then take a short march toward the west, and, after another rest, resume its course towards the east. Astronomers endeavoured to account for these and other apparent irregularities by supposing the planets to revolve in cycles, which were themselves carried forward in epi-cycles; and so, by a series of complex suppositions, they satisfied themselves that they understood the reasons of all the planets' vagaries. But Newton, after deep thought, propounded one simple theory—viz., that every particle in the universe pulls every other particle, with a force in inverse ratio to the square of the distance; and this not only satisfactorily accounted for all phenomena of the motion of the planets which had then been observed, but has continued to be a sufficient reason for all such phenomena as have since been discovered. So I doubt not that some Newton of AMOSGEPOTIC FORCE will arise, who will arrive at the source of all the appearances which now so much puzzle us. The strange word which I have just used is due to the author of a very learned work upon the subject before us, entitled, 'From Matter to Spirit,' and is merely an English version of the Greek adverb *αὐτως ἔπειτα*. This title has at least the merit of being independent of any theory, for, if we once admit the reality of the phenomena, there can be no objection to declare that they are caused *somehow or other*.

"Before I close this Paper, I would advert to the opinion which is so general among the students of this subject—that the element of intelligence which is manifested in Amosgepotic proceedings is referrible to spirits, and those quite distinct from the experimenters,—in fact, that the whole process is a species of necromancy. Now I cannot, after what I have witnessed, bring myself to this belief. Most of the supposed messages plainly bear the impression of the mediums' habits and mode of thinking; if the medium spells badly herself, the orthography of the message is also incorrect. The style of the messages received at Mrs. Marshall's is also similar to that of her own conversation, which certainly does not bear the stamp of education. Still, I am quite willing to believe that the rappings were not produced by any personal movement of the medium, or by any mechanical contrivance controlled by her, and that she is quite unconscious that her mind in any measure dictates the answers.

"I think that, in some mysterious manner, the mind of each person who sits at the table modifies the answers received; and thus it comes to pass that, indubitably, a visitor to a medium will receive information which he is certain is known only to himself, and, not being aware that the answers which are spelt out are but the reflex of his own mind, he comes to the conclusion that they proceed from some supernatural source.

"Besides the consideration which I have mentioned before which militates against this view, another appears to me to be very forcible. Mediums abound in America; they are reckoned there by tens of

thousands, and, if the spiritual hypothesis were true, the Americans must be holding constant correspondence with unseen intelligences, whose powers of acquiring knowledge are limited by no considerations of distance, and whose access to the most secret councils of camps and senates is under no restriction. Why, then, in the deadly and desperate struggle which has been continued for so many months between the North and the South, have not the respective leaders been kept continually well informed by their ghostly confederates of the minutest movements of their opponents? Why, also, is there any uncertainty concerning ancient historical facts, when ample information could be readily procured from the very persons concerned in the events under consideration? Why, for instance, need we longer doubt whether Themistocles died by a natural death, or poisoned himself, when it would be so easy to consult him on the subject? Or why should it still be a disputed point whether our own Richard II. fell under the pole-axe of his assailants, or died from starvation, or lived in Scotland many years after his deposition, when it would be so easy to summon his spirit, which would take it as a compliment to be noticed, and would readily give the information required. Such considerations lead me to doubt very much whether these manifestations can be attributed to any spirits but those of the experimenters. I must not, however, conceal that much is to be said on the other side of the question.

“Having determined to confine my observations to facts which I have myself witnessed, I have not adverted to other wonderful things which are said to have taken place in connection with the exertion of Amosgepotic force:—how mediums had their hands guided to write sentences not in their own hand-writing, but in that of persons long since dead,—how, when paper, colours, and pencils have been placed in a convenient position, spirits have executed by their means well-finished and artistical drawings,—how persons have been raised into the air by spiritual agency, and, floating near the ceiling, have left their autograph upon it.

“Such, and many other wonders, are recounted in the books before me, and any of the company are quite welcome to read them. My only object in meeting you this evening was to express my certainty that a new force has been discovered, perhaps in some respects analogous to electricity, and to try to induce you to institute a course of experiments to ascertain the nature and origin of that force.

“Though we cannot make experiments on the force here, any one who possesses patience and perseverance may make them at home, and I may conclude my reading by quoting directions for the purpose from the work ‘From Matter to Spirit,’ to w’): I have alluded (pp. 3—6.)”

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## OUTLINES OF TEN YEARS' INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE PHENOMENA OF MODERN SPIRIT-MANIFESTATIONS.

"Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."

"My conviction of the super-mundane and extra-physical nature of the cause of the phenomena has not been the result of a few weeks' reading, nor of the observation of a few isolated facts, but has been produced by many years of tolerably close observation, and the reading of every book, pamphlet, and letter, *pro* and *con*, which came within my reach. . . . . You say, that we ought to appeal to reason more, and facts less. On the contrary, I think, with the experience of mankind before us, we ought to appeal to both facts and reason more; let each have its proper influence. As to your not having seen tables float without mechanical aid, why that proves nothing, so far as modern physical manifestations are concerned, beyond the fact that *you have not seen* what others have. . . . . But this does follow, that you ought to be a little more modest in the expression of your opinions, and *investigate before you decide*.

"We are to believe only such things as '*can be made to harmonize with our previous knowledge*.' Then the king of Siam was right when he said 'there is no such thing as ice.' . . . . The philosophers of the 17th century, who denied the *fall* of ærolites, were quite right. . . . Benjamin Franklin was, with propriety, looked upon as a fanatic by the learned world, when he said he had drawn electricity from the clouds. . . . A foolish man was Dr. Harvey to assert and defend his theory of the circulation of the blood; *all physicians* knew that was quite contrary to and out of '*harmony with our previous knowledge*.' Travel across the Atlantic by steam, and in opposition to wind or current!—nonsense, that's not in harmony with our previous knowledge! Send communications from London to Edinburgh in an instant of time!—pooh, pooh, that's not in harmony with our previous knowledge! Exercise absolute control over a person, and render him deaf, dumb, blind, incapable of motion or sensation, and stop or accelerate the action of his heart at will!—fudge, that's not in harmony with our previous knowledge! Read without the use of any of the five senses, and by means of an agent more subtle than light!—can't be, that's not in harmony with our previous knowledge! Convert the sun into a taker of the portrait of any dirty urchin who will sit before a camera!—impossible, that's lowering his dignity, and is not in harmony with our previous knowledge! Write as rapidly as the most fluent speakers talk!—preposterous, that's not in harmony with our previous knowledge! Photograph, and render perfectly apparent and distinct, on a space not larger than the *sixteenth of an inch*, a

*landscape* covering an area of many miles!—ridiculous, that's not in harmony with our previous knowledge! Exhibit 1,000 perfect living animals, swimming, diving, feeding, and playing, in the tenth-part of a drop of water!—monstrous, that's not in harmony with our previous knowledge! See and hear a table answer questions correctly, no one in the room knowing the answers; observe accordions and guitars played, no visible being touching them; perceive tables float in the air without any mechanical contrivance; recognize spectral hands raising pencils, and writing communications that can afterwards be preserved and read with ease!—impossible, that's *not in harmony with our previous knowledge!* . . . . Almost all our knowledge of anatomy and physiology is the result of observation, and not of reason. . . . The work that lies nearest the hands of the opponents of spiritualism, and that which they ought to do, is to expose the fallacy of, or account for, the facts which are continually brought before us. Until that is done, it is no use raving about 'impossible,' 'opposition to natural laws,' 'optical illusions,' 'hypochondriacism,' &c. *It would be amusing if each writer on the negative side would state how much time he had devoted to, and in what manner he has examined the question.* We would then see 'the nakedness of the land.' . . . . Mr. Joseph Barker says, 'Whether the Spiritualists are right in their belief in the existence of disembodied spirits or not, we do not know. One thing is certain, they are not without grounds for their faith; they have what to them appears no less than ocular demonstration, and, though we are obliged to confess ourselves doubters, we cannot help feeling at times as if our doubts were *unreasonable*,—we cannot help feeling as if the faith of the Spiritualists was more reasonable than our own unyielding scepticism. . . . We hope they will be able to keep their faith, and we should be glad if they could convince the whole world that the doctrine of a happy immortality is true. We should esteem it a blessing, a great, inestimable blessing, to be ourselves convinced.'

