

# SPIRITUALISM ;

ITS FACTS AND PHASES.

ILLUSTRATED WITH PERSONAL EXPERIENCES.

BY

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“I merely mean to say what Johnson said,  
That in the course of some six thousand years,  
All nations have believed that from the dead  
A visitant at intervals appears.”

BYRON.

“Millions of Spirits walk the world unseen.”

MILTON.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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IN this 19th century, wherein so many Mechanical and Scientific luminaries shine, I am aware that an attempt to urge an argument in favour of Supernaturalism will be met by a multitude of declamatory pooh—poohs! Nevertheless, I shall brave the storm of declamation, because I am fearless, holding by the Truth.

The experiences upon which my arguments and principles rest have most of them been personal. I have introduced only such incidents illustrating the subject as I have been able to gather from reliable sources. I have adopted this plan that I may avoid the censure of making a book, on what is generally considered to be an extravagant subject, by gleaning a number of well-selected ghost stories which have appeared in other books. I have chosen the more arduous, and I venture to add, praiseworthy mode of obtaining original facts by making personal acquaintanceship with the parties concerned. Thus, I have admitted no stories, as such, without discovering collateral evidence favouring their truth. I was well aware of the difficulties which I should meet in pursuing the task I had assigned myself, but knowing that no great truth was ever yet defended, without difficulties, like barricades, being placed in the vanguard, I went about my work with spirit, having a spiritual Truth to maintain.

The experiences which a man can claim as his own are far more convincing to him than all the learned lore of all the books which have ever been written. That which he sees with his own eyes, touches with his own hand, affords him substantial proof of its reality. He may, and should use his judgment, and ascertain that no deception has been practised upon him, or that he is not the dupe of his own imagination. But when this is done, and still the reality is before him, he must be dull indeed, if he do not perceive it.

That I have not been over hasty in giving in my adhesion to Spiritualism will appear to the reader in the first three chapters of the work. It will likewise appear to him that I have not become a convert without being forced to ally myself to the legitimate family of reasons standing on the side of Spiritualism.

I could not discover the mighty fact that the modern phases of spiritual Truth were substantially attested—that the alleged phenomena were as real as any of the known phenomena of Science or Nature, without burning with a desire to add my testimony to the mountainous array of testimony already tendered for the spiritual cause.

In the following pages I have aimed at simplicity, knowing that if I clouded the theme with learned technical phrases, I should close the book to the multitude—whilst truth, looking out from plain simple robes as beautifully as it looks out from the most elaborate and royal robes—would display itself to the scholar.

In the prosecution of my task, I have endeavoured to divest my own mind of all aggressive thoughts, and more especially to divest the reader's mind of a number of puerile and stale objections which it has suited influential persons, who have never themselves

fairly investigated the subject, to promulgate against Spiritualism. At the same time, I have boldly, and without reserve, argued the spiritual question fearless of all ultimate consequences. Had I have consulted my own private desires, I should for the sake of many valued friends, have hesitated, and only half met the difficulties. But the marvellous truth of Spiritualism, as it has been made manifest to me, has forced me in the names of Conscience and Duty, to handle all objections with decision and logical exactness.

If my views are considered by some to be strong, they must remember they are the results of careful, practical, and reflective investigation. I did not *make* Spiritualism, and cannot be held responsible for conclusions it may lead to. Albeit, I am quite willing to be held responsible for defending them, and urging that they are the very essentials of true Life-living immortal Faith.

In mere speculative or metaphysical philosophy one must pause before giving authoritative vote, because the chances are greatly in favour of the decision being wrong. Not so in matters of a phenomenal character—the facts arm themselves before us, and we fail to mistake them.

It is even so with Spiritualism. The phenomenal facts present themselves and there is no logical way of disputing them.

It is easy to ride off on the rocking-horse of custom, and call out “collusion,” “Mechanical contrivance,” “Automatic cerebral action,” “Magnetism,” &c. Still the facts remain facts, and only want to be fairly marshalled in order, to give strength to the spiritual armies.

The risk of defending unpopular opinions is, thanks to intellectual progress, a minor one compared to what it was a century or two back. We have no fear of the river, the rack, or the stake, yet we are doomed never-

theless to learn that we escape those perils because they have become obsolete, not because the spirit of persecution has no abiding place in the midst of our civilisation.

It is not a little amusing to catalogue the epithets of abuse applied to us. Neither is it a source of satisfaction to find numbers of ordinary, practical, clever men insisting on tests of the most absurd and extravagant character.

Having witnessed occasional phenomena, such as heavy tables rising from the ground a considerable height without human contact, or moving in a semi-circular direction, or spirit communications, written through the medium's hand, in the well-known characters of the writing of departed friends, we are asked to conceive ourselves blind, insane, or knavish, if we dare to speak that we do know and testify to that we have seen.

The marvels we have witnessed, although highly mysterious and wonderfully unexpected, were nevertheless not so strange to us as the conduct of certain influential opponents, who have betrayed a force of ignorance in their opposition to the spiritual question quite as extravagant as any of the phenomena we have described.

Mere presumptive assertions and unreasoning epithets, are like waste steam, soon evaporated, and count for nothing in the interest of Truth.

I remember a commercial traveller listening for a time to me when I was defending the truths of Spiritualism to a sincere opponent who wanted "more evidence." He did not listen long, or say much, but he shook his head with such a force of incredulity that I was compelled to reply—

"The shake of *your* head will not shake down the monument." He laughed and seemed only the more

incredulous—perhaps he did not believe me, and went away “not quite so sure of that.”

But after all, we can afford to hold by a truth, although a multitude of sceptics stand like trees before us, “shaking their heads.”

The difficulty of bringing conviction to the minds of those who are so blind they will *not* see—or so deaf they will *not* hear, is of course great.

We show them manifestations, but they demand to see others of a different order, and there is no end to the list of phenomena demanded.

The fact, that one simple experiment of a table moving for a medium when it has persistently refused to budge for a host of men, full of magnetism, is of course overlooked.

Why should our clever opponents hesitate to look away from the truth, and why not ask for its appearance under conditions of their own, which would necessitate the performance of miracles more marvellous than any recorded in Holy Writ? Unfortunately, however, for them they start upon wrong premises and necessarily go wrong. They talk to the Spiritualist as though he were the originator, instead of the Spirits, of all the phenomena in dispute. The case is very different in point of fact. The Spiritualist receives such phenomena only as the Spirits please to give. He finds that he is master only of his own individuality, and can perform such acts as he himself is capable of—no more. He cannot appropriate to himself the individuality of a single Spirit, or make it perform a single manifestation, but he must elicit such phenomena only which the unseen powers deign to supply.

Whether the manifestations be weak or strong, they are nevertheless capable of legitimate logical disquisition.

Because a table does not rise to the ceiling, does it

follow that it remains stationary while it is in actual motion? or that Supernaturalism has nothing whatever to do with its movements? Because an elaborate lengthy address is not written or spelt out from the communicating Spirit, does it follow that short sentences are not? Because the spirit of the grandmother of some person present does not communicate when called for, does it follow that no other Spirit does? Yet these are the sort of objections urged against the reality of Spirit communications.

One man asks that a 56lb. table shall be taken into an open field, and no one shall be allowed to approach it within 15 feet; then it must rise 15 feet in mid-air before *he* will consent to believe. Perhaps he would like a fledgling that can just flutter a few feet, to soar to the sky, to convince him that it can fly at all; or a horse that can run a mile in three minutes, to run a hundred miles in the same time; or a mole-hill to stretch itself into a mountain, or a monument to fly. Of course he will exclaim these remarks are extreme, and are not fair to the question. I answer—Spiritualists never yet assumed that a disembodied Spirit was either omniscient or omnipotent. Facts prove the contrary, and he, like the mundane philosophers, must fain repose on Facts. Spirits are limited in powers and bound by conditions. To insist, therefore, on independent operations apart from conditions, relating to spirit-life, is tantamount to insisting on natural phenomena without the necessary instruments being employed for their production. It is not urged that spirits *cannot* elevate a large table 15 feet in mid-air without human contact, but should they fail to do so on any particular occasion, it would not in the slightest possible degree prove that other more ordinary manifestations, which science cannot explain, do not take place.

Besides, such a phenomenon would fail as much in bringing conviction to the minds of those who will *not* see, as the more common yet more wonderful operations of spirit-power intelligibly set forth in the various forms of the modern séances.

In America, France and other continental countries, Spiritualism in its modern forms has made rapid progress. It numbers, amongst its adherents, some thousands of the best and most influential and learned men. It has found its way into England, where it makes silent, although slow progress. Still it moves on calmly and peacefully, as the great river of Truth. It is destined to take the scales from the eyes of scepticism, and make Immortality and Christ ever living spiritual realities.

The age being material, it appeals to materialism through material means, and in order to convince those who can believe nothing out of nature, it supplies an independent law which operates in defiance of the law of gravitation, holding heavy substances in mid-air and re-enacting the miracles of the Mosaic world.

It is not new, but it appears in modern guise intrusted with a Divine mission—a mission of eternal mercy, Almighty Love, and immortal Truth.

With a view to bring to others what has brought consolation and faith to myself, I have penned these pages, feeling confident that a full and fair regard for Spiritualism, whilst it would not destroy the faith of any sincere Christian, but rather stimulate it, would tend to bring into the fold of Christ very many wandering sheep, who, without a spiritual shepherd would be lost.

I ask of the reader to “read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest” the subject matter of this book before he reiterate the stereotyped “pooh! poohs!” of some, and the illogical standard objec-

tions of others who hold high office in the Church and State.

I give him my solemn assurance that I have stated the facts of my own experience without reserve, and have not in any case allowed Imagination to supply the place of Reason, in the interest of Spiritualism.

I have trod the path with caution which has led me into the wide spiritual field. Having arrived there, I cannot help it if I perceive objects which were before invisible to me, and are still invisible to others.

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From trammels of the earth set free,  
 Our dead friends live in spirit spheres,  
 With us, unseen they sail Life's sea  
 And mingle in our joys and fears.  
 The fleshy vestments of the soul,  
 Like bark upon the forest tree,  
 Decay ; while oceans onward roll,  
 But spirit-life must ever be!

Oh, pleasing thought ; angelic lights  
 Shine brighter than earth's brightest star—  
 They beam upon our darkened nights,  
 And shed their lustre near and far.  
 While grateful prayer our soul uplifts,  
 For God's diurnal blessings given ;  
 We praise Him most for His best gifts,  
 Of soul, and soul's unending Heaven.

Our deep affections linger round  
 The spots where Home-born joys increase,  
 And there our spirit-friends abound,  
 To guide our feet, and give us peace.  
 They teach us more than learning's seers  
 Or proud philosophers can teach—  
 From them we learn that hidden spheres,  
 Are orb'd within the Spirit's reach.

J. H. POWELL.



He smothered me  
over in the tent

He has forgotten me

Yes

Goodbye

I am sure  
George Chapman

died 70 years ago

see page 122

# S P I R I T U A L I S M ,

## ITS FACTS AND PHASES.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND SCEPTICAL DOUBTS.

LIKE most persons whose minds are biased by foregone conclusions gained from narrow rules of logic (so termed), I found the path circuitous and difficult for the feet which led to the open pastures of Spiritualism.

Forgetting the fact that for years I had held by the stale objections urged against the phenomenal facts of Mesmerism, and that after investigating privately and publicly with the certainty of unmasking the delusion, I was entangled in conviction and bound in honor to defend what I had hoped to expose, I still re-enacted the old scene of intolerance whenever an argument was elicited on the modern phases of this "stupendous Spiritual hoax."

Mesmerism was true, without a doubt ; I had proved by so many practical experiments that fact ; and, mar-

vellous as it appeared, was destined to set my mental faculties to work theorising and philosophising about it.

I even deemed myself condescending to accept so great a marvel as Mesmerism in spite of the all-sufficient proofs of its truth which numerous phenomena had supplied. Was not this enough? In the name of all that's reasonable and true, must I be called upon to enter the infinitely greater unexplainable proofs of Spiritualism on the ledger of my already mystified brain?