"I struggled in the meshes of doubt and disbelief for about eight years, and, after vainly attempting to solve the problem of their causes by the operation of merely natural laws, I was at last, by overwhelming force of facts, driven into the belief of their being produced by extra-mundane powers, or, *ab extra*, spirit agency. I can, *therefore*, be tolerant of scepticism on the part of unbelievers in either the phenomena or theory of Spiritualism, and desire to force no man's conviction. I request persons not to receive implicitly my testimony, but to examine for themselves, and, from personal observation, either receive or reject, cautioning them at the same time not to expect to reach the top of the ladder of Spiritualism at a single spring. There is no royal road to learning; the mountain of knowledge is not to be climbed in a day. Let us learn the lesson that experience teaches all wise men and women—that truth is only to be acquired by slow and laborious research. . . . I infer that modern mysterious phenomena are produced by invisible spiritual

intelligences:—1. Because no known natural laws, giving them their widest latitude, have yet accounted for them; 2. Because there is no appearance of the probable discovery of a natural law that will account for them; 3. Because the interposition of invisible spiritual intelligences, acting through the agency of known or faintly shadowed-forth natural laws, does satisfactorily account for the phenomena. This position I am prepared to defend,—*all* others I believe are untenable. .... Assuming, then, that the phenomena are effected by disembodied spiritual intelligences, how are they produced? The following appears to me to be the most reasonable theory:—All persons, more or less, emit a fluid, which by Reichenbach is termed ‘od’ or ‘odyle.’ To the influence of that emanation some individuals are very susceptible. It appears to be somewhat, but not perfectly, analogous to the mesmeric or magnetic fluid. It emanates from almost all substances in greater or less quantity, and has, like electricity, the property of polarity. .... Be this inference true or false, this seems certain, that *there is* an emanation. Probably upon the quality and quantity of that emanation, in any given locality, depends the power of invisible intelligences to produce mechanical effects. .... All these facts lead me to suppose that the invisible intelligences work by this, or, it may be, some other subtle fluid. It is very probable that this fluid is converted into, or used for the production of a force by a means not at present known to us. Through this agent, then, the table may be lifted, and, where it exists in sufficient quantities a person may be lifted, and a house itself shaken. The independent raps are probably produced by a series of small explosions, or concussions; and hands are probably formed by intensifying this ethereal fluid, and moulding it into proper shape. This theory may be all true, all false, or partly true and partly false. Be that as it may, it presents itself to me, at present, as the most feasible explanation of the *modus operandi*. ....

Objection 4. Many of the communications are untrue, and self-contradictory. This, no Spiritualist, who has *freely investigated the subject, will deny*. The fact may be accounted for by the characters of the agents from whom the revelations come, some of whom are acknowledgedly bad and others good; and partly, perhaps principally, by the media through whom the communications are transmitted. All communications partake, more or less, of the character of the media through whom they pass. Even the Scriptures are tinged—in most cases strongly tinged—with the characters and styles of composition of the writers; and any man learned in literature could say from the style and nature of the compositions, this was written by John, this by Luke, and this by Paul. .... Suppose the spirit of a poet to have the power to inspire an unlettered rustic with his conceptions, how poor and imperfect would be his utterances! Suppose the poet could, in addition to the conceptions, inspire him to utter the exact words, how imperfect would be the representation, how terrible the accent, and how marred the



beauty of the finest passages!\* The objects of recent spiritual revelations may, in a *secondary aspect*, be designed to convey information respecting the affairs of this life, hints respecting the essential nature of the life that is to come, and more or less perfect communications in reference to sublunary and celestial things; but the *primary* object seems to me to be to demonstrate to a hyper-sceptical age the reality and actuality of a future state of existence, and that the future world is *not* an 'undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns.' Men now, in a general way, believe that God sees them in noon-day light and midnight darkness,—that He knows their thoughts, and sees their actions; yet, so faint and vague is the impression, that many men do, beneath the eye of the Almighty, what they dare not for shame do in the presence of their friends. If mankind believed and fully realized that which to many appears an undoubted fact—that the spirits of the departed hover round them, see their actions, and read their inmost thoughts—the very consciousness of such an assembly and invisible cloud of witnesses would induce many to draw the reins of their vices, and turn their thoughts to higher and holier purposes. There are numbers of sincere, moral, and intellectual sceptics, who are throwing out their strong Brierian arms in search of grounds on which to rest an unshakeable and rational belief in a future state. .... I know of no single instance in which a man's moral character has been injured by the investigation of modern spiritual phenomena. Such cases may have arisen,—some natures warp and distort everything."—T. P. BARKAS.

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#### THE REV. CHARLES BEECHER ON THE BONA-FIDE PERSONALITY OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNICANTS.

"Suppose the departed wife, sister, or friend of any one present desired to make herself manifest to him, how *COULD SHE* on the supposition that modern phenomena are produced by natural laws? Suppose a departed wife or sister wanted to converse. She speaks to you, moves your furniture, touches your dress, your person,—

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\* I wish to call particular attention to this happy illustration of Mr. Barkas', of an idea I believe held in common by all serious observers of these phenomena. To any thoughtful mind, it will throw much light on some of the messages purporting to be given by the spirits of certain great men who have passed from this life, and which messages have been held up by opponent critics with such glee for universal repudiation.

‘all automatic action,’ you say, of some brain, *en rapport* with the locality.’ She sings, plays the guitar or piano, takes a pencil and writes, and you see the pencil in free space tracing your wife’s or sister’s autograph,—‘automatic still,’ you say. She shows you a cloudy hand, nay a luminous form, and smiles and speaks as when in life,—‘that is an optical illusion, or hallucination, or subjective vision,’ you say. She communicates facts, past, present, and future beyond the scope of your knowledge,—‘that might be Clairvoyance,’ you say. Alas! what could she do more? She must retire baffled and confounded, complaining that you had become so scientific that all communication with you was impossible.”

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### A LETTER FROM JUDGE EDMONDS.\*

[“In 1845 Mr. Edmonds was appointed Circuit Judge of the first judicial district, in preference to several able competitors for the office; in 1847 he was elected Judge of the Supreme Court; and was successively Associate Judge and Presiding Judge of the most important judicial district of the State—perhaps of the Union—and finally, in 1851, took his seat in the Court of Appeals. In the discharge of his judicial duties, his fearless and independent conduct remind us of our own Sir Matthew Hale. An extraordinary instance of this was presented at an anti-rent trial in 1845. The counsel employed had been engaged in the same case previously, and had then manifested no little combativeness. They displayed the same warmth before Judge Edmonds, and carried it so far as to come to blows in open Court. The offenders were gentlemen of high standing, and personal friends of the Judge, and both at once apologized for their contempt of Court. But the Judge committed them both to prison, and adjourned his Court with the remark that it was not his fault that the course of public justice was thus interrupted. This event attracted much attention throughout the Union, and was noticed by our own press as ‘evidence of advancing civilization in America.’”]

“The real marvel of the phenomena is, that inanimate matter moves without mortal contact *and displays intelligence, and that an intelligence which can read, write, and cypher, can speak in many tongues, and can read our secret thoughts.* Whence comes that intelligence? is the question. The presence of an intelligence is easily ascertained. But the neophyte says—and it is almost his first question—How know I that it is not my own mind that either generates the thought I perceive, or is read by this intelligence and communicated through the medium? The answer is, because thoughts come which were never in your mind, nor in the medium’s either, nor in that of any mortal present. Over and over again—hundreds and thousands of times has this occurred. I could fill sheets with instances which have occurred to myself. I will mention some, merely as an illustration of what I mean. To convince my daughter that it was not her own mind, they (the spirits) told

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\* Reprinted from the *Spiritual Magazine*.

her of the loss of a steamer which had left this port for California, only a few days before, laden with soldiers. They said that vessel had foundered at sea, that over one hundred of the passengers had been swept overboard, and that the residue had been taken off by three vessels, bound for different ports. In the course of a few days after that, news came of the wreck, confirming in every respect the statement which had been made. I have heard Mr. Collins say that the first news he had of the loss of the Arctic steamer, with some of his family, was by a spirit-communication, and I have often been told of things then unknown to me, but afterwards ascertained to be true. These, and many other such like incidents, demonstrated that the intelligence was not that of the medium or any present at the *séance*.