Paragraphs on spiritual phenomena appearing in the daily papers attracted my attention and stimulated my scepticism. I read the accounts of Robert Owen's spiritual séances and fell into the stereotyped notion that the old philanthropist having reached four score years had arrived at his dotage. By-and-bye reports came that the father of English Socialism was dead, and that he died in the full and certain faith of Spiritualism. Peace be to his ashes, I murmured with a sigh, because I loved him for his noble, unselfish devotion to an exalted and Christian principle of human regeneration. He had passed away, his glorious dreams of social happiness being too exalted for present realization in this world.

The death of Owen brought the subject of Spiritualism again fresh before me, and made me give it a passing thought or two. I heard of strange and startling phenomena, and was not a little surprised to discover that many of my own personal friends were converted to the modern forms of the faith. Like the sudden appearance of an army on a hill, was presented to my mind a host of substantial names of men high in literature, science, and theology, who had undertaken to carry the cross of Spiritualism.

Then followed in pursuit of the influences at work

to bring Spiritualism to me—as I was evidently disposed not to go to Spiritualism—“Stranger than Fiction,” in the Cornhill Magazine for August, 1860. This article, written with the graphic force of truth, relating the floating of Mr. Home in mid-air and other extraordinary revelations, excited my mind, but it would be indeed stranger than fiction if I believed the account. Yet I conceived an irrepressible desire to witness some of the alleged spiritual manifestations for myself.

Accordingly I visited London on a spirit-mission, devoted to my purpose with a force of curiosity scarcely controllable.

T. S., a writer in “The Spiritual Magazine,” and author of “Confessions of a Truth Seeker,” a friend of some dozen years standing, secured me an audience with Dr. Dixon, a writing-medium, who very kindly undertook to bear with my ready sceptical quirks, and to open every convenient avenue by which I might enter on the plain ground of “The Truth.”

The doctor accompanied me to a house in the neighbourhood of Soho. We were soon ushered into the presence of a French medium, Madame Besson. The lady welcomed us and seemed pleased to converse with the doctor, informing him that during the night she had been sadly troubled with “the Spirits.” My blood felt a slight nervous chill as the words “the Spirits” escaped her lips. The novelty of such words and the influences of my early education must take the responsibility for the weakness.

We sat at the table, a small round one; each of us placed our hands lightly upon its top. After a few minutes a request was made by the two mediums for the spirits to manifest themselves. The table began to move, and I began to smile incredulously, and to watch the movements of Madame Besson and Dr.

Dixon with suspicion. The table grated carelessly along the floor without an apparent physical effort on the part of either of us. Having never witnessed a manifestation of the kind, I was not a little surprised, and was not free from the weakness of fear. There was no time for thought. The table advanced suddenly towards *me*, causing me to move on one side to allow it to proceed. In the centre of the room, with none near it but myself, I requested the table to knock, which it did with a violence not to be mistaken. "Knock louder;" the request was granted. I then asked the table to rock like a vessel at sea. Instantly it obliged, swaying with a motion resembling a boat on the waves. I wanted a rougher sea, to speak allegorically. The table rocked more violently, until losing its equilibrium it toppled over upon my toe—a physical if not spiritual fact too convincing to be mistaken. I wondered why the Spirits should allow the table to cause me pain, settling my wonder by saying I suppose they owed me a grudge.

I was soon informed that the spirits had no grudge against me. One of the Mediums addressing the invisibles said—

"Had you a desire to hurt the gentleman's toe?"

The table rose up and thundered out a single knock with its foot, which I was informed meant "No."

I smiled, although I was astounded, because I remained firm to my material creed. Madame Besson remarked that the Spirits had only limited powers like ourselves, which accounted for the overthrow of the table.

Argument was no use; scepticism looked out of my eyes, and must have been visible in every movement of my body.

I undertook a careful inspection of the table, and discovered a rope, which was bound round the top of

the stem. Here was the clue to the whole mystery. There must be an electric agent communicated to the table by means of this rope. I felt my prejudices strengthen.

The rope, I was told, was for the purpose of supporting the table, because it had been broken. A lame excuse, I thought, and looked more suspicious.

Doctor Dixon now desired me to take a piece of paper and a pin, and prick with a pin a number of holes in the paper, without allowing either himself or Madame Besson to see. I did so. Presently the table was asked to knock with its foot the number of holes I had punctured. Wrong. I had made six holes in the paper; the table knocked "five."

"Try again." I now, with stimulated scepticism, slowly and cautiously pricked six more holes in the paper. The table signalled "seven." Wrong again. This was not the way to overcome scepticism. I was less a spiritualist now than when I entered the room.

The sitting was at an end. The Doctor invited Madame Besson to his house to take tea with us in the evening.

We parted, only to meet again in a few hours. What I had witnessed was of a nature very marvellous, but not sufficiently so to establish in my convictions proof of spirit-agency. Neither, except in the affair of the rope, could I conclude that I was duped by imposition. I was in a state of extreme mental suspense until the appointed hour permitted me to make my appearance at the house of Dr. Dixon, situated in Queen's Square.

After the tea a "sitting" was proposed, round the table, which was a heavy one, and would probably have made two of the size of Madame Besson's.

In addition to the Doctor, Madame, and myself, Mrs. Dixon and my friend T. S. were present on this

occasion. A book was produced, containing specimens of spirit-caligraphy, which were curiosities made up of sermons, gossip, short-hand notes, not to be deciphered, and loving letters, all said to have come from the spirit-land through the medium of the Doctor. The styles of penmanship were as various as the letters of the alphabet—the remarkable statement of the medium, that they were all fac-similes of the hand-writing of the spirits when they were in the flesh, attaching to them a superstitious interest.

This wonderful book made a deep impression on my mind. But the fact that I did not see a sentence written weighed against probability and supported my want of faith.

I observed that the Doctor's heavy table, which was moved about freely, by no visible agencies which I could detect, was entirely divested of rope or any other accessory which might afford the mind a resting place for doubt. This fact made the rope which I had discovered round Madame Besson's table, mentally slacken and fall away.

A new and startling phase of these manifestations, like a nightmare, affrighted me. Madame Besson fell into a kind of spontaneous trance; her whole body trembling convulsively and violently. The tears fell like rain from her eyes, and her demeanour betrayed symptoms similar to the workings of madness. A few de-mesmeric passes from the Doctor restored her. Then followed a relapse without the apparent frenzy. She was said to be gifted with spiritual perception, and in addition was a medium for discourse. Thus she was supposed to see the spirits, and to allow them to speak with *her* vocal organs.

She spoke—her sentences coloured by her peculiar French gestures and broken English accentuations. Taking the hand of Mrs. Dixon, she addressed that

lady in tender, affectionate terms, offering her consolation and assurance of future happiness.

I thought the medium a clever actress, and was impatient to see the act concluded. The tears fell fast and freely from the eyes of the doctor's wife. This new event was explained ; she believed that the spirit of a deceased son was communicating to her through the medium. This was said to be a common event—the additional evidence being afforded that several spirit-epistles contained in the caligraphy book, were in his well-known hand-writing.

I was in expectation that this would be the finale to a scene altogether sad and painful. But not so ; the medium took the hands separately of all in the room, and assumed to spiritually address each in turn. The Doctor had also a communication from the son ; T. S. was favoured with a word from his mother, whose demise had first drawn his attention to spirit matters. I was spoken to by some unknown Spirit, who, I supposed, had scraped acquaintance with me for the purpose of making the drama complete. This second séance was at an end.

I appeared to be in dream-land, so marvellously mysterious seemed all I had witnessed. My heart must be flint, or conviction must come. There was not the slightest flaw in the indictment—the smallest hole to drag possibility through, to give the lie to all I had heard and seen.

My stay in London was only of brief duration ; yet it was sufficiently long to enable me to witness a third séance before my return home. This took place at the house of Madame Besson.

I introduced a lady friend, and we were welcomed by the medium, who was conversing with an American Spiritualist, the editor of a London paper. We were informed that Dr. Dixon and his lady were expected,

and we should not be allowed to depart without staying to tea.

In due time the expected visitors arrived, and we all sat to tea at the very table which had so unceremoniously toppled over on my toe. The recollection caused a smile.

In ordinary gatherings of the kind, persons don't feel particularly nervous at tea and cake. Neither did we, if I may judge from circumstances. The provisions evaporated as readily as the steam from the tea, and we all entered the arena of conversation good naturedly. Perhaps this fact has to do with those to follow. Admitting the truth of the spiritual ideas all good guardian spirits must have participated in our joy.

Six persons were assembled—a seventh came in afterwards. There was nothing in the way of forming a circle. Accordingly we placed our hands, in the usual sitting posture, lightly on the table. A few minutes only elapsed before we were favoured with striking manifestations.

Questions were put to the table and answers elicited. The knocks were regular, loud, and decisive. The table fairly leaped from the ground several paces. It rocked with the seeming motion of a ship at sea; danced upon one leg, and performed other pleasing evolutions of a like character. Once at our united wishes the table ascended without a hand touching it, remained several feet above *terra firma* and several seconds in mid air, descending gently and reaching the floor almost noiselessly. We all played tunes and made scratching sounds with our fingers on the top of the table; and distinct, correct, and wonderful, they were all repeated by the spirits.

I found my objections weakening, and offered a few remarks, testifying to my profound astonishment and

growing conviction of the spiritual realities of the manifestations.

Madame Besson went off again into the trance-condition. She got up, fell on her knees, and delivered long religious addresses. At one moment you could mark the fierce contortions of her face and the nervous twitches of her limbs, and feel certain she was grappling with demoniac spiritual powers. The next moment, her face assuming a seraphic expression and her whole manner calm and impressive, you could not fail to conclude that her spiritual influences were of the angelic kind.

Each of the company was favoured with a communication.

My lady friend, a thorough sceptic in spirit phenomena, was of a sudden the object of general notice. The medium placing her hands on the lady's head, communicated from the spirit of an old woman known to my friend when a child. The medium then hobbled across the room in mimicry of an old woman walking with the aid of a stick.

I was informed afterwards by the lady that she had recollection of an old woman who used to be partial to her, and who hobbled in exactly the same way. She likewise related an account of the supernatural appearance of this old woman to her when she died.

It was now my turn. The medium addressed me in affectionate and fervid language under the spiritual influence of my mother.

About an hour previous to Madame Besson entering the trance-state she had informed me that my mother's spirit was present and wished to communicate. The table ambled into my lap by way of testifying the spirit's wish to embrace me.

I put the following questions :—

Are you happy?—Three knocks signifying “Yes.”

Would you like to see father?—Three louder raps.

Do you know how many children I have?—Three raps. The table immediately rapped the exact number.

Do you watch over my wife and family?—Three raps.

Would it please you to communicate with my sister? The affirmative response to this question was rapid and betrayed eagerness.

Other questions of a private domestic nature received decisive and intelligent answers, which were not of a nature above imposition, although the correctness and force of them went far towards establishing their genuineness in my own mind.

A very lengthy religious discourse came from my mother, through the mouth of the medium. After this each of the other persons assembled who had not received a communication, went through a similar ceremony to myself, and appeared to regard the voice of Madame Besson as the *bona fide* servant of their dear spirit friends.

I left London full of the marvels I had heard and seen, and disposed to treat the spiritual question with gravity. But scepticism is like an ice-rock, it needs much sun and a long time to dissolve.

Mixing with men of stern stuff in ordinary life, I found stern reproof for my weakness in trusting to the evidences presented in favour of Spiritualism at the tables of professional mediums.

At length I discovered a scapegoat for my weak admissions of my changed views in favour of Spiritualism at the house of Madame Besson. I had been wrought upon biologically, hence my mind's pliability.

It soon became a settled fact, not that I had been hoaxed by imposition of a collusive character, but that

I, in common with the others, had simply fallen a victim to psychologic influences which grew out of expectancy and excitement.