“But still the question arose—May it not be of some other mortal, reacting in some as yet unknown way? This question, too, has been met by very many incidents, some of which show every probability in favour of the Spiritual theory, and some which show that it must be from the spirits of the departed. Dr. Hare’s identification of his sister, and my identification of my wife are instances of the former kind. Things were said to him that he knew were unknown to any but himself and his sister long since dead. So with me, matters were referred to that never had been known to any one on earth but to my wife and to me. Then, again, the characteristics of the individuals purporting to speak from the spirit-world, came so strongly marked that there was no mistaking them, and that often in so subtle a form, and with such a delicate touch, that no accomplished actor could imitate, much less one so rude and unlettered as the mediums often were. The language, the tone of thought, the feeling, the temper, all agreeing in the minutest particular with those which marked the individual when in life, and often displayed in a tongue utterly unknown to the medium, but perfectly in keeping with the person professing to speak. Thus I have been spoken to in Indian by a savage whom I knew once in our far-western wilds, and at another time by a Spanish woman whom I had known in Central America, and in both instances referring to matters known only to me among the still living.

“Now, if I was struck with blindness, think you that I could not identify distinctly from all the rest of the world one whom I had known most intimately for over thirty years, when the opportunity should be afforded me of repeated conversation for a period of eight or ten years? Behold, then, how strong is the argument of probabilities, and how much more credulity it would require to believe any other solution of the mystery than the spiritual one.

“But we need not stop here upon this probability, however strong it may be. Add to it, the power of spirit-sight and hearing, and you have every element by which one could ever, under any circumstances, identify any individual. This seeing and conversing with spirits is quite common with us—more so, indeed, just now, than the rappings or table-turnings. This was of almost daily

occurrence at my house for six or seven years, while our doors were open to all enquirers, and was during that time witnessed by thousands. Now that we have withdrawn from that field of labour, it is less frequent with us, but has not entirely ceased. Only a few evenings ago, I was sitting alone in my library, profoundly thinking upon a great moral question, on which I had some perplexing doubts. I looked up, and my only brother, who died about a year ago, stood by my side, within three feet of me. He told me he came as the messenger of a higher intelligence to solve that doubt, and he did so, with an expression of countenance, a manner, and in language, entirely characteristic. We had a brief conversation on the subject, and as soon as he perceived that I understood him he vanished. I saw him as plain as I ever saw him in life, and if I could ever identify him I could then. Now, if this was not the spirit of the departed, what was it? and whence came the clear wisdom of his teaching, far as it was beyond my capacity to originate? Fifty years ago this would have been a ghost story, and the silly education of my childhood would have caused me to be frightened, but now it has been of such frequent occurrence with so many people, and under so many various circumstances, and it has come to be so well understood, that it excites no alarm,—no agitation even. Why, even our children laugh and play with the spirits! Supposing all this is true—and there is as much evidence of it as there is of the rapping and the table moving—what explanation can be given of it, half as probable as the spiritual theory? Men believe in the Bible! Then they believe that in the olden time, mortal men saw the spirits of the departed. Who was it that Peter, and James, and John saw with Jesus on the mountain? And who was it that John saw in the Revelations, but one of his brethren, the Prophets? And wherein, pray, has the nature of man so changed, that what was possible to him eighteen hundred years ago, is not possible to him now?

“But this is not all that is to be said in favour of the spiritual source of these manifestations. There is one consideration more important than all others, for in it is involved the great end and object of the whole of this spiritual movement. It is this—this intelligence can and does disclose to us what is the condition of life into which we pass through death. No mere mortal intelligence can do this—no mere earthly intelligence having its birth, its home, its empire, and its grave here, can accomplish that task, for, whence could it get the knowledge? But the spirits of the departed would necessarily have the knowledge, and, most naturally, would impart it if once the way for the communion was opened, *and the mind of the mortal was ready to receive it.*

“And this is what they are doing: giving us this knowledge of the future life in its broadest expanse and in its most minute details, aptly finishing—‘now that man is ready to receive it’—the revelations of one God and one immortality given to us long, long ago.

“It will not do to say that these professed revelations of the

future life are the product of mortal imaginations. The coincidence and agreement of the manifestations on this topic in all parts of the earth, in all languages, is a marvellous feature of the whole movement. While upon all other topics—domestic affairs, history, science, or natural philosophy—there are contradictions and incongruities, while in regard to the manifestations themselves and the *modus operandi* of them, there are all sorts of conflict; in regard to the condition of the future life, there is a universal accordance. This no mortal imagination could accomplish. This, no former revelation has given to man. This, all religions have hitherto failed to enlighten us upon. This, external nature and unaided reason are incapable of disclosing to us. But it can be done by the spirits of the departed, if they are permitted to return to earth and hold communion with us. And this is what they are now doing, and, I repeat it, *this is the great end and object of the whole movement.*

“Those among the spirits, whose material condition or strong affection brings them back to earth, or causes them to linger here, are the instruments first used to establish the fact of spirit communion. And as soon as that becomes established, the physical manifestations which have been used for that purpose fade away, and then the attention of both spirit and mortal is mainly directed to the other higher purpose, and the teachings come from the wise ones made more perfect by a longer sojourn in the spirit-world. But in the meantime, and in the earlier stages of the manifestations, there are dropped here and there thoughts upon this more momentous topic—the frequency and character of them depending mainly on the mood of mind and object of the inquirer. But whatever the character of the medium, whatever the purpose of the inquirer, whatever the nature of the manifestations, whether physical or mental, whatever the circumstances under which they are made,—there is in these revelations of the future life, be they brief or voluminous, a marvellous accordance and an exemption from all those contradictions which so often rise to plague us in all other parts of spiritual communion.

“I have observed the past year, that several of your statelier order of Reviews have given some attention to this subject in their review of *Home's Incidents*. I perceive that they confine their attention mainly to the physical phase of the phenomena, and deny or question, simply because they do not know. I do not wonder at their unbelief without knowledge, for the manifestations are mainly so merely personal in their character, that it is not possible for any testimony from another to convey the vivid idea of reality. Thus, I know whether I am touched or not—I know whether I see or not; but it is quite impracticable for me to carry to another the vivid idea of reality which I have. And they who cannot give due weight to human testimony are to be pitied—that is all! But there is one subject on which these reviewers could safely have touched, if they would; and that is the moral nature of the doctrines which Spiritualism promulgates.

"I have had frequent occasion to assert, that the tendency of these doctrines was to the most exalted private worth and public virtue. I have challenged contradiction—I repeat the challenge. . . .

"So, too, they might have said something about this great end and object of spirit-communion to which I have referred. When persons of education sit down 'to cram' for the occasion of such a review, and to write an essay upon a subject which now occupies so much of the attention of the civilized world, is it possible that they could have waded through so many volumes and never alighted upon the idea? It stands out as the great end in view, and yet these reviewers ignore its very existence.

"Why was this? Surely, nothing can be more important to man than a revelation of a future life, so full and ample that he may understand how to prepare for it. It could not have been intentional, and it can be accounted for only on the supposition that they, like the writer of 'Mary Jane,' were too intent on the means to be mindful of the end.

"Let us be warned by their example! Let us never be unmindful of this great end of the work before us! Let us remember that the advantages enjoyed by us, who have been blessed with evidence enough to believe, and the privileges bestowed upon us, are that we may perform the duty of imparting to our fellow-men the most valuable of all knowledge—that, namely, of the future beyond the grave.—Yours most truly,

"J. W. EDMONDS.

"*New York, Feb. 21.*"

## MR. AND MRS. S. C. HALL ON "THE USE OF SPIRITUALISM."

"REVEREND SIR,—I desire to answer the question you have asked me,—What is the 'USE' of Spiritualism? and your doubts as to whether it be good or evil in its origin and purpose. . . .

"My purpose in writing is to show the use of Spiritualism. I will endeavour to do so, humbly, earnestly, and briefly as I can.

"To me it is certain that belief in Spiritualism is not only consistent with reason, and sustained by experience, but is sanctioned by Revelation.

"'Concerning spiritual gifts,' the apostle Paul 'would not have us ignorant;' and the prayer of one of the most beautiful of the collects of our Church is, that God will 'mercifully grant, that as Thy holy angels always do Thee service in heaven, so, by Thy appointment, they may succour and defend us on earth.'

"Pause, therefore, reverend sir, before you attribute this *new revelation of an old power* to Satanic influence, for so it is pronounced to be by many, who, unable to withstand the proofs of 'Spiritualism,' resist it upon this unnatural and unchristian ground; as if it can be for an instant admitted, that while God *does* allow evil spirits to be with us, communicating with us, influencing us, teaching us, He absolutely forbids just and good spirits from counterbalancing the effects that evil spirits are continually striving to produce. Surely, that is arraigning, not only the mercy but the justice of God. ....

"You, as a clergyman, believe and teach that miracles *have been*, although, probably, you may maintain that they *have ceased*. While you tell us that miracles were wrought to induce conviction of Christ's mission ('*to the intent ye may believe,*') and as means of conversion to truth, you deny that they are in operation *now*, when there are on earth millions more than there were in Apostolic times, who do not believe in Christ, and though you know that Materialism is widely spread, and increasing over the earth.

"I am coming to the point of my letter, and the purpose for which it is written.

"If I were writing to 'the general public,' I should give a detail of wonders—every one of which is a miracle, according to the accepted interpretation of the term! hundreds of which I have seen at different times, in different places, and with various persons present to testify to the phenomena. There are thousands of witnesses to these phenomena: witnesses, the exactitude of whose testimony upon any other subject would not be doubted by any one of the many who *will* doubt them on this: eminent men—men eminent for integrity, intellectual strength, continual exercise of the enquiring faculties, who *have* enquired repeatedly, and with *suspicious scrutiny* (as in my own case), applying all the tests that reason and the senses can supply, under circumstances that rendered imposture and self-delusion equally impossible; and who have obtained entire conviction, that the spirits of those who have been in the flesh can and do communicate with those who are still in the flesh, and that 'holy angels' are permitted to give us evidence that they *do* 'succour and defend us on earth.'

"It is easy to mock at the 'meanness' of manifestations by 'table-turning,' 'raps,' and so forth—the lowest rails of the spiritual ladder; not more unreasonable is it to sneer at a contemplated railway, while nothing of it is perceptible but the clay that is to form the roadway. As easy is it to condemn and abuse 'mediums' as cheats, forgetting that the orator Tertullus, representing the high priest, described St. Paul to Felix as 'a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition,' that in refined Athens he was stigmatized as 'a babbler,' and that in all ages men who have brought new lights into the world have been persecuted, outraged, and slain.

"But my purpose in addressing you is to show the 'use' of Spiritualism, and not to proclaim the power by **FACTS**,—that has been well and often done. The mockers and sneerers at Spiritualism.



are almost exclusively those who have seen nothing of it, know nothing about it, and *will not* enquire concerning it. As rational and respectful would it be for me to reprove Professor Owen for saying that a certain mark on a stone was the mark of an antediluvian bird's claw—which to me appeared nothing more than an accidental impression—as it would be for one, who has seen and known nothing of Spiritualism, to tell me (I say it with all humility), who have seen and studied it much, that I am deluded and deceived—believing myself to see, to hear, and to feel, that which I neither feel, hear, nor see.

“It is no doubt right for clergymen to tell us we have the Bible, and that the Book is all-sufficient for salvation: although they thus ignore the fact that ministers are appointed by God to be its interpreters. ‘Understandest thou what thou readest?’ was the question put by the apostle Philip. ‘How can I, without a guide?’ was the answer of the eunuch. I deny, however much I may deplore, that they—not the one, but both in combination—suffice *always* to induce conviction of the mysterious truths of Christianity. They certainly did not suffice in my case; for I did not, and could not, believe in miracles, although from my youth upwards I had been taught to study the Scriptures, and had been ‘guided’ by Christian men of the Established Church. There are hundreds of thousands of professing Christians who are circumstanced as I was—who do not and cannot believe that three men were put into a burning fiery furnace, and issued thence unscathed: that a man who had fallen from the second story, and was taken up dead, was restored to life at the word of a fellow-man: who, in short, do not believe in aught they cannot test by reason and the senses, and who, therefore, whatever their profession may be, are *not Christians*. It has happened to me, more than once in my life, to be told, ‘I would give all I have in the world to believe fully and entirely, and without a shadow of doubt, in a future state.’ In the Christian, as in the Jewish Church, there are Sadducees who do not believe in a Resurrection.

“It is with others as with me!—many who, within my own knowledge, were more than ‘doubters,’ are now believers; humble, but fervid disciples of Christ—made so by Spiritualism. ....

“But that I should make this letter far too long, I could quote abundant instances of conversion to belief from unbelief—of some to perfect faith from total infidelity.

“Reverend sir, shall I surprise and shock you if I say there are among intellectual men as many who will sneer at me for recording my belief in the Divinity of Christ, as there are who will laugh at me for expressing my belief in Spiritualism?

“You will perhaps require to know something of *facts* beyond this statement: I will give them to you as far as regards myself. To the wonderful phenomena I have witnessed, I shall here make little or no reference; neither shall I (with one or two exceptions), to the communications I have received, or that have been received by others in my presence, through what are usually called

'mediums,' *i.e.*, persons who are used by angels and spirits, under God, to be a means of intercourse between them and us. Why this power should be given to some and not to others, is one of the mysteries that perhaps never will be explained on earth: but it is so. St. Paul alludes to 'diversities of gifts,' one of which is 'discerning of spirits.' Mediums are not remarkable either for intellectual or moral qualities; that is one of the inexplicable facts by which Spiritualism is surrounded.

"I confine myself to my own experience in association with that of my wife. You know us, I think, too well, to believe us victims of continuous self-delusion, delusion extending over years—evening after evening—while you will not suspect us of blasphemy (for it is no less than blasphemy if there be wilful deception) in the details I give.

"I extract from a book in which we enter the 'messages' we receive:—

" 'We receive these messages—*we two*—while sitting at a small table, the table tilting thrice (as one of us repeats the alphabet) at each letter that forms part of the sentence.

" 'We never sit without prayer that God will permit us to receive only communications from holy angels and good spirits, usually repeating the Lord's Prayer, and generally, also, the prayer that precedes our Sacramental Service, 'God, to whom all hearts are open,' &c.

" 'The messages are what we term spiritual messages: we believe them to be delivered to us by spirits, some of whom have been in the flesh—commissioned by God to do this work for our souls' good, and to promote our earthly happiness.

" 'S. C. HALL.

" 'A. M. HALL.'

Mrs. Hall is in perfect agreement with her husband in all he has here written, but she could not sign the whole because the doubts which are hereafter expressed never did perplex her. In her tribute to the memory of Mrs. Home, she says, "Spiritualism has been to me a blessing, for which I cannot be enough thankful, less for my own sake than for others, who are very dear to me; for though it brought me more sunshine, it has given me no new light."

"This book contains upwards of one hundred messages *given to us two, sitting together*, no other person being present. Of these messages, I copy some—

As I conceive it to be imprudent, in the present state of the inquiry, to attach any importance to spirit messages of a doctrinal nature, it will suffice for my purpose to state that the messages quoted are of the usual deeply religious character. Those whom the subject interests may find the

complete declaration of the writers in the July number of the *Spiritual Magazine*, and also in the *Spiritual Times* of the 9th of the same month.

"These extracts will suffice to show the nature and character of the whole: they extend over a period of three years. We never 'sit' without receiving some message; sometimes we are told the earthly name of the spirit who gives it; generally, however, when we ask the name we receive no reply. ....

"I do not wish strongly to describe my state of mind, all my life, until I became *convinced* by Spiritualism,—convinced, that is to say, that the dead die not: that there is an eternity of which what we call life is the beginning and the preparation: that earth is but the first of 'many mansions,' to which man is in progress: that, in a word, God creates in each of us a spirit (which we call 'soul,') that He ordains shall never perish.

"Honoured and revered be the memory of the good woman (her life in this sphere was continual preparation for life in another,) who, when she left earth, was mercifully permitted to continue her influence, to give me counsel, to bring me 'messages,' to humble my heart, and lead me to a knowledge of my Saviour—a work she had laboured, while in the flesh, to accomplish, in vain. We have had evidence of her presence with us, since her 'removal,' as clear, certain, and conclusive, as we had when she was sitting 'in the body,' by our side. It is scarcely less palpable than it was when she was *only* an inhabitant of earth. ....