With this idea fresh in my mind's eye all the attestations of sincere Spiritualists were clear delusions. I was free to look about me, but took no note of the idea being a false medium through which I beheld all spiritual fact.

Months rolled on. Fresh spiritual marvels were revealed. Such intellectual Goliaths as William Howitt, to whom Spiritualism in England is vastly indebted, appeared before me in their vigorous and manly writings in favour of the faith. Yet my scapegoat ran off with all difficulties and left me perfectly master of the field on which so many noble warriors for spiritual truth had battled and fallen.

The daylight of truth was yet in a mist, and I, with self-confident energy, went groping after it with my eyes bedimmed by the ever present shade of a false phantom.

We may be in the midst of a cloud and lose the glorious beauties of creation, but if we wait patiently, the sun will shine and dissipate all gloom with an unerring certainty, affording us a view of real pictures more perfect and divinely beautiful than art can either sketch or conceive.

So, in like manner, the darkness of materialism may over-shadow our souls, and for a time cause us to lose sight of all spiritual glories. Yet, if we only wait patiently, the sunshine of divine love will dissipate the gloom, and open upon our wondering eyes eternal streams of holiness. But if we mystify our eyes with materialistic film and seek not the glory, how shall we behold it?

## CHAPTER II.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND SCEPTICAL DOUBTS  
CONTINUED.

NEARLY two years elapsed since the events related in the previous chapter had first puzzled my mind. I was again in London. At the house of a friend, the spiritual subject was again broached. I freely offered my psychologic scapegoat on loan to my friend, who strangely refused the favour. The fact is, although not himself a Spiritualist in the strict sense of the term, his wife was, and very seriously expressed her opinions. He related a number of facts, and presented me with some well written spiritual tracts. She spoke of spiritual experiences of an impressive character. I was not to be rendered pliable a second time. The subject was dropped and renewed on a future occasion.

My wife was with me this time. It was proposed that we should all go to Mrs. Marshall, who we were informed was a powerful medium. Accordingly we marched off, ready for excitement, if not conviction. I was full of the memory of the powerful agencies which took strong possession of the fortress of my doubts at Madame Besson's, and I steadily resolved to allow no fresh array of facts to test the weakness of my mental body-guard a second time.

The manifestations were not so astounding in a physical sense as those of the last séance I attended; yet they were mostly of a character to puzzle.

The alphabet was freely used, and a number of names and sentences was obtained. Our friends were favoured with answers to interrogatories through the alphabet and mentally.

We received several communications, purporting to come from friends long dead.

I was not a little amused at the imperfect orthography of the majority of the sentences which were spelt out. Still there was much to cause theme for marvel, and to set the common sense faculties on the alert. Finding that the table knocked out so readily a number of answers to questions, I thought I would give a test, in order to put the matter beyond the mere idea of guess-work on the part of the medium.

“Will the Spirits present favour me with an answer through the alphabet to a question I wish to put?” Three knocks came in reply. “Then spell out the title of the new book I have in the press.” To my astonishment the letters—CLIPPINGS FROM MANUSCRIPT were signalled out without a single hesitating halt.

I had been much troubled about the tardy manner in which the printers were getting through their task.

“Can the Spirits say how long it will be before the book is out?”

The table knocked six times loudly, meaning six months, as I afterwards understood, on putting the question in a new form.

The title of the book was right, but I deemed the other affair of “the six months” very improbable, because the printers had already had the copy a number of months, and would surely never keep the book in the press for so long a time.

I am quite satisfied that Mrs. Marshall could have

had no means of ascertaining my name, or the fact that I had a book of the title mentioned in hand. Information of that character could only have got to her through our friends who came with us. I am quite certain to answer for them. Had they have mentioned a word, even in the slightest whisper, I must have heard it, sitting, as I did, with my face towards them, at the table, during the séance.

My book has since appeared, and strange fact, it never saw the light until six months and a few days had departed, from the date of this séance, although I exercised every possible means in my power to make the spiritual prognostication false. I even took half the copy from the printer and put it in other hands; resting satisfied, with the arrangements I had made, that the book would appear at least a month in advance of the six spoken of. The new printers, like the old, delayed; the binder delayed, and the book came out in fulfilment of the prophecy.

The time seemed to have lightning-wings. The sitting was at an end. Although not prepared to give in my adhesion to Spiritualism from what I had seen, I was much excited and intensely interested in gaining fresh evidences and witnessing additional phenomena.

A second visit to Mrs. Marshall's gave us a number of new facts to dwell upon, and some more difficult mazes to explore. We sat at the table a few minutes only when my wife received imperative intimation that a Spirit friend of hers was desirous of communicating. She asked for the alphabet. Immediately the name in full—FANNY SHORT—of a dead sister-in-law was spelt out. The signals being given by rappings in the table like the sounds which a person's knuckles might produce. When asked if she would spell out a sentence, she gave rappings to the letters ALL IS WELL. My wife then requested the communicating

Spirit to inform her if she could fetch the spirit of her mother. Three raps and a pause of a few seconds took place. Then there was an eager movement of the table towards my wife, who desired to know if her mother were present. An affirmative rapping sound ensued. The alphabet was again used and the full name of my wife's mother—MARY ANN SHORT—was obtained.

Several other questions were put and answered in the usual way; when all of a sudden my wife's dress was seized by invisible hands and forcibly pulled. She was next carried round, chair and all; the Spirits resting her back-ways to the table.

A feeble movement of the table, answering a question from myself, gave me assurance that a Spirit wished to converse with me. The alphabet was in vogue; I thought I might as well use it, and proceeded to point, pencil in hand, to the letters. The letters rapped out were—MARION. I remembered our dead child of that name, and marking the very gentle rappings which distinguished this from all other communications, felt certain there was a genuineness about it. The little girl was seventeen months old when she died, and consequently could not be of the strength of older Spirits. But the question how she learned to spell, sorely puzzled my wonder-excited brain.

At other sittings, out of London, I have frequently received intimation of the presence of our spirit-child, and in all cases the movements of the table are gentle and the rappings faint. This unmistakable fact alone sets the guess-work theory at rest, supposing it possible that the medium had a means of producing the rappings and knockings in obedience to her own guessings. All mediums would not guess, move the table, and produce the rappings and knockings, alike.

The theory that the medium's brain is in a con-

dition of clairvoyance, and photographs on itself the thoughts passing in the minds of the persons placed *en rapport* with her, is utterly inconclusive. When the alleged spirit of our child intimated its presence by spelling out its name at Mrs. Marshall's, our minds were excited by the communications which came from the spirits FANNY SHORT and MARY ANN SHORT, and no thought of Marion entered our brains until the letters were rapped out. In fact, until the letters were nearly all signalled we thought the MAR would end with Y, and only conceived the possibility of the communication coming from Marion when the O and N completed the word.

I have often sat at a table and endeavoured to invoke her presence, but have found no response; whenever she has appeared I have particularly noted that it has been when I was not at that moment thinking about her. Her first appearance at the séance I am speaking of, at a time when the communications were marked and perfect, where there was no flaw at which to carp and tear, that suspicion might have opportunity to shew its teeth and doubt to triumph, made a deep impression on my mind. Since receiving other responses from her, and finding all possibility of trick or delusion at rest, where professional interest and private desire had no scope, I have symbolized her in the following:—

I had a little girl with pale blue eyes,  
 Like lustrous stars in night's pellucid skies.  
 She press'd her baby-lips to mine with bliss,  
 And smiled, an angel-smile; to bless her kiss.  
 Her smile was dear, and dear her infant ways,  
 And dear her beauty—dear her gentle gaze;  
 But dearer far her love, divine and pure,  
 That like the soul for ever shall endure.  
 As some bright spirit in a pleasing dream,

Or, clear reflection in a limpid stream,  
 That vanishes 'ere Thought can find repose,  
 As Beauty hides within the folded rose ;  
 My dear, dead Marion appear'd to me,  
 A flash of sun-light on a dull dark sea !  
 A gleam of Beauty fading from the earth !  
 A tiny gem of matchless form and worth !  
 A lily fairer than all lily-flowers,  
 A queen of queens as gladsome as the hours !  
 I pressed my darling to my anxious breast,  
 And deem'd her of Life's fairy forms the best !  
 I praised her with a parent's liberal praise,  
 Her features—beauty—all her artless ways ;  
 For she, my child, was heaven on earth to me !  
 With her I lost all sin—with her was free.  
 From all the cares that crush the Spirit's flowers,  
 And lead the soul thro' Shame's polluted bowers.  
 I press'd her to my heart, a being pure,  
 And deemed her holy life and love secure !  
 As shadows steal athwart the sun-lit noon,  
 As clouds come o'er the pale and pensive moon.  
 A change came o'er the features of my child ;  
 The lily faded on earth's wintry wild.  
 I laid my flower within the stubborn mould,  
 It's wither'd petals bitten by the cold.  
 I hid my gem within the sullen tomb,  
 And nature, weeping, robed the world in gloom.  
 The years, like birds, have flown, and yet the grave,  
 The buried gem retains—but cannot save  
 The lustre that adorn'd it on the earth,  
 Like Christ, the Spirit, hath a second birth.  
 And so, my matchless gem—my sainted queen !  
 My lily-child that blooms in Death's demesne,  
 Doth live in spirit-land and soaring free,  
 Appears in angel robes and talks to me !

I attended several other séances at Mrs. Marshall's, some of which were marked by few noteworthy phases. Although the marvellous phenomena I have described put my mental faculties on a vain mission of discovery, and every fresh stage of the journey brought renewed difficulties in the way, I still held tenaciously to my scepticism. True, I had found my original scape-goat

an obstinate plague, and was doomed to abandon him at last. Yet there must be some wonderful secret: the discovery of which would settle the matter.

At one sitting rappings from invisible knuckles would be felt and heard upon the legs of my chair. The next minute on the ceiling and in all parts of the apartment the same mysterious sounds would distinguish themselves.

Generally, at the close of the sittings, the departure of the Spirits were preceded by an indistinguishable number of raps, loud at first, then gradually faint and fainter, until, like echoes on a hill, they faded away in the echoing distance.

MAKE YOURSELF HAPPY. BELIEVE IN GOD—and sentences with a GOD BLESS YOU, at their end were frequently spelt out. Sometimes letters were jumbled together in such uncouth order as to make neither sense nor reason.

As a specimen of defective orthography I present the following verse, which came to me from a spirit who persisted in presenting himself as “Robin Burns.” I had desired to know if the spirit of any poet would communicate with me. The table in the usual manner gave eager response in the affirmative. “Who is it? will you spell your name?” was my compound inquiry. Three knocks. The letters rapped out were ROBIN. “Robert Burns?” The table knocked and tilted an affirmative, with evident satisfaction.

Of course I felt honoured, and what person with poetic sensibilities would not?

A lucky thought took possession of my brain. I would get the Bard of Scotia to improvise a verse or two—a talent for which he was famous in his life-time.

“Will Robin kindly give us a verse or two of poetry,” I asked, with due solemnity of tone, and a strong disposition for an affirmative response.

The table's three decisive knocks sent a thrill of pleasure through me.

"Now, please, let's have them?"

The table commenced beating affirmative knocks with its foot on the floor, to the following letters :—

O-COTLAND THY LOKS AND THY MOUNTAINS  
 THY WOODS AND HEATHER SO WILD—  
 THY WATERS FROM NATURE'S PURE FOUNTAINS  
 I HAVE DRANK FROM WHEN I WAS A CHILD.

ROBIN.

"Is that all?"—One knock.

"But you don't pretend to say that you are the spirit of the great Scottish songster?"

The table thundered out three knocks, with a suddenness almost electrical.

Surely Burns could spell correctly and present a better specimen of his genius than this, I thought.

The quickness, however, with which the words were spelt out and the rythmical effort of the lines obtained in the manner described tended to puzzle me much.