"And is it nothing to have the continual consciousness that I am watched and guarded by those who loved me while they were on earth,—the knowledge that I am ever surrounded by them, earnest in efforts and in prayer to keep me right, and prevent the influence of the evil spirits I know to be as constantly near me, eager to instil *their* principles into my ear, and my heart? Is not death thus deprived of its sting,—the grave of its victory? Is the counsel I ask of my departed friends a vain thing,—asking that God and my Saviour may permit them to give it, and the knowledge that he *does* permit them to give it?

"S. C. HALL."

"The spirit-world, around this world of sense,  
Floats like an atmosphere, and everywhere  
Wafts through these earthly mists and vapours dense  
A vital breath of more ethereal air."

—LONGFELLOW.

I do not think it probable that "Modern Manifestations" had impressed the writer of the following lines, which appeared in *Eliza Cook's Journal* some 14 years ago. I offer them to the reader as confirmatory of the theory, generally held by spiritualists, of guardian spirits:—

### GUARDIAN ANGELS.

" Guardian angels!—do we doubt them?  
 Night by night, and day by day,  
 Could we guide our steps without them,  
 Where would wavering fancy stray?  
 Ev'ry noble thought that's spoken,  
 Ev'ry smile, and ev'ry sigh,  
 Are they not a sign—a token  
 That some guardian angel's by?

" Guardian angels, hovering o'er us,  
 Keep the soul, in mercy, pure;  
 Had we not bright hope before us,  
 Could we this frail life endure?  
 Then, be sure, that ever near us  
 Voices come from forms unseen,  
 Breathed by angels sent to cheer us—  
 Watching earth and heav'n between!"

J. E. CARPENTER.

## ADDENDA.

MR. B. COLEMAN\* AT RYDE, AND A REPLY TO HIS  
OPPONENTS.

"There came a wise man and a fool; the wise man *heard, investigated, and decided*,—the fool *decided*."

"If, after making every allowance for the incongruities, false theories, fanaticism, and the common errors attached to Spiritualism, only ten per cent. of the whole should prove pure and impregnable, it is still as sound a science as Chemistry was at the beginning of this century, which has thrown aside ninety per cent. of the teachings then received as truths."—*Professor Mapes to Mr. B. Coleman.*

If the party of ladies and gentlemen who recently met Mr. Coleman in Ryde had been called together to hear for the first time M. Du Chaillu's marvellous tales of the Gorilla in that mysterious region, Equatorial Africa,—or a description of wonderful natural phenomena, narrated by some venturous explorer of the Arctic circle,—or a recital of strange Japanese customs—the various shades of doubt and scepticism thereby raised would, I am convinced, have assumed a less positive tone than those which found expression at the recital of some of Mr. Coleman's experiences. The fact that educated, thoughtful men—men supposed to be conversant with every topic of the day—should have ignored the pressing claims, nay the very existence of phenomena that have been occurring in their midst for the past ten or twelve years, which gave, in continuous and increasing reverberative tones, a solution of the grandest, most momentous problem that ever engaged the attention of the human mind—affords either a remarkable proof of stolid apathy, or a startling and lamentable phase of human prejudice.

There is no force in the remark that the facts vouched for by Spiritualists are not facts to the public. The Spiritualist is not to be held responsible for the indifference, want of opportunity, or, it may be, the indolence of those

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\* Mr. Benjamin Coleman—a gentleman well known in the city of London, who has boldly advocated the cause of Spiritualism—whilst spending his summer holidays with his family at Ventnor in the present month (August), was invited to meet a few ladies and gentlemen at the lecture-room of the Philosophical and Scientific Society at Ryde.

who have not troubled themselves to step aside from their accustomed path to observe that which was occurring but a few paces distant, for it has been forced upon the public attention sufficiently often that these alleged phenomena were not restricted to Chinese Tartary, or some other remote locality. It is known to most of those who keep pace with these events, that neither Mr. Coleman nor Mr. Robert Chambers crossed the Atlantic on a wild-goose-chase, after some illusive *ignis fatuus*. They must have been perfectly convinced of the reality of this wonderful power, if not of its spiritual origin, from what they had repeatedly witnessed in this country. Their visits to America were simply for the purpose of observing more remarkable phases of these manifestations. Neither have the sceptics the plea of expense, and disinclination to seek the mysterious aid of "mediums," who, however honest, mayhap lack the choice modes of expression becoming the associates of educated men. It is a fact which should have restricted Mr. Coleman's opponents to a cautious reticence, that there has been no need to travel far nor to search long for the opportunity of observing this astonishing "revival of an old power," for they could, if so disposed, have summoned more instances of its reality in their own homes and amongst their own friends than their present philosophy could account for. Therefore I maintain it is an amazing anomaly that men disposed to scientific studies, and to calm and patient observation of nature in its wide expanse, its grand aspects, in the workings of its unseen and subtle agents, and in its minute organisms—men who bring into the ordinary pursuit of business or of knowledge an amount of energy to bear upon their efforts that carry them over obstacles which would appal the many—should come boldly forward, after this great question has been agitated for twelve or fourteen years, and, as it would appear, knowing absolutely nothing, theoretically or practically, of the subject, pronounce a negative decision on the whole.

It was urged by one of Mr. Coleman's opponents at Ryde, in reference to robes, which it was alleged clothed a spirit form, and which robes it was stated possessed the appearance and all the reality of a material object, that if these things were so they must be miracles, and he (the opponent) was "quite sure the days of miracles were past." I cannot but respect the state of mind which, while it approaches this question in an inquiring spirit, yet exercises due caution in the reception of its startling truths; but this objection appears to me to assume a form of presumptuous knowledge

of the limit of spirit power over matter, and of the mysterious workings of God and His laws, which I cannot think the gentleman could have seriously entertained. Mr. Howitt, in his brief review of the Rev. Isaac Taylor's "Physical Theory of another Life," says. "The author speculates as a strong probability on what every spirit now communicating shows to be a great truth—viz., that in our earlier stages in that (spirit) world we shall probably carry a certain amount of the more subtle particles of matter with us, and that these we drop by the way as we advance towards purer and more concretely-spiritual spheres." Mr. Isaac Taylor further infers that "the human spirit retains the form of the body; that it maintains its identity, and all the memory of the past; that it is probably destined to successive developments into purer and higher conditions; that its passage from this life to the next will be immediate; and that it may, very likely, be only astonished at finding so little apparent change in itself, and how little its personal consciousness has been disturbed." Quoting Mr. Taylor's words . . . . "Then our conjecture is—that within the field occupied by the visible and ponderable universe, and on all sides of us, there is existing and moving another element fraught with another species of life—corporeal indeed, and various in its orders, but not open to the cognizance of those who are confined to the conditions of animal organization, not to be seen, nor to be heard, nor to be felt by man. We here assert, and insist upon the abstract probability that our five modes of perception are partial, not universal means of knowing what may be around us; and that as the physical sciences furnish evidence of the presence and agency of certain powers of nature which elude the senses, except in some of their remote effects, so are we denied the right of concluding that we are conscious of all real existences within our sphere." Further, "There prevails throughout the system of nature a pervading of the dense elements by the less dense, or the fluid or gaseous. Thus all solid bodies are penetrated, either by humidity or by the elastic gases, or by the imponderable elements, light, heat, electricity, magnetism. Again, fluids are, in like manner, pervious to other fluids, with which they may combine, and also to elastic gases, and to the elements just named; and, in its turn, the rarest gas is traversed by and commingled with other elastic bodies, and by heat, electricity, or magnetism. In some cases the pervading element affects the element pervaded: thus heat expands the metals, and, at a certain point, fuses them, and so galvanism puts into activity the affinities of many solids and



fluids; but in other cases the pervading element takes its course through the pervaded body without giving any indication *upon that body* of its presence or its passage. Thus electricity may pass unnoticed through a perfectly conducting substance, as the magnetic attraction takes its way through intervening bodies, which in no sensible manner it disturbs; and thus, too, does the power of gravitation take effect at the greatest distances, without rendering itself sensible in any other manner than that affecting an approximation of masses. But is this constant principle of the visible world which shows itself in a thousand ways around us,—is it exhausted and done with in the instances which our modern physical discoveries have brought to light? . . . . Our present conjecture reaches to the extent of supposing that within the space encircled by the sidereal revolutions, there exists and moves a second universe, not less real than the one we are at present conversant with—a universe elaborate in structure, and replete with life,—life agitated by momentous interests, and perhaps by frivolous interests,—a universe conscious perhaps of the material spheres, or unconscious of them, and firmly believing (as we do) itself to be the only reality. Our planets in their sweep do not perforate the structures of this invisible creation; our suns do not scorch its plains, for the two collocated systems are not connected by any active affinities.” I cannot do better than quote a little further from this remarkable book, in which philosophies are propounded which largely coincide with the revelations of the Spiritualist. The author is impressed with the conviction that “there are powerful agencies in operation around us, of which we have no immediate perception. . . . Let it just be imagined that, as almost all natural principles and modes of life are open to some degree of irregularity, and admit exceptive cases, so this pressure of the vast community of the dead towards the precincts of life may, in certain cases, actually break the boundaries that hem in the ethereal crowds, and that thus, as if by accident and trespass, the dead may in single instances infringe upon the ground of corporeal life.\* Mr. Taylor further believes “there is the

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\* It affords me much gratification to quote opinions so analogous to those which have afforded me much consolation, held by one with whom I was brought into contact by business matters many years ago. I have a keen remembrance of certain observations he made in reference to troublesome doubts I then had, and also of his expressions on the occasion of my first deep grief. Should this humble tribute to a great cause meet his eye, he will probably be able to recall the writer to memory in connection with the earlier stages of “Dr. Trail’s Illustrated Josephus.”

familiar and ready intermixture of invisible and impalpable beings with human society, so that within any given boundary there may be corporeally present the human crowd and the extra-human crowd, and the latter as naturally and simply present as the former,—the latter as vividly conscious of the material world as the former, and as energetically prompted by interests and passions, by desires and fears. . . . 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. It is a question, first of testimony, to be judged of on the established principles of evidence, and then of physiology,—not of theology or of morals. . . . The time will come when, in consequence of the total dissipation of popular superstitions, and the removal, too, of the prejudice which makes us ashamed of seeming to believe in company of the vulgar, or to believe at the prompting of fear, it will be seen that facts of this class ought to engage the attention of physiologists, and then they will be consigned to their place in our systems of the philosophy of human nature. Notwithstanding prejudices of all sorts, vulgar and philosophic facts of whatever class and of whatever tendency will at length receive their due regard as the materials of science; and the era may be predicted in which complete reaction shall take its course, and the true principles of reasoning be made to embrace a wider field than that which may be measured by the human eye and hand.”

I find so much appropriate matter to supply a rejoinder to the difficulties and objections advanced by Mr. Coleman’s opponents, that I feel some embarrassment in keeping this paper in its prescribed limits. I must endeavour to find space for a few more paragraphs from an able article by Thomas Brevoir (T. S.) in the June number of the *Spiritual Magazine*, and which I also respectfully submit to the consideration of those who, in company with Mr. Coleman’s opponents at Ryde, are unable to realize the possibility of these extra-natural occurrences, vouched for by Mr. Coleman, and by many of the deepest thinkers of the present day:—

“It is a shallow philosophy which judges only from appearances, which regards the material as alone real, which would have all plain and level to the understanding, and, impatient of mystery, exhausts itself in impotent struggles against whatever does not at once surrender its secret treasures and yield itself to the embraces of the cold and sensuous mind.

“If spirit is to us a mystery, matter of which we talk so glibly is no less so; for who can tell what matter is? True, “it is that

which has length, breadth, and thickness." But, O! my sagacious mentor, what is *that* in which these qualities inhere? What is the substance which underlies these properties? Who can tell me that? If we know spirit only by its manifestations, we know matter only by its properties. Of the real, the inmost nature of both, we are equally ignorant. Scepticism in relation to spirit has been met by a scepticism profounder than its own, challenging proof of the existence of matter—a challenge which can be successfully met only by an appeal to consciousness, *i.e.*, a recognition of the *ego*, or spiritual self-hood, which the Materialist has called in question. ....

"As to the difficulty arising from the intimate connection between soul and body, a correct understanding of nature will show that this is not something strange, exceptional, unknown, contrary to all observed facts; for we find that all the active forces in nature are distinct and separable from the material substances in which they are manifested. 'The existence of light is not dependent upon the bodies which reflect its rays; a substance which appears, so long as it is the subordinate agent for communicating light to the eye, to be the source of the light we behold, may be destroyed, and yet there may be no diminution in the absolute quantity of that subtle property, though it is not perceptible to our visual organs, after the removal of the reflecting agent. The phenomena of heat afford a beautiful illustration of the same fact, as they present that property at one time actually developed, at another latent, but in all its changes still existing undiminished and unaltered, independently of the matter which it modifies—always ready, under every circumstance, to be called into activity by the agency of chemical attraction. Electricity, magnetism, and chemical affinity, also afford clear exemplifications of their existence, independently of the matter which they qualify. The active principle, or principles, of which those attractions consist is evidently something distinct from the bodies with which it is combined, and when that principle seems to be destroyed its powers are in reality in active, though imperceptible, operation.' When we find that subtle essences, as heat and light, so similar and closely connected as to appear identical, may be separated, and exist (apparently at least) independently, where can be the difficulty in believing that the power which can think, will, love, and worship, may be liberated from physical organization, and exist apart from the chemical substances of which that organization is constituted? ....

"If the subtle essences of the imponderable elements are only liberated by changes in the forms or separation of the particles with which they are combined, and suffer neither diminution nor decay, may we not, on this ground alone, warrantably infer that the infinitely more subtle power which thinks, wills, loves, worships, will survive and be unaffected by the decay and wreck of its mere material investiture? ....

"Let this, too, be noted, that the most potent forces in nature are not the gross—but the subtle, the imponderable. The solid oak

stands for centuries, but it is rived by the electric flash, and crumbles to decay under the devouring but invisible elements; the firm rock is wasted by the yielding wave. Attraction, repulsion, chemical affinity, light, heat, electricity, magnetism, &c.; these are not only the potent, but the permanent invisible forces in nature, separable from the particular forms of matter with which they are associated, surviving their dissolution, and, apparently indestructible, save by the Omnipotent Power which called them into being. So far, have we not here the analogies of spirit, and may not these or other inward and subtler forces of nature, of which we are yet ignorant, be the elements through which spirits operate on the grosser forms of matter? Faraday, if I am not misinformed, has avowed his conviction that the ultimate particles of matter are but points of force. Thus, then, do we rise from the grosser forms of matter through continuous and discrete degrees; from passive substances to active forces; from the evanescent to the permanent; from the ponderable to the imponderable; from matter to spirit. 'All the phenomena of nature point to immaterial agents as their ultimate causes; and as we pursue the investigation into the more intricate processes of the properties of matter, every material and invisible agent refers us to a subtle and invisible cause, which is past finding out. It is only when we take our position on the low level of ignorance that our views are limited to the material objects which immediately surround us; but when we occupy the vantage ground of science, our views are expanded, we behold other and more distant scenes, and the mind is raised above this world to survey the prospect of a superior, a better, and a more enduring state of existence.' "

Another gentleman present at this meeting, whose vocation should give weight to his opinions, forcibly expressed himself to the effect that the things which Mr. Coleman had narrated were the result of contagious delusion, which, he candidly admitted, he might himself catch if exposed to its injurious influence. The incredulous smile which this announcement called forth from the reverend and much-respected chairman—who, I believe, is not a stranger to the phenomena—was in itself a meaning protest against such a conclusion. It is scarcely necessary to add that the gentleman did not vouchsafe an explanation of a "delusion," which, in its astounding results as such, must necessarily upset all our existing notions of reality.