On a future occasion, sitting at the same table with my friend, Mr. Cooper, whom I had prevailed upon to witness some spiritual phenomena, I invoked the alleged spirit of Burns with the view to obtain some more poetic effusions. The following is a correct copy of the second verse elicited in the alphabet-form. This came without defective orthography.

THY BALMY BREATH OF THE MORNING,  
 AS IT COMES UPON LIFE-GIVING WINGS,  
 WHEN THE LARK FROM HER NEST IS UP-SOARING,  
 WHAT JOY TO THE HEART IT BRINGS.

“Is that all?”—One knock responded.

“Then proceed.”

The letters were deliberately signalled out, forming the words BOBBY BURNS.

There was a general laugh. The table seeming to take up the chorus.

“Robert Burns you mean?”

The table thundered:—“No.”

The laughter only become more boisterous. The “Robert” was asserted to be meant by us all and not the “Bobby.” But the table wouldn’t have it. It rapped assent every time the word “Bobby” was mentioned, and persisted in refusing to allow the more respectful name of “Robert” to pass without kicking out its stubborn negatives.

There was a lapse of several weeks between the sittings which gave me the opportunity of obtaining the two verses above quoted. Yet, in the theme and the word “Thy,” commencing the first line of the last verse, the relation of the two verses is visible. A slight alteration and halt in the metre give evidence of a want of finish; still, there is the rudiment of design in the whole.

Nothing worthy of further note passed at this sitting except that Mr. Cooper obtained a communication from an alleged Spirit who spelt out JOHN COL, and by no manner of solicitation could be prevailed upon to knock the additional M A N out, which would have made the name of a deceased relative complete.

My psychologic scape-goat had run off, being unable to carry the whole difficulty of the spiritual question, but I was not yet subdued. The ice rock of scepticism was melting, but it was not melted. I went forth into the world to do battle for the bread that perisheth, yet failed to battle for the heavenly bread which, like manna, lay upon the wilderness-paths

of materialism, needing only clear eyes to behold and ready hands to gather. Yet I was less authoritative, less disposed to laugh with the laugh of scorn, at the marvels I had witnessed than I had been formerly.

The cloud which obscured my eyes was gradually disappearing before the slowly appearing aurora of truth.

## CHAPTER III.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND SCEPTICAL DOUBTS  
CONTINUED.

ALTHOUGH I had no ever-present ghost of fancy on which to saddle the mystery of the spiritual phenomena, I still entertained wavering ideas in favor of old prejudices. I had witnessed some unaccountable marvels perplexing beyond question, although only a tithe as wonderful as the accounts which instanced the exciting incidents of which Mr. Home and other mediums of the higher order professed to have been the media. Still, all I had witnessed if it could only be taken for the genuine thing—made all I had read about of a higher character, quite within the range of credibility. But here the difficulty rested and seemed to me insurmountable. All “manifestations” which I had hitherto witnessed, were either at the houses of professional mediums or their friends. For the sake of a stop-peg to fill the last hole open to sceptical *animus* I must see them at my own table.

A visitor to Eastbourne, a Mr. T., staying at my house, who by the way was possessed of an extraordinary degree of nervous excitability, conversing with me upon an inconceivable number of topics, antithetically alluded to “spirit rapping,” stating that it was

all magnetism and a very simple matter, at my request, consented to sit at our table, a small round one.

Mr. T. evidently took the matter in hand with a confidence which could only grow out of practice. The spiritual facts were only magnetic facts, and all the so-called spiritual appearances ditto.

There was no mistake about it. The table rocked and rocked and moved about as though endowed with life and intellect. Questions were put and intelligible answers obtained by means of the alphabet.

Our first "sitting" was over, not without a suspicion crossing my mind that Mr. T. was playing a clever hoax upon us.

Mentioning the subject to some friends, Mr. Cooper and Mr. and Mrs. Hicks and others entered upon an arrangement to meet at my house and judge for themselves.

The second sitting was pregnant with incidents of an astounding character. The table was as volatile in its movements as the one I had seen at the house of Mrs. Marshall, still I could not satisfy myself that Mr. T. was honest in the matter. Such is the stubborn nature of deep-rooted scepticism; it hunts probability to the verge of the impossible and never leaves the field while it has a foe to fight. If it fails to overcome living substantial adversaries it creates imaginary ones and always assume itself the victor.

Marion came to the table in her usual gentle manner, spelling her name. Here was one mysterious fact, Mr. T. could not guess her name and caused the knockings to resemble in sound those which had marked her appearance at the London table.

Another fact struck conviction to my heart. Mr. T. left the table and still the manifestations came forth.

Another fact deepened the conviction. The table rose and ambled towards Mrs. Hicks. On being asked if any Spirit desired to communicate, three decisive knocks succeeded the question.

“Will you spell your name?” Three more knocks gave the response. The alphabet was immediately resorted to, and the letters ELIZABETH WESTLAKE were vigorously knocked out. On hearing from the lips of Mrs. Hicks that the name belonged to her deceased sister, and that she was not in her thoughts at the time, there was a feeling of satisfaction expressed in the faces of most of the company. For myself the marvel assumed sensible proportions. Weighing it along with all I had seen in London of the manifestations, I could not resist the conclusive testimony of facts in my own house beyond trick, or professional interest even.

By-and-bye a communication for Mr. Hicks caused a considerable degree of fun. The table was made to knock affirmative answers to the letters of the alphabet which would constitute the Spirit's name. The letters H K X S, meant for Hicks, made spiritual orthography ludicrous.

Mr. Cooper was next in communication with the alleged spirit of Mr. G——, a clergyman of his acquaintance, who had been dead about six or eight weeks. It happened during Mr. G——'s latter days on earth that the subject of Spiritualism was one of disputation between Mr. Cooper and himself.

The question was put, “Will you communicate?”

WHEN I WAS ALIVE I DID NOT BELIEVE IN SPIRITUALISM, was the response elicited by the aid of the alphabet. A certain V. R., who had been dead a short time, and whose death had been sudden, was asked for. He came and some strong rockings of the table took place.

A discovery was made at this second "sitting," that Mrs. Hicks was a medium—it remained to be proved whether Mr. T. were the better of the two.

The last sitting at which Mr. T. was present took place late one night, after several of us had sat for an hour or two and failed to elicit the faintest phenomenon.

No sooner did Mr. T. enter the room and sit down to the table than it began to betray signs of intellect in its movements. Rappings in the table like tappings produced by a piece of wood, very lightly and rapidly exercised for the purpose, gave evidence of an additional effort on the part of the Spirits to diversify the séance.

The following questions, put by myself and Mr. T., with the answers, may interest.

Can you give us reliable answers to questions about our progress in worldly concerns?—One knock,

Do Spirits participate in our joys and sorrows?—Three knocks.

Have Spirits an idea, similar to ours, of the flight of time?—One knock.

Has magnetism a motive influence in producing spiritual manifestations?—One knock.

Would spiritual séances, if frequent and general, tend to good?—Three knocks.

Do Spirits manifest themselves in dreams?—Three knocks.

Do they communicate with each other?—Three knocks.

Have they a knowledge of the future?—Three knocks.

Is the amount of spirit force equal in the mortal to the spiritual state?—Three knocks.

Do Spirits inspire men of genius?—One knock.

Do they continue with us day and night?—One knock.

Do they stimulate us to action?—One knock.

Do they mingle with matter?—Three knocks.

Have they materialistic ideas?—One knock.

Can all persons be convinced of spiritual presence?  
—One knock.

Do Spirits realise joy and sorrow similar to mortals?  
—One knock.

Do they visibly appear to certain persons?—Three  
knocks.

Do they photograph their likeness on the brain,  
giving it only a semblance of themselves?—One knock.

Do they feel pain? One knock.

Have they form?—Three knocks.

When they visibly appear do they desire to terrify?  
—One knock.

The following questions were asked solely by Mr. T.

Is it true that persons see the phantoms of animals  
in haunted houses?—One knock.

Is the fact of a house being haunted evidence that  
some cruel crime has been perpetrated?—One knock.

Is there a future state?—Three knocks.

Can Spirits recognise darkness from light?—One  
knock.

Have they a local habitation?—One knock.

Do you dwell entirely on this earth?—Three knocks.

Do you know if the planets are inhabited?—One  
knock.

Can you travel to them?—One knock.

Do you understand different languages if you have  
not learned them in life?—Three knocks.

Is a Spirit ever tired?—One knock.

Is there a future misery for us?—Three knocks.

Is it eternal?—One knock.

Will any be lost for ever?—One knock.

Are there different states in the spiritual world?—  
Three knocks.

Can our prayers avail for the departed Spirit?—  
One knock.

In putting these queries, with their spiritual answers forward, I do not hold myself responsible for the arguments they may elicit from persons of diverse creed. I have given them space to chronicle facts not to canvas criticism. In other chapters, my views on some of the points touched upon here, will be boldly and fairly urged according to the spiritual light within me; let my responsibility appear with them.

I have, however, noted that many communications seem to warrant the idea that some of the views of the circle are favored by spiritual affirmative answers. But this is not generally the case. Thus, a séance consisting of parties entirely devoted to orthodox views may develop spiritual orthodoxy, and *vice versa*. But this fact neither invalidates Spiritualism nor establishes the mental-magnetic theory. It argues strongly in favour of the views treated of in the chapter on “spiritual affinities and phases.”

Mr. T., I have already said, was a believer in the magnetic theory, but he was destined to find his scape goat a wild one, unfit for harness. He begged the table to spell out the initials of the name of a lady friend who had last written to him. It was done. C. F. were the letters given; his face reddened.

“Well, I’ll believe you are spirits if you’ll spell out the name of the doctor I last visited in London,” he said. The spirits undertook the task, probably bent on bringing conviction to him of their reality.

The letters YOEMAN being knocked out brought a deeper red upon his face.

“I’ll believe you are spirits if you’ll say how many weeks have elapsed since I visited him?” The table at once knocked five times. The crimson in his face still deepened.

He declared to me that the answers were all correct, and that the name of the doctor had been for a time forgotten by him.

When I saw Mr. T. the next morning he was in a sad state of nervous excitement, declaring that he had been kept awake during the night by the Spirits, who made the night dismal with rappings on the walls of his bed-room.

His highly nervous temperament may possibly have made his ears the fools of his imagination. Be that as it may, I found him proof against further spiritual sittings, and heard him recant his old magnetic idea in favour of the supernatural. Sceptics will accept this fact for what it is worth. But it offers an illustration of the manner in which the spiritual powers mysteriously and forcibly overthrow doubts and difficulties.

When a stone is rolled down a hill the probability is that it will only stop when it reaches the level plain. So with this spiritual stone, it was started down the hill of investigation in Eastbourne, by Mr. T., and it has been traversing ever since. It may meet with ruts and ridges in the shape of prejudice and persecution, but on it must roll until the broad level ground of truth affords it a sure resting place.

Mr. Cooper, with a persistency and earnestness highly commendable, took charge of the stone when Mr. T. lost valour and abandoned it.

At his own house the manifestations commenced, and have been gradually and marvellously developing ever since—Mrs. Hicks generally acting as medium.

The spirits of the clergyman, Mr. G., V. R., and John Colman, who signified his presence at Mrs. Marshall's by giving only half of the surname, generally found audience during the first sittings at the house of Mr. Cooper.

The table, a large-sized loo, under their guardian-

ship, favoured us with tiltings and knockings of a vigorous and pleasing character. At one time it would rise on one foot and turn upon another with the ease and freedom of a harlequin; at another time it would keep correct time to music, and sweep the room in high glee, like a human being sweeping the mazes of the dance.

At first the alphabet was of little use; the Spirits, from some cause or other, spelling out the most incongruous words. But in due time, names and sentences were marshalled in pompous order, to the delight of all parties.

The two Spirits Mr. G., the clergyman, and V. R., intimated to the circle that they would like Mrs. G. and Mrs. R. to come to the table. Mrs. G., the widow of the spirit clergyman, and Mrs. R., the mother of the spirit, V. R., were prevailed upon to be present. The mother, being in communication, the alphabet was called for, and these letters were signalled.

WHEN THE LORD TOOK ME FROM THIS STATE I KNEW I SHOULD BE HAPPY.

The mother was much affected. She afterwards said she felt she should receive assurance of her son's happiness, relating a dream which had come to her some time previously, in which Vincent R. appeared with a countenance radiant with serene placidity.

Mrs. G., the widow, after the usual questions and the ordinary greetings of the table in response, which in her case were more powerful than any which had taken place during all our sittings, received the following sentence:

MAY THE BLESSING OF GOD BE ON YOU.

From that time the Spirits—Mr. G. and V. R.—have made no further manifestations of their presence; whether it be that having given assurance of

their happiness to those most dear to them they have no further motive to bring them to us, it is a remarkable fact that no invocation on our part can cause them to reproduce the strong and pleasing table movements which marked their presence.

It was expected that these spiritual marvels should cause interest, and not very praiseworthy feelings, to possess the minds of many of the quiet and talkative inhabitants.

Mis-statements and uncharitable remarks flew on the winds of rumour, and people of a very orthodox mould, with the word "Devil" on their lips, turned up their eyes and denounced the poor misguided "resuscitators of witchcraft," in no very complimentary terms.

A gentleman of good position, and characterised for christian principles, re-enacted the order of the Inquisition, under its milder modern forms, by fleecing us of our fair and honourably attained talents, endeavouring to cancel our titles and laurels, won out of the field of Spiritualism; and ending by withholding his patronage, in the way of business, to some of our friends, with the threatened etceteras to follow.

Still our sittings have increased in frequency and improved in character. Curiosity has brought to us descendants of Hippocrates and students of Blackstone, who have offered queer resistance to the truth.

A sceptical lawyer, finding the table move, thinking probably of the magnetic scape-goat, found in that fact substantial reason for concluding the movements were not Spiritual.

The alphabet being used, the letters were intimated—**ALL TAKE CA**— "cake" suggested the lawyer. Three knocks brought a fit of loud laughter.

"There," said the legal functionary, "is proof that the mind does it. You see, I am a medium."

Perhaps the Spirits took up his suggestion, to make a "cake" of him.

Immediately afterwards they spelt out the sentence, which read—ALL TAKE CARE YOU DEAL WELL WITH SPIRITUALISM.

This illustration affords a proof that suggestions anticipating the Spirits may give them opportunity of playing a joke, and at any rate may lessen confidence in the spiritual genuineness of the sentences given.

At the table of a gentleman—a Mr. E.—the ordinary manifestations were elicited; the lady, Mrs. E., declaring she would not believe the spiritual ideas, no, not if the table itself got up and told her they were true. She was requested to sit with the rest of the company at the table; she only emphasised more emphatically her negations.

Mr. Cooper said, "I was at a table in London where a person was present who stubbornly persisted in remaining from the table; but the table, without much hesitation, advanced to *her*."

"Then why don't this table advance towards me?" was the triumphant request of Mrs. E.

In a few seconds the table marched towards her, as though impelled by the desire to give her conviction.

Another lady present obtained through the alphabet the letters—TAKE CARE OF BABY. Then followed—I SEE YOU ALL.

At the house of Mr. Cooper a very considerable number of sentences have been knocked out in single letters. Some of these sentences have contained words spelt backwards, and have been abruptly left in an incomplete form.

Here is a sentence unfinished, with the first word backwards—UOY MUST NOT GO WHERE—the communication was readily understood.

From the Spirit of Mary Cooper, a grandmother of

Mr. Cooper, the sentence came—I CAN ALL OF YOU TAKE CARE. Here the letters are not placed according to the rules of prosody, yet the sense is perfect.

ALL TAKE CARE YOU DO NOT LAUGH was signalled out when the company had been freely indulging their risible faculties.

DO YOU REMEMBER ME? came from a Spirit who had left the earth when the person addressed was a child.

SING AND I WILL HELP; and such laconic communications came frequently.

On one occasion Mrs. Hicks received the name of her grandmother, together with her sister's name. Then the following incongruous sentence presented cause for mirth—PLACE THAT CONFEDENCE IN LORD AS DO YOU WILL BE LIKE US. It will be observed that the E in the word confidence is incorrect according to our orthography.

On one occasion the spirit of a man, said to haunt a loft hard by, was invoked. He freely rapped out the following—I MUST BE MADE HAPPY.

“But how?”

I CANNOT TELL YOU YET.

“When will you?”

FIND OUT THAT MAN FOR ME AND HE WILL TELL YOU WHAT TO DO.

“What man?” Echo might answer the last query; “the Spirit of the loft” was gone, and may he find happiness.

Some very excellent instruction has been often obtained at the table. A chapter from the Bible, or a beautiful poem, being called for, it has rapped out genial and hearty applause at the verses containing the deepest sacred meaning.

The time of day being asked for, it has been told by the table with correctness. So, also, when a number has been written, it has knocked it out.

Not always, however, has its answers been correct. Like the mistakes in orthography, the mistakes of the responses to cross-questions were often apparent.

Hitherto all the manifestations of the table necessitated either the hands or single finger of the medium, or others sitting near her, to be placed on the top. The attempt had been often tried unsuccessfully to obtain some more convincing proof of independent action. The magnetic scape-goat was not yet entirely abandoned by some of us, although such wonderful phenomena as described had taken place.

Sitting round a table at the house of Mrs. Hicks, the long desired and often requested phenomenon set the doubt of tables moving without human contact at rest. We all sat several paces from the table, and on requesting the Spirits to move it without our touching it, the feat was accomplished. The sociable piece of mahogany ambled in a circular direction towards Mr. Cooper. It repeated the performance five times. This fact can be attested by six persons.

The mist of doubt is entirely dissipated, and as if to rivet conviction with enduring force, the evidences of spiritual power are clearing up like a cloudy day, when the sun attains its meridian ascendancy.

Mr. Cooper has discovered a medium in his own house, and one that promises to yield us some of the higher and more enticing phases of the spiritual subject. His daughter, Mary, a girl of some 14 years, has lately been receiving communications from the Spirits in legible, bold, written characters. She likewise has elicited a few attempts at spirit-drawing, all of which betray design and open up fields for thought to traverse and doubt to disappear.

Her mediumship does not stop here. Some very good organ music has been heard, her fingers being moved and pressed on the notes with a mechanical per-

fection, beyond her own will, and without her own conception of the notes constituting the music evoked.

In carefully inspecting some of the specimens of spirit-writing, it is easy to discover a visible similitude in the formation of some of the letters to the same letters forming a sentence in the communicating Spirit's hand-writing when on earth. This is substantiated. The sentence, I LOVE YOU AND WANT YOU TO LOVE GOD, was one of the first sentences written through Miss Cooper's mediumship. Afterwards the name of a Spirit was requested to be written, and the autograph of Mr. Cooper's grandmother appeared on the paper—MARY COOPER.

Mr. Cooper produced a book which is a family legacy, and in which is written Mary Cooper, the grandmother's own hand-writing. The wonderful similarity of the spirit-autograph with the one in the book must give an impetus to the magnetic scape-goat which will frighten it into oblivion.

HE WILL HAVE CONVICTION SOON was rapped out when a question was put by one of us with a view to ascertain the way to deal with a gentleman who had publicly denounced our manifestations.

“But how? Will you write out the answer?” It was done through the hand of Miss Cooper—HE MUST READ AND SEE.

Afterwards the following pretty sentence was signalled by means of the alphabet:—I HAVE GATHERED ANOTHER GARLAND BECAUSE I KNOW YOU LIKE FLOWERS.

Thus I have traced truthfully, stage by stage, the incidents of my progress from materialism to Spiritualism. I have not consciously hidden a fact which would tell against Spiritualism, although I have for want of space kept back several that would tell in its favor.

My mission now is to treat the questions of Spiritualism in all its phases as they present themselves to my mind; to boldly confront the popular scape-goats and beat them from the ground. In order to fulfil my mission I shall be content to use the weapons of argument and reason; making facts, not fancies, marshal themselves in battle array under the generalship of spiritual truth.

Attempts have been made to obtain some communications in Russian, but only a few letters have as yet been written, but they have been formed exactly like the proper Russian letter.

Here is a remarkable epistle from Spiritland, communicated to Miss Mary Cooper from a deceased aunt. The whole of it was rapped out by the aid of the alphabet with considerable rapidity.

MARY, I HOPE YOU LOVE GOD, AND TRY TO MAKE YOUR PAPA HAPPY. LOVE ADA, ERNEST, ARCHY AND ION. WILL YOU WRITE TO AUNT MARIAN AND TELL HER THAT SPIRITUALISM IS TRUE? GO AND TELL AUNT H——Y THAT I HAVE COMMUNICATED TO YOU, AND TELL HER THAT I WISH HER TO COME TO SEE ME AND BE CONVINCED. GO AND TELL HER THAT I WILL COME TO THE TABLE AND SAY WHAT I HAVE TO COMMUNICATE, AND WE WILL TELL HER MANY THINGS ABOUT SPIRITUALISM. GO AND SEE HER DIRECTLY, FOR SHE MUST BE TOLD AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, OR SHE WILL NOT BELIEVE WHAT YOU SAY.

On being solicited to give her name through the hand of the medium, the spirit consented, and the well-known name of the aunt was written in full. It commenced with the initials K. A.

The above epistle was given without a single mistake in the orthography. While the letters forming the name, Marian were being signalled, the fifth letter

was changed to o by anticipation, but the table was decisive and gave it a, which makes the correctness of even the name perfect.

After this a spiritual wish was expressed to communicate with another aunt.

At a sitting which took place a few hours later Miss Cooper received written, AUNT KITTY IS PRESENT.

She was asked what communication she had to make to the other aunt as desired previously. Then came, YOU MUST WRITE AND TELL HER WHAT I HAVE TOLD YOU TO SAY TO AUNT R——.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE SUPERNATURAL IN SCRIPTURE.

IN the first chapter of Genesis and the second verse we read, "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Thus, in the opening chapter of the Old Testament, Spiritualism finds favour. Further on, in other parts of the Sacred Book, we have accounts of the appearances of angels, messengers from God to man, sent to the earth in order to warn and comfort and avenge—in the name of the Lord.

The Scriptural testimony throughout is one long chapter of marvellous events, which grew out of the more marvellous workings of the Supernatural. In fact, it appears plain, that God, for some holy purpose of his own, chose to lead His people through the shadows of sin into his glorious presence, by spiritual agencies, which were hidden from the normal eye, and which could only be perceived by the few whom He had previously gifted with mediumistic sight.

An Angel appears to Hagar. Genesis 16, verse 7. "And the angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, &c." The Lord's messenger is sent to guide her mind in a direction to which she was opposed, and to effect a purpose that human persuasion merely might have utterly failed to accomplish.

Three men (angels) are entertained by Abraham. Genesis, chap. 18.

Two angels visit Lot. Genesis, chap. 19.

Jacob is met by angels. Genesis, chap. 32, verse 1.  
 "And Jacob went on his way and the angels of God met him."

In the Book of Exodus, chap. 3, verse 2, we read,  
 "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him (Moses) in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed."

Aaron's rod is turned into a serpent and the river into blood. Exodus, chap. 7. In these latter wonders the Supernatural becomes even more manifest.

Moses talks with God on the Mount, and is privileged to behold His face. Fire descends from Heaven "upon the altar and consumes upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat," Leviticus, 9 chap., 24 verse.

And what more convincing in the Scriptures could be found in favour of the Supernatural than that mysterious and interesting account in the 22nd chapter of Numbers, of Balaam and his ass. An angel armed with a sword awaits the approach of Balaam with intent to kill him. But the ass sees the angel, and turning on one side carries his master out of the path. The angel pursues Baalam. The ass falls down under his rider. Baalam smites the animal three times. The Lord opens the mouth of the ass and he speaks.