One remarkable instance which Mr. Coleman narrated of his experience in itself offers a reply to very many of the objections put forward by the sceptical and other opponents of Spiritualism; and as the remarks of some of the gentlemen at the conclusion led me to the conviction that they had not, at the moment, considered it in all its bearings, I

solicited permission of the narrator to give it here in its entirety. I feel sure that the reader who has followed me thus far will the more appreciate the kindness and devotion of this gentleman to the cause of this enquiry, by learning that in previously-published recitals of this incident, those portions relating to private family affairs had been only alluded to in general terms, and thus the whole incident lost much of its significance. Perhaps some of those gentlemen who so pressingly demand explanation of a phenomenon before they will accept its reality, will "explain" how they reconcile their favourite theories of "imagination," "collusion," "mind-reading," "reflex action," "automatic action of the brain," "some undiscovered force,"\* "Satanic agency," &c., with this deeply touching and unexpected incident. The incident was thus related by Mr. Coleman:—

"On my visit to New York, one of the first persons upon whom I called was Miss Kate Fox. This young lady, though now not more than about six or seven and twenty years of age, is one of the family with whom the rappings first originated at Rochester, in America, and her mediumistic powers have continued from that time to the present in undiminished force. I was an entire stranger to Miss Fox. I told her that my object in visiting America was mainly to obtain all the information I could on the subject of Spiritualism, and she readily responded to my request to help me in any way that lay in her power. We were seated on the sofa, her mother sitting opposite, and, while conversing, there came three loud raps on the table, which stood in the centre of the room, as if to affirm or approve of some remark that I had made. As our conversation proceeded, the rapping sounds multiplied, until they were heard in all

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\* Should any readers of these pages, who may have been led to feel the plausibility of the Spiritual (so-called) hypothesis, be troubled with the intrusion of painful and perplexing thoughts, generated by reflections on some of the above recapitulated theories—devised by the ingenuity of sceptical minds—I would remind them of the vantage ground on which the Spiritualist stands. Happily he has no need to invent theories to sustain his belief. The agents which he *knows* to be as real as his own existence, speak for themselves in language open to the apprehension of a child, proclaiming in one unvarying, unyielding, determined assertion, the personality of the power which work these wonders. Let the imaginatists and automatists try to coax or lead these agents to give replies favoring their own theories, and they will most certainly find that they are opposed to something more than mysterious actions of their own minds or of their own brains,—something more than electricity or an "undiscovered force,"—that, in fact they have beings to contend with, possessing an individuality as strongly marked, and a will as stubborn as any of their own.

directions, on the door, the walls, the ceiling, floor, and table. Miss Fox remarked that a host of spirits appeared to have assembled to welcome me. I then drew chairs to the table and questioned them, asking if there were any present belonging to me? The name of my step-son 'Harry' was spelt out, and, after a few words of a message had been given, there came the words, 'Let me speak.' I said, 'You are speaking?' 'No.' 'Is this another spirit?' 'Yes.' 'Do you wish to speak to me?' 'Yes.' 'Are you a relation?' 'Yes.' 'Then give me your name?' 'Ann.' 'No,' I said, 'that will not do; I have no relation in the spirit-world of the name of Ann.' 'Yes,' was emphatically rapped out. 'No,' I repeated, 'I am sure I have no *relation* of that name.' Again the spirit rapped, 'Yes.' 'Well,' I replied, 'I will not dispute the point further, but I shall be glad to hear what you have to say to me.' Miss Fox then called over the alphabet in the usual way, and the following words were spelt out:—'Oh how your voice recalls the memory of the past! Your love for dear Eliza reconciles all! I am well satisfied now; may God bless you and my dear Eliza!' Ann!—I then for the first time recognized the name. It was that of my wife's mother, and the appropriateness and significance of the message can only be understood by my explaining that during the old lady's life-time, many years ago, we were not on good terms. She objected to my marriage with her daughter, and it was not until after her death that I married my present wife, her daughter, whose name is Eliza."

Understanding that Mr. Coleman's published narration of his American experiences—which a popular morning newspaper pronounced to be "one of the most remarkable books ever published in any country," and which further vouches for the well-known credibility of the author—was out of print, I obtained permission to reprint the Preface, which contains a forcible summary of the author's reasons for belief. I hope space will also permit me to include a few extracts from the work, particularly one relating to the method adopted by Professor Mapes to investigate the subject, and which I would strongly commend to the attention of all those who purpose attempting a practical examination of this important question, as an example they would do well to follow, before they venture to condemn, if their object really be to arrive at the truth.

RYDE, *August 25th*, 1864.



# MR. B. COLEMAN'S PREFACE.—REASONS FOR BELIEF.

"The conductors of the *Spiritual Magazine* having determined to re-publish the Papers on American Spiritualism, contributed by me to that Journal, in an independent form, I desire to offer to the reader a few words in explanation, as to my prominent connection with the subject.

"It will be seen by a perusal of this volume how, and under what circumstances, I became a convert to a belief in spirit-intercourse, which belief I understand to be—that *the spirits of departed men and women have an existence in another sphere, and, under certain conditions, that they can and do manifest themselves, and communicate with spirits in the flesh.* This being the cardinal point in my view of the subject, I see no reason why all denominations of religionists should not, when satisfied of the fact, become Spiritualists; for certainly the belief does not destroy the great truths inculcated in biblical history, but, on the contrary, it throws new light on the sacred volume, and enables us to realize and comprehend many passages which are dark without it. But as I am no theologian, I prefer to leave the religious bearing of the subject to be dealt with by other heads, believing that it is especially the duty of the ministers of religion to investigate Spiritualism, and give it, if possible, a right direction. Neither have I any scientific knowledge, though I do not think that to be a necessary qualification for the investigation of the facts of Spiritualism. I am a man accustomed to commercial pursuits, of strong nerve, and without fanatical bias of any kind. My mind is of that practical character that I am, I think, even a better witness to attest a physical fact that runs counter to generally received opinions than the man of science, who has been educated, so to speak, in a groove, and who has first to unlearn and to throw aside the dogmas by which he is enthralled, before he can receive a new light which overturns his past philosophy. Having once become satisfied that the phenomena were real, I sought for an explanation from men more learned than myself; but finding, as I advanced in my enquiry, that the facts I witnessed completely set aside the theories which science had placed in my path, I was reduced to the necessity of either ignoring the evidence of my senses or of admitting the spiritual origin of the phenomena. For instance, Professor Faraday's theory, that a table moved by the involuntary muscular action of the hands of those who sat around it, was entirely annihilated when I had seen, as I have frequently done, a table and other heavy bodies moved about *without* physical contact of any kind. It was no use to tell me that it was 'Od' force played the air I asked for, on an accordion, held by me in one hand, apart from any person present. It was equally futile and insulting to one's common sense to say that electricity had played on the accordion, and had answered questions, and had given me information on subjects of which I had no previous knowledge, without at least admitting that an intelligent agent guided



and directed it; and, in a word, having become satisfied that it was no ordinary power that effected these marvels, I accepted the only rational solution, and became a Spiritualist.

"As I was one of a few who recognized the truth at the earliest period of its introduction into this country, the only merit which belongs to me is, that I have steadily and boldly—despite the ridicule which the unthinking portion of society has cast upon the belief in Spiritualism—proclaimed the facts whenever they have been challenged; and now that thousands around me are seriously enquiring into the truth of this important subject, I have, in my humble way, become an authority.

"As I am unaccustomed to write for the public, I am aware that the chief interest which may attach to the perusal of the following Papers will arise from the entire reliability that may be placed on the facts recorded in them, and not on their literary merit.

"BENJ. COLEMAN.

"London, Dec., 1861."

FORM

#### INCIDENTS IN MR. COLEMAN'S AMERICAN EXPERIENCES.

"..... On a second visit to Mr. Colchester, I took with me a sealed envelope, enclosing a folded paper on which I had written; 'Will the spirit be so good as to give me the exact words of this paper, merely to satisfy me of its power to do so?—B. C.' I laid the envelope on the table. Mr. Colchester did not touch it, but, taking a pencil and paper, he wrote rapidly *every word contained in it*. This was a conclusive test of that clairvoyant power which has been so frequently disputed, and which Sir Philip Crampton, M.D., challenged some years ago, when he said he had enclosed a hundred-pound-note in an envelope 'to be given to any one who, by the operation of mesmerism, shall describe the particulars of the note!' It was never claimed, and it is therefore constantly cited as proof that clairvoyance is a fraud. In reference to this particular test, I find the following statement in the 37th number of the *Zoist*, April, 1852:—'After all, it turns out that Sir Philip Crampton did not enclose a bank-note, but a blank cheque; and they say he thought it good fun to substitute one for the other.' The fraud, in this instance, would thus appear to have been practised by the learned physician, and this is the way that men of science pretend to investigate, and too frequently trifle with subjects which they know, if proved, would overturn their philosophy. If, however, there should be any *savant* in the present day who is bold enough to risk a hundred-pound-note on Mr. Colchester's ability, *without* the apparent aid of what is called Mesmerism, to decipher the contents of a sealed envelope, I shall be glad to be the 'medium' of making the trial, and I shall be much mistaken, after my experience, if the sceptic is not made to pay for his temerity. .... Professor Mapes' history in connection with Spiritualism teaches an instructive lesson,