To accept the literal idea of this narrative, credulity is put to its utmost test. But Spiritualism renders it a probable truth, no more extraordinary than other supernatural or even natural facts.

This story of the ass beholding the angel favours the evidence supporting the statements about animals being frightened at unusual appearances at the same

moment as human beings, several instances of which are on record.

The waters of Jordan are divided, and the priests and people that bear the ark stand on dry ground in the midst of the river and pass clean over. Joshua 3, verse 17.

An angel is sent to rebuke the people of Bochim. Judges, chap. 2, verse 2. An angel appears to Gideon and sends him to deliver the children of Israel from the Mideanites. Judges, chap. 6.

An angel is in converse with Monoah's wife and afterwards visits Monoah himself. Judges, chap. 13.

Then we read of the doings of the Witch of Endor, who is prevailed upon by Saul to raise up Samuel. The witch, fearing the common fate of witches, refuses at first, but the king assuring her that she should be subjected to no penalty of the kind, she consents, and forthwith Samuel appears.

In the first and second chapters of the second book of Kings, we read of an angel comforting Elija, and of his miraculous ascent in a chariot of fire up into heaven.

In the 4th chapter of the same book, Elisha performed a couple of miracles multiplying the widow's oil and raising her dead son. Further on, in the 19th chapter, verse 35:—"And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred four score and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses." Sometimes on missions of mercy, at other times on missions of fierce vengeance, the angels of the Lord are represented performing the high behests of the Almighty.

It is not my purpose to take separately one by one the sacred references to the Supernatural, and invest them with all the metyphysical figures the mind can discover, in order to give commanding force to them.

My task is simply to note the principal instances on record, where the Supernatural appears, and allow them in their own simple nakedness to serve my purpose by substantiating the fact, that Supernaturalism has its most powerful and worthy friend in the Sacred Scriptures. We read of persons possessed of a familiar (wicked) Spirit living under the ban of the Judicial law, many of whom were less fortunate than the Witch of Endor.

History, not biblical, takes up the theme, and shows us the tools of persecution, and the ghosts of witchcraft, which haunted our puritan forefathers and caused them to drag the Judicial spirit of persecution down into an age for which it was unsuitable and out of place.

Spiritualism is destined to remove the scales from the eyes of mankind and teach them better than to persecute either wizards or witches. Let there be laws for the just punishment of the impostor, whether he be a wizard or not. Persecution is a scourge in the hands of fanaticism, and a scourge it becomes. Apply it against the outlaws of public opinion and a scourge it will be in very truth.

The Supernatural pervades scripture. That must be admitted, if not in the instances already cited, in those which are to follow.

The evil and the good are perceptible everywhere. The Bible Spirits, alike with other Spirits, come forth in bold contrast.

The evil Spirits are like danger signals to the pilot, when he comprehends their meaning. The good Spirits are angels that are bound to us with the divine chords of divine sympathy. The evil Spirits on the other hand have strong powers of fascination—and, serpent-like, charm us into sin. It is the mission of the good Spirits to guard over us and defend us. But

it is our own mission to be up and doing with our lamps trimmed, lest the Master come and find us sleeping.

The instances further related in the Old Testament. Where Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego pass through the fiery-furnace without a hair of their head being even singed—and the appearance of those miraculous fingers and the mysterious handwriting on the wall, which struck terror into the wicked heart of Belshazzar, afford other evidence that supernatural manifestations formed part of the order of divine government.

Passing from the Old Testament to the New, I find in the first chapter of Matthew, preceding the birth of Jesus, an angel appeared to Joseph for a similar purpose to the one which brought the angel of the Lord to Hagar. In the 4th chapter of Matthew the spiritual element follows Jesus up into a mountain. He is there tempted by the Spirit of darkness, who no sooner departs than angel Spirits appear. In the 8th chapter the account is rendered, of the two men possessed with devils meeting Jesus, and the particulars given of the Saviour's manner of ridding them of the devils which were suffered to enter into swine. In the 9th chapter Jesus heals a dumb man possessed of a devil. In the 17th chapter, He is transfigured and appears before Peter, James and John in white raiment, and with face that shines like the sun, in company with Moses and Elias. And the last chapter describes the crucified Jesus free from the Sepulchre, his resurrection being discovered to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, by the angel of the Lord, who had descended from Heaven and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. Jesus makes his appearance to Mary Magdalene, and afterwards, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, he stood before them, saying, "Peace be with you." They marvelled

and rejoiced at the presence of their Lord, but Thomas was wanting in faith and could only be convinced by placing his finger in the holes in his master's hands and side.

Peter is in prison and sleeping between two soldiers, bound in chains, and he is to be put to death at the instigation of Herod. A light shines in the prison, and an angel touches the prisoner and tells him to put on his sandals and cast his garment about him. They come to an iron gate, which opens of its own accord. The angel departs, and Peter is free.

It is surely unnecessary to give other cases. To those who believe with a believing spirit in the scriptures, they must weigh down the heaviest objections to Supernaturalism. To those who would put them on one side, with a deeper disbelief than was possessed by Thomas, some other arguments, of a different character, will be required, to bring conviction home to them. Here Spiritualism finds its level, and performs true service.

I have taken no note of Christ's miracles—as miracles, which might be done to add additional testimony in favour of the marvellous spiritual powers he possessed. Neither have I gone into Revelations, where the chapters abound with the marks of Supernaturalism.

The great supernatural truth is all-potent, all-pervading, and fully established throughout the entire books which constitute "The Book of Books."

How is it that Theology and Science have combined to curb this mighty truth?

It will be urged—The days of miracles have past. How so? The miracles performed by Christ, which belonged to the period he walked and talked with men, have certainly passed; but other miracles, equally the work of the Supreme Being, are daily and hourly performed.

Do we dispute them? Then our doubts are worth to us more than our eyes, and facts have no force and no value.

The angels that appeared before the Lord's anointed in the old days, were not always visible to others who stood near. And doubtless when told of the spiritual visitations, they, like Thomas, wanted to *feel* the marks of their presence, before they would consent to believe. But the Lord's anointed ones, under angelic guardianship went about their duties, nevertheless.

The gift of *healing*, possessed in such a marvellous degree by Jesus, was not confined to himself. He imparted it to some of his disciples.

But those who had the gift were few in comparison to the vast multitudes who had it not. This fact offers evidence in favour of the views, elsewhere put forth, on "Spiritual Mediumship."

The fact proved, that the supernatural manifestations which are taking place in these modern days, have their parallels in Holy Scripture; the faith of the believing Spiritualist becomes the more firm, and the weight of evidence to the unspiritual Theologian becomes overpowering.

The fact proved, what remains for the Bible believer but to pause in deep humility before he condemns?

Let him remember that Spiritualism offers a solution to scriptural mysteries, before which the devout have trembled, and feared to stand in defence of christian truths. By accepting the modern phases, which are established of the old spiritual truth, he is leading the Materialist into the sunshine of faith. But by standing opposed to the old light in its new radiance, he is allying himself with the foes of the Lord, and sealing up the book of his own faith to them.

Dispute the whole range of modern spiritual phenomena to the Materialist. How will the story of Balaam's ass beholding an angel and finding speech, appear to him? He will readily accept doubt at your hands, and doubt will probably seal his doom.

Tell him that it is absurd to suppose that a disembodied spirit can knock out its communications on the leg of a table, or through other media—and how will the story of Jonah, living in the belly of a whale, sound to him?

Persuade him that modern science has ascertained the laws of the possible, and measured their operations with mathematical correctness; and mounted on the pedestal of Wisdom, it has decided what it is safe to believe and what it is unsafe to believe. Say that it has given its veto against the facts which prove there is a law or series of laws of a supernatural order, ascertainable, in fact, although obscure; and how will the proofs establishing the truths of the divine law as exemplified in the transfiguration, in the burning bush, in the fiery furnace, in the hand-writing on the wall, and in all the supernatural evidences afforded by the Word, appear to him?

The sceptical mind halts not in presence of the marvellous or miraculous; it leaps over such breaks with ease, because science and theology have stimulated its progress—the one by bounding the range of the possible; the other by circumscribing the limits of the Supernatural, and unconsciously fighting against itself in its vain endeavour to crush the spirit out of the soul of the Present.

If the unbelief and wickedness of people in the days of Moses and Christ needed a dispensation of miracle to bring them to a knowledge of the Lord, we surely need one now, and are destined to behold one in the

form of the old spiritual truth, spiritually and miraculously manifested.

What does it argue—that pious people, earnest believers on all past supernaturalisms, but in no possible present or future ones, take up the hue and cry: “These things cannot be.” If they *can* be they *must* be, and that they *be* may be ascertained on investigation of the phenomena and examination of their evidences.

Let the question of Spiritualism rest upon its merits and all its mighty teachings of the old truth in novel forms will be as manifest as the manifestations in dispute.

The Bible has no word against it, but in almost every one of its books, I have shewn, it supports evidences of its truth.

Angels and devils came to the people of the Bible dispensation, and they come to us now. It would be a delight to us to know that only angels could come; but as it was in the beginning, so it is now. The good were the favoured of the Lord in the old days, and when spiritual visitants were sent to them, they were generally of the angelic host. Whilst the demoniac spirits, on missions Satanic, possessed the wicked and influenced them to perdition.

In our own case it is in such-wise the spiritual powers are drawn to us. Goodness begets goodness, and sin begets sin.

The stern facts of the spiritual question accepted for what they teach, will weigh on the side of truth, and touch the great heart of humanity, bringing the World To Come a step or two nearer to us. They channel the mind along streams of thought of an awful and pleasing character. And since virtue thrives by contact with virtue, religion must expand by contact with spiritual truth.

Faith moves mountains ; but it wants moving itself first. Then the mountains of difficulty which obstruct the way of truth, and retard the advancement of the human soul, will dissolve away like snow before a burning sun.

## CHAPTER V.

## SPIRITUALISM VERSUS THEOLOGY.

THE modern facts which have come to light testifying to the truth of spiritual presences bear upon their features such incontrovertible marks that even wonder becomes mystified at the sceptical forces allied to distort or overturn them.

In vain do the earnest and intelligent adherents to the spiritual doctrines collect evidence and give personal proofs. The age is too much engrossed by scientific, philosophic, and materialistic platitudes to heed their voice. On this side of the channel we have been slow to learn and quick to condemn without investigation. We have sought after no new Gods, but we have bowed down to false ones. We have taught superstition and condemned it, talked about religion and rendered its teachings impracticable, always looking forward to the dim futurity with a steady eye upon the actual present. Our love has been divided between creed and cash, the dogmas of the one supplying the place of the Spirit, and the sound of the other setting them to music. We have left the counting house for the sanctuary, but have carried with us its robes. On our churches we have bestowed elaboration, and instead of worshipping the Supreme we have idolized our temples.

Our souls have been pinned to the earth with earthly trammels—the trammels of materialism, therefore we have failed to soar being burdened with their weight.

Instead of looking full in the face of the sun of righteousness that our own features may glow with the radiance of his brightness, we have turned our eyes earthwards and have become earthy.

We have looked at things through a golden medium and valued them as they appeared. But we have feared to look fully with our naked eyes at the mysterious and mighty harbingers of divine truth. It has been our sin that we have said what we have not thought, and performed acts we dared not challenge to the strict test of moral and christian ethics.

There have been the constant warnings of the inward voices of the Spirit, the perpetual struggle to deafen the sense of hearing, and the restless and miserable uncertainty of our life-pursuits stimulating the material senses and destroying, or at least clogging, the spiritual desire, within us. We have gone on grovelling yet conscious of the sacrifice of our noblest instincts. In the desert we have groaned for the life-spring and found it not, because of the materialistic film before us. In the garden we have looked for flowers and discovered weeds, because the sense of the beautiful has become materialised. In the palace we have approached the throne and adored its trappings and not the King. We have done all this, and more, because our souls are enslaved by the forms of Matter and not enfranchised by those of the spirit.

The church has been more careful for its rituals and observances than for the catholicity of Christ's doctrines. It has set itself up the Judge of Faith, and instead of judging not lest it be judged, it has denounced dissent and put a ban upon controversy, walling itself in a sanctuary of exclusiveness. Owing its own exis-

tance to a revolution of religious idea, which succeeded the secession of Luther from the Catholic Church, it nevertheless regards private judgment right only in the degree in which it is asserted. Thus the church exclusively holds fast to its own, battles for itself, and narrows the ways of salvation.

It is the principle of exclusiveness which excites jealousies and suspicions, and uncharitable feelings, and renders the pure and perfect teachings of Christ almost a dead letter. We want a living, palpable, breathing faith, dependant on no mere external set of formularies; which shall inspire the universal human soul with holy and heavenly hopes. Such a faith Spiritualism is destined to supply. We want testimony that behind the veil there is life, and that death is only a name for change—testimony that the life-long longings of the soul for immortal being, when the body or case of the spirit shall moulder to dust, are not mere fancied delusions stimulated by instruction. Such testimony Spiritualism is destined to supply.

We want assurance that the life we lead here will regulate the life beyond; assurance that every noble act, holy desire, sincere thought directed in the way of goodness, high endeavour and soul-elevating conception, will go with us, pleading for us, and giving us happiness in that other world behind the veil; assurance that every base, degrading action, vicious desire, insincere thought, directed in the way of sin, low pursuit and criminal conception, will follow us, haunting us like spectres, to witness against us and work misery upon us, in that other world beyond the tomb. Such assurance Spiritualism is destined to supply.

The teachings of our age are essentially materialistic, and their effects close out of our souls the diviner life. It is in vain that we bow to Christ and Mammon at the same time. If we serve the one we must abandon

the other. We cannot serve God and Satan. Let us for a brief space watch the worship of the popular theologies.

We are taught from infancy to believe that Death comes to us as a messenger from Heaven or Hell, and that our title to eternal existence in either place is gained by our belief or unbelief in certain tenets. The place, or state, Heaven, will yield us, not progressive, but perfect, unending happiness; and the state, or place Hell, the extreme opposite—ceaseless and perfect misery. Our finite minds fail to reach the remote distance, and scarcely dread consequences of pain, or realise consequences of pleasure, so far removed from conception. Thus doubt and uncertainty intervene, and render us liable to seize the fleeting rewards of earthly joy—to indulge in sin at the cost of hope.

Spiritualism renders doubt and uncertainty impossible, because it brings the consequences of life-action near. It offers a medium-state or series of states similar to the Greek Hades, and admits the eternal principle of progression. Thus the certain knowledge that we carry with us immediately we enter on the confines of the grave those instincts which have demonized or spiritualised our souls on earth, in other words, the knowledge that our future begins at the end of our present, and the Heaven and Hell are contained within ourselves and afford our spirits immediate bliss and anguish which endure progressively—makes responsibility to act and gives the strongest possible incentive to virtuous effort. Spiritualism teaches this, and, without ignoring Christian truths, adds testimony in their behalf.

The discovery of the fact that an intermediate series of states precede the Spirit's progress into the bosom of God, is a discovery which by no means destroys the idea of eternal rewards and punishments; it only affords

our finite minds a view of the next place of existence and deems it desirable that we prepare for that, and fit ourselves, when there, for other existences beyond.

In Spiritualism we behold the fulcrum on which we raise faith from the iron shackles of doubt. The lever that can remove mountains of vice. Theology lets loose the rope that the soul holds by, and it falls away into sin. Spiritualism picks up the rope and draws the soul to Heaven.

Once engraft the conviction that goodness and vice walk with us here and continue with us hereafter in degree and power, performing their work at the end of our journey in this life, the inducements to right-action will be strengthened, and the inducements to wrong-action will be weakened. It is the certainty and proximity of retributive justice which alone can operate upon the fears of the hardened and reckless.

The wretch who perpetrates a horrible crime knows that if he come into the fangs of the law he must expiate his crime on being found guilty. But he actually performs his demoniac task under the influence of the conviction that he will escape. He never dreams of that far-off uncertain Hell-punishment taught by theology. It is the present immediate punishment he dreads.

If detection were a certainty palpable to the criminal's eyes, he would find his iron nerves less rigid and his purpose less stern. He knows that detection depends on his own awkwardness, and endeavours to destroy all witnesses against him. He knows likewise that gigantic criminals *have* escaped. And he argues himself into the commission of crime with the chances of escape apparently in his favour. What has the Lutheran idea of Hell done towards preventing the commission of the offence? Simply nothing.

Spiritualism would have had a different effect. It

would have taught the criminal that the monster of iniquity eating away the vitals of human compassion from his soul would haunt him here and hereafter, and that the gain of the deed would be loss almost infinite, a loss to be realized at once, if not this, the other side of the grave. Teach the idea that the murdered will be ever-present in the spirit-world to the murderer—a retributive phantom, which shall make certain the scorpion stings of Remorse—the inducements to murder will find a check, which all capital punishments in their most cruel forms would fail to produce.

The popular theological notions of Heaven and Hell, by their remoteness and unchangeable *statu quo* character, are fatal to pure moral progress. The sinner is taught to believe that a rule of belief divides the walls of the two places. Modern sectaries set Christ up in their temples, like the brazen serpent was set up in the Wilderness, that the children of Israel might look upon it and be healed. They ignore gradual progressive salvation or receive it lightly. The consequence is that we have an almost inane faith, and lack self-effort. Christ went about doing good, and all who grow in likeness of Him must do the same. His was a life of continual service, and his example is a lesson for our profit. If we ignore or treat lightly self-effort for improvement, contenting ourselves with simple idealisms regarding the Saviour, we shall fall short of personal merits. But, say a host of voices, there is no merit due to us—the merit all belongs to Christ. Then why are we rewarded for goodness and punished for wickedness? Take away all our responsibility and leave us in the hands of Christ we shall be safe—but how if we get into Satan's hands? Leave us our responsibility it becomes inevitable that we exercise our powers either for good or ill, and work for ourselves a future of joy or woe.

Spiritualism invites us into its fold, and burdens us with no cumbersome forms or rituals of an exclusive character. It points to Christ and bids us transfigure our lives in likeness of Him, unfolding to us certain and immediate fruition of good and fruition of evil. We are thus stimulated to put a check upon our passions and improve our habits ; to grow more in love with the PURE, the TRUE, and the FREE.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE SUPERNATURAL VERSUS SCIENCE.

THE supernatural in all ages has thrown its mantle over the human mind, and ignorance has groped about in terror, fearing to approach its mysterious foot-stool. Science has materialised and sought to laugh down all faith in the unseen Spirit intelligences. The centuries have rolled past and history and literature have almost excluded the IMMATERIAL, but still at intervals startling revelations of a character unearthly have terrified and thunderstruck the human heart.

The ages have been busy with the mechanical forces of a material philosophy, and have failed to find either time or disposition to search out the hidden marvels of Spiritualism. Thus the eye diverted from a given object fails to perceive it, and evidence is wanting for its existence.

Science has developed some of the forces of matter, but failed to touch the forces of Spirit—not content with its own mighty achievements it has sought to melt in its crucible all knowledge, and has dared to fix all possibilities under its banner. In its own sphere it is the agent of progress and the friend of man, but out of its sphere it becomes an agent of terror and a foe to truth.

For centuries the trophies of science have won for it the admiration of mankind, and its dictum has been admitted supreme and final. Science has become the "all in all" to man, or it has invented a vocabulary of epithets consigning him with the "fools," "fanatics," and "superstitious" of the earth.

Starting upon material principles it ends in material conditions; within itself it contains the world of facts, which forms the basis of its axioms. To itself it proves all things or doubts their existence.

It is not to science, under its present mode of operating, that the Spiritualist can look for an advocate. If he appeal to its devotees the chances favour the idea that he will be called either a fool or a knave.

Slowly, but certainly, the mist of materialism is clearing before the dawn of a new sun—the sun of Spiritualism. The old ideas of ghostly appearances wear new forms and come to us up out of the dust of ages.

The universal heart has a chord that vibrates to spirit pressure, even while science invents ghosts to prove their nonentity.

The slumbering embers of Spiritualism are gradually awakening to new life, and the decisive philosophies of the schools must hold their breath.

It is useless saying that the disembodied Spirits cannot visit the "glimpses of the moon," whilst a legion of facts say they can and do.

The ghost of Hamlet's father was a poet's conception of a mysterious supernatural fact. We had been taught to believe it an ideal creation, like Milton's Comus—and were easily persuaded, with an array of scientific experiments before us, to believe all ghostly reports of the same stuff. But these modern phenomena, of which we have seen much and heard much more, bid us pause and ask ourselves a few questions.

The scientific are incredulous, being materialistic. They fail to see the spirit powers around us through the medium of their invented telescopes. But by what rule of logic ought they to deny the existence of Spirits because they evade their scrutiny? By what course of reasoning ought they to settle upon *their* ascertained knowledge being *all* knowledge? How know they that the physical world contains no spiritual world within itself, or that none is around it?

Surely the mysteries of Spirit are not more overwhelming to the mind than are the mysteries of matter.

It would be right to dispute where testimony fails, but not where it is of an unimpeachable and conclusive character.

Science has its own legitimate field of operations. It would lose none of its utility by confining itself to its own hemisphere, and admitting the existence of a spiritual hemisphere beyond it.

It is the spirit life which, like the poetry of existence, elevates the soul above the material, and sets the affections free like bees, to suck the honey from ethereal flowers. Science deals with the material—the supernatural with the spiritual.

The denial of the supernatural involves the logic of atheism, and turns God into matter, inculcating a fatal fatalism, which becomes the tomb of hope and the grave of faith.

The denial of the supernatural involves the closing and clasping of the book of books;—the breaking of the soul's chords, that no heavenly music may be heard in its chambers;—the subjugation of the yearnings which immortality inspires.

The denial of the supernatural involves the sealing up of the future hereafter, and the confining of the Spirit to the dull boundaries of this earthly earth.

Science has its mission, but it mistakes its calling when it enters the lists of doubt and exercises its subtle skill to overturn the mysterious facts of the supernatural.

It is not given to all men to think or see alike. Therefore they should be charitable, and especially humble and truth-loving.

Such men, high in their calling as Professor Faraday and Sir David Brewster, who shoot popular prejudices at Spiritualists, should pause and learn humility, and they would gain experience of another kind to that which they have become familiar with.

Scientific men build their theories upon facts, and rest their faith upon them. They hold theories in abeyance until they prove them correct.

Spiritualists follow out a similar plan. Facts form their theories and force them to conviction.

But the men of science are unwilling to believe the existence of spiritual facts. Here is the rub, and the cause of misapprehension, misconception, and abusive epithet.

A host of scientific objections urged by a host of Faradays and Brewsters, is powerless to destroy a single spiritual fact.

The opponents of Spiritualism assert that those who witness in favour of supernatural appearances are the dupes of a diseased imagination or the victims of a systematic trick.

The Spiritualists, on the other hand, are convinced that their scientific opponents have a materialistic cataract forming upon the organ of sight—that they urge their veto against the truth of spiritual facts, however strongly attested, because they are not gifted with the necessary spiritual sight. Thus the case stands, and the phenomena of the supernatural increase in number and marvellousness.

That the modern manifestations should effect such a ready and general distrust in the minds of the principal leading men of science, and in turn in the minds of a multitude of lesser men, is no cause for wonder. When it is considered that for nearly two centuries the resources of the laboratory of nature have been sought for with a view to the development of science and the annihilation of superstition, it becomes the greater wonder how the modern manifestations of spirit life should be recognised at all.

In our devotion to the natural phenomena with the view of turning knowledge into profit, of a moral as well as golden kind, we have allowed the supernatural to slumber, but we are not certain that we have been gainers in consequence.