and answers in itself two of the most prominent questions which have been put by its opponents in this country, viz.—if Spiritualism be worth consideration, how is it that no man eminent in science has ventured to investigate its claims and expound its philosophy? Well, the answer is that Professor Mapes, of New York, like his compeer, the late Dr. Hare, of Philadelphia, a man of science, undertook the investigation several years ago, with an entire disbelief in its reality and a determination to expose ‘the delusion,’ and, like Dr. Hare, he was driven step by step from his original position, and ultimately converted to a full belief in spirit-intercourse. . . . Thirteen years ago, the Professor set to work earnestly to investigate Spiritualism, without saying a word to his family. Shortly after, he discovered that one of his daughters was also engaged in a somewhat similar way. She had, in fact, become a writing medium, without knowing it. On one of his weekly visits to his family, this daughter said, ‘Father, I want to show you something very curious. Don’t laugh at me. Here are pages that from time to time I have been influenced to write, without my will or my mind being engaged in the work. It has been going on for weeks, and I should not have named it now, but that I saw in the *Tribune* newspaper yesterday that others had been similarly influenced, and it is said to be the work of spirits. I want to know the meaning of it.’ Curious to obtain evidence from such a source, though anxious to avoid explanation and encouragement, the Professor asked her to take a pen and let him see what she meant. Her hand was moved excitedly, and she at once dashed off a long message purporting to be from the spirit of his father. The Professor said, ‘If there is any meaning in this I should like, if possible, to have some proof of identity.’ Miss Mapes’ hand again wrote, ‘You may recollect that I gave you, among other books, an Encyclopædia; look at page 120 of that book, and you will find my name written there, which you have never seen.’ The book alluded to was with others in a box at the warehouse in town. On his arrival in town Professor Mapes opened the case, which had been fastened up for 27 years, and there, to his great astonishment, he found, as described, his father’s name written on the identical page 120. This incident awakened a new interest in him, and he accordingly determined to conduct a serious investigation, and at once secured the services of Mrs. Brown, the eldest daughter in the Fox family,—a well-known and very reliable medium of great power. His next step was to obtain a party of friends to join him, which was, however, a very difficult task. He first invited his son-in-law, a member of the Senate, who laughed at the request, said it was too absurd, and hoped the Professor was not going to sacrifice his time and fame to such a delusion. And in this way he was met by others, until at length, making it a personal favour, and to oblige him, he got a party of ten together, having, as he said, purposely selected one-half of *positive* minds, who would believe in nothing, and the other half of *negative* minds, who might be induced

to believe in anything. They agreed to meet every Monday evening for twenty sittings, and up to the nineteenth evening they had not elicited anything sufficiently satisfactory to carry conviction, or to be worth recording, but on the twentieth evening some very curious and striking phenomena were displayed. The spirits who purported to be present gave peculiar names, such as 'Pierre Wilding,' 'Deliverance,' &c., insisting, against the belief of those present, that they were their ancestors, and indicating in the most definite way their relationship. Upon subsequent enquiry, each of these statements was verified, and a previously hidden page of family history being thus unexpectedly revealed, it excited a natural interest in the minds of all to continue their sittings, which Professor Mapes assured me were prolonged uninterruptedly for FIVE YEARS, during which time every conceivable test was applied, *resulting in the entire conversion of the whole party.* . . . . Mrs. Mapes was at this period altogether opposed to the whole subject, and unacquainted with the fact that her husband was so deeply interested in it. . . . In a short time after, Mrs. Mapes herself was impelled one day to write, and became at once developed as a writing medium. . . . Months having passed, her husband and family were surprised one day by her making preparations for drawing, and declaring that she believed she could copy plants and flowers. They smiled at this announcement; they were incredulous, as she had never been instructed, and had never shown the least talent for the art. She went, however, into the garden, plucked an apple-blossom, and sat down to copy it. In a few minutes she made, greatly to the surprise of all around her, a most excellent copy of this very delicate flower; and thus spiritually influenced she commenced a series of colored drawings, which, as they proceeded, increased in beauty, and have now become most perfect specimens of the art. . . . These drawings, which are produced with great rapidity, unlike most mediumistic productions, are of natural fruits, flowers, and birds; and this extraordinary fact attaches to the birds, that each bird—without study, or any knowledge of the natural history of the subject, on the part of Mrs. Mapes—is placed in the accustomed associations of tree or plant on which it builds or feeds. I am indebted to Mrs. Mapes for two specimens of her work, which she kindly presented to me, and which have created the greatest admiration in all to whom I have shown them. One is an iris, and the other a collection of American autumnal leaves. They are both pronounced by connoisseurs to be works of high art, and the marvellous fact remains to be told, that *both paintings were commenced and finished in little more than one hour.* No artist, I believe, could copy them in less than two days. . . . I am now told by Mr. Heaphy, an artist of known celebrity, who has examined them with great care, that there is a peculiar stereoscopic effect in one of the drawings which cannot be imitated by any process known to the artists of this country."

The following is Mr. Heaphy's letter to Mr. B. Coleman in relation to this subject :—

"MY DEAR SIR,—I was greatly interested in the drawings you showed to me as having been executed by, or with the aid of spirits. You are aware that while I respect the arguments of the Spiritualists, I am not a Spiritualist myself. I must, however, say that the drawings in question possess many peculiar points, especially one of them representing a number of leaves of plants. This drawing is highly coloured, and, on being looked at through a powerful lens, the surface of the leaves—especially of the red one—possesses a reality of appearance quite stereoscopic. Indeed, I was obliged to pass my finger repeatedly over the surface to assure myself that the surface was flat. Having been an artist from my childhood (more especially in water-colors), as was my father before me, I think that I am pretty well acquainted with all the processes used in painting; but I must candidly confess that I know of no process by which the effect I mention can be produced, and, were I to offer any sum of money, however large, to-morrow, for the production of such a work, I should not expect to obtain it. Though, as I said before, I am no Spiritualist, yet, in a matter of a work of art I can have no objections in stating my opinion.

"I remain, dear sir, yours faithfully,

"THOMAS HEAPHY.

"B. Coleman, Esq."

## OVER THE RIVER.

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(Reprinted from the "*Spiritual Magazine*.")

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Over the river they beckon to me,  
 Loved ones who've crossed to the further side;  
 The gleam of their snowy robes I see,  
 But their voices are lost in the dashing tide.  
 There's one with ringlets of sunny gold,  
 And eyes the reflection of Heaven's own blue,  
 He crossed in the twilight, gray and cold,  
 And the pale mist hid him from mortal view:  
 We saw not the angels who met him there,  
 The gates of the city we could not see;  
 Over the river, over the river,  
 My brother stands waiting to welcome me.

Over the river, the boatman pale  
 Carried another—the household pet;  
 Her brown curls wave in the gentle gale—  
 Darling Minnie, I see her yet.  
 She crossed on her bosom her dimpled hands,  
 And fearlessly entered the phantom bark;  
 We felt it glide from the silver sands,  
 And all our sunshine grew strangely dark.  
 We know she is safe on the further side,  
 Where all the ransomed and angels be;  
 Over the river, the mystic river,  
 My childhood's idol is waiting for me.

Do none return from those quiet shores,  
 Who cross with the boatman, cold and pale?  
 We hear the dip of the golden oars,  
 And catch a gleam of the snowy sail,  
 And lo! they have passed from our yearning hearts,  
 They cross the stream, and are gone for aye;  
 We may not sunder the veil apart  
 That hides from our vision the gates of day.  
 We only know that their barks no more  
 May sail with us o'er life's stormy sea,  
 Yet somewhere I know on the unseen shore,  
 They watch and beckon and wait for me.

And I sit and think when the sunset's gold  
Is flushing river, and hill, and shore,  
I shall one day stand by the water cold,  
And list for the sound of the boatman's oar.  
I shall watch for a gleam of the flapping sail;  
I shall hear the boat as it gains the strand;  
I shall pass from sight with the boatman pale,  
To the better shore of the spirit-land.  
I shall know the loved who have gone before,  
And joyfully sweet will the meeting be,  
When over the river, the peaceful river,  
The Angel of Death shall carry me.