Sceptics have called in mockery upon the ghosts of their dead friends and challenged them to appear and confute their scepticism. And finding no (to them) visible appearance, they have scoffed and ridiculed the Spiritualist. But how know they their departed friends were not near them? It is not given to all men to see alike. Others call, and the Spirit appears, communicates, and inspires. The fact is doubted, denied by the sceptic. But why? Because he himself has never received a communication from spirit-land. The reason is a lame one. As well may he doubt and deny the possession of genius to some men, if he himself possess it not; or doubt and deny the effects of mental magnetism if he himself cannot produce them.

The supernatural in all ages has existed. Its invisible messengers move in our midst, and for aught we know, direct and impel our thoughts. It comes not to us in these modern times, as a new thing, but appears only in novel habiliments suitable to our modern habits and modes of life. It appears not to overthrow the

achievements of science, but to put to the blush the assumptions of her disciples.

The walls of mystery surround us, and science fails to overleap them, or to satisfy the legacy of longings which has come down with the ages to us. In vain do we bury our aspirations beneath the *debris* of doubt.

We still long for communion with the unseen spiritual, our instincts asserting their legitimate wants in the midst of the soul's deepest struggles with the gross and sensual.

Science can work out wealth from matter and reduce the labour of life, increasing blessings and distributing them with methodical skill. But science halts here. And where it halts, the supernatural appears, unfolding real pleasures divine and perennial.

Marvellous evidence of Creative skill! The Spirits of the just and of the unjust are within the circuit of our conceptions, warning us that like follows like, and teaching us, to so order our lives that we may carry with us into the life everlasting, redeemed Spirits chastened by individual earnestness and effort.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE GHOSTS OF FANCY.

WHAT a train of imaginary creations follow in the track of ages! The popular mind, schooled in material philosophies, disregards the idea of spiritual visitants on this earth. Yet it conjures up Ghosts of Fancy which terrify and render nervous even the sceptical brain.

The popular mind revolts at the supposition that invisible intelligences manifest themselves. Yet imaginary visitations from spirit-land seems to hold a lease of the human mind. What does this all-convincing fact prove? Why, that the endeavour of Materialism to overturn the belief in real ghosts has forced upon the mind imaginary ones. It is useless to assert that the latter are less dangerous than the former. Or that they are chargeable upon superstition, and will die out as science and intellect gain supremacy over the understanding. There remains the all-potent fact. The Ghosts of Fancy affright us in our silent chambers, and in our wanderings among the tombs and solitary places. We have overturned belief in real ghosts and substituted belief in unreal ones. What have we gained? The shadow, not the substance. The idea, not the fact. The consequences are far more

dangerous than would accrue from a reliable belief accredited by the testimony of true witnesses of absolute spirit fact.

An uncertain, vague, and indefinable fear, excited by an involuntary operation of the brain, is little likely to find absolute repose, whether the education of the intellect take place or not. It is true that educated intellect sincerely denies the phenomena of ghostly appearances, and comes armed with powerful facts based upon matter to prove that spirit cannot make itself manifest this side of the grave. But the fact still remains, that an involuntary tremor takes possession of the human frame and renders the philosophy of materialism a mere boast. Nor does this involuntary, innate tremor possessing the mind, owe its origin to superstition, but rather to materialism.

If, instead of turning from the subject of real ghosts with self-assumptive arrogance, the popular mind were aided to seek them and learn the object of their mission to this earth—half the terrors of imagination would die out in the blaze of Spiritual Knowledge.

It is asserted that ignorance is the nurse of fear, and scientific men laudably experimentalise, and argue away unfounded statements concocted in the excitement of a vain and frenzied fear. But ignorance neither invents nor destroys real ghosts, while it fosters imaginary ones. And who have done more to perpetuate ignorance regarding spiritual presence than scientific men?

They have scorned the very name of ghost and imperiously shirked investigation of spiritual phenomena. Thus they have fostered ignorance of the facts of spiritual visitation, and being unable to subdue the innate longings of mankind for communion with angel-spirits, they have substituted the Ghosts of Fancy

which never can be laid only by restoring the realities and allowing them to manifest themselves.

An imaginary terror is always worse than a real one. Anticipation haunts the mind and disturbs its repose for a much longer period, and with more unsatisfied results, than do the absolute ghosts themselves.

It is better to look at a full-moon than only a half-moon, because we have the whole fact free from cloud fairly visible, and have a clear ground for investigation. If a full-moon had never been seen, the world would doubtless have looked upon its visible part as the whole. The philosopher who dared to argue that it had an invisible side would profit little for his pains. The truth is the truth, although like one half of the moon it be obscured. But this fact is like the invisible part of the moon, nothing to the popular mind which materialises all things. But to the earnest progressive mind it is a fact of infinite weight and utility.

The testimony of impartial history throughout the ages comes to us and overwhelms us with evidence of hauntings and rappings and visible appearances.

Mediumistic powers have borne the names—sorcery, witchcraft, magic. Many of the sorcerers, witches, magicians have been put to the torture and have gone to their spirit-spheres martyrs to a truth infinitely mighty. But from their odylic atmospheres, re-appears the same mighty truth, bearing the modern types of Spiritualism.

In these days we have been so long accustomed to pride ourselves in our great mental acquirements—that we boasted 19th century philosophy as a security against the possible resuscitation or exorcism of the dead spirits of the middle ages. But how is the boast rendered false? Spirit-mediums move in our very midst and

invoke the marvels of the spirit, which marvellously impress us with appearances and signs which infinitely out-Cagliostro Cagliostro, and make small the idealisms of Aladdin. Intellect is at war with credulity, and yet, in spite of itself and its materialistic instincts, its thunders reach not the Sinai of Truth but reverberate back upon itself.

In this boasted age of enlightenment, real ghosts are destined to dethrone the mere ideal ones. Intellect may frown. Science may scoff. Religion, under all its masks of dogmatism, may turn away—yet the truth long hidden in the crust of materialism, the spiritual truth, testified by invisible and visible agencies, sheds abroad its radiance.

The Ghosts of Fancy have entered cottage and palace, terrifying subject and prince; they have arrayed themselves more powerfully than mighty armies and held giant brains in thralldom. The creation of fancy, they are nevertheless apologies for real spiritual ghosts which intellect and doubt have sought to annihilate.

Ignorance fosters fear, knowledge subdues it. The way, therefore, to stimulate the courage of mankind respecting apparitions is to give them all possible knowledge of them. Teach children to regard the return of the Spirits of the departed as a possibility, and that communion with them may lead to knowledge of the life everlasting; and that they are, if good, to be loved rather than feared, the instinctive tremulousness, which is common to us, will give place to a strength of faith, which will make terror a bye-word. But allow the mind to dwell upon them and dare it to assert belief in them, a host of fancied ghosts will haunt it through existence and cause it to "give to airy nothingness a local habitation and a name."

The popular theologies, whilst they have thrived on spiritual conceptions, have failed to meet the bold ghost-

question face to face. They have taught that "angels attend us unawares" and "holy angels guard our bed." But they evidently mean differently, or they would readily accept proofs confounding, which daily come to light in favour of spirit-visitation.

The very essence of poetry breathes spiritual life, and faith has not concealed its appreciation of spiritual truth. Yet when these modern manifestations are spoken of, the eyes of the Christian and Infidel alike distend in mocking disbelief.

It is so easy to hold by a popular fallacy, because the multitude laugh not at their own foibles or the foibles of others that seem in likeness to them. But not so with unpopular truth. The men who stand on a hill are easily seen, but if they attire themselves in unfashionable apparel they will be sure to be marked and stoned with ignorant and popular prejudices.

It is, however, only an old scene in the drama of "persecution" being re-enacted. The penalty for being truthful varies in weight, but it is nevertheless martyrdom.

In this enlightened 19th century Christendom, we exorcise the phantoms of ancient inquisitions, and set them to haunt the brains of the true. We resuscitate the dead carcass of Juggernaut and bid it crush the joys of the Spirit out of the soul of the present. But vain the work.

Let the mind realize the truth of the existence of real ghosts, and imaginary ones will lose their terrors. The only way to meet the ghost difficulty is to face it. Turn from it and it becomes the more perplexing. Face it and the fancied ghosts vanish before the absolute presence of the real ones. Refuse to face it and terror becomes intensified.

The education of the intellect has failed to subdue the involuntary spiritual desires which belong innately

to us, whether we be deep engulfed in foolish superstition, or enlightened in all the mysteries of scholastic lore. It is in vain that the subject is pooh-poohed—and scouted and assailed with invective and sceptical scorn. It must sooner or later be met. Then had it not better be met at once?

Religion has recognised and stimulated the soul's involuntary longings for spiritual communication. Yet hitherto it has not dared to loosen the string that binds them.

Spiritualism will aid it with the task. The involuntary instincts of the soul that find enjoyment in spiritual things are as much a part of our being as are the limbs upon our body. It is in vain we endeavour to ignore them. They have an existence which no materialistic poison can end.

The old Bogy of materialism is haunting us daily—we behold him in the state and in the church, and cannot escape from his presence. He terrifies our children and petrifies spiritual endeavour. He is a fancied delusion. We know it, and yet feel fear. His mission is to terrify, not to improve. Not so the spiritual reappearances of the good; they come with a purpose, and instead of inspiring terror, influence human affection and effect marvellous missions of mercy. Our involuntary instincts receive at their hands the fruits of ethereal growth, and love supplies the place of fear.

The Ghosts of Fancy must either vanish or cease to terrify, as the Ghosts of Fact become known. The dim distance becomes illuminated with spirit-presence and entices the aspiring soul.

Unfolding glories yet undreamed of, the spiritual harbingers of a holier faith and more divine futurity than the creeds have inculcated—come to us with their invisible robes about them, asserting eternal God-Truths which alone can lead us to Him.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## SPIRITUAL MEDIUMSHIP.

THE most common of the spiritual phenomena develop themselves through table-tippings, rappings, and alphabet communications. The more uncommon and marvellous of the manifestations exhibit themselves in wondrous performances of a character which puts material forces in the shade. We have the testimony of unimpeachable witnesses that Mr. Home leaves *terra firma*, and floats in mid air. That invisible hands elicit divine music from visible instruments. That flowers are taken from vases by Spirit fingers and scattered about the apartment. That human hands are rendered sensible to the pressure of supernatural hands which disappear when tightly clasped. That phosphorescent atmospheres assume the temporary forms of the dead as they were in life. These and a thousand other manifestations, even more wonderful, such as spirit etchings being produced, in colours with marvellous and inimical delicacy and quickness, and articles of a valuable nature being hidden and discovered by spirit agency, put the practical senses on the *qui vive*.

The character of these manifestations depends on mediumship. Mediums, like other beings, differ in

power and quality. Where the medium is of a gross, low character, the communications will be of a like character. An imperfect cause cannot produce perfect effects, neither can a mere physical medium induce other than physical manifestations. Good mediums, like gold dust, are precious, and comparatively scarce.

At Spirit Séances the manifestations are invoked, they rarely come unbidden. Spiritual appearances may be visible to some, and at the same time invisible to others. Hamlet and his mother were together when the ghost of the murdered Dane suddenly appeared to the prince, whilst the queen saw nothing but vacancy. Whether Shakespeare wrote under the impression of an actual belief in ghosts or not, is unimportant. His representation of his ideal creation is true to fact and serves its end.

The modern ghost club should advertise for a few good mediums, instead of a haunted house. With the aid of the former, evidence may come even in their own chambers. But without a medium they may safely defy the ghosts to show themselves.

Mediumship answers many objections and settles a few mysteries. It is, however, a great puzzle to the materialist. He is conscious of no mediumistic gift himself, and reasons that others are like him. Here he loses truth—because facts prove it so. He cannot see how a being formed externally like himself can claim a gift of a character distinguished for spirit intercourse. He therefore satisfies his own mind by attributing all alleged mediumship to imposition or a diseased fancy. But at every step he takes to satisfy the earnest truth-seeker, he involves himself in fresh evidences unfavourable to his easy-formed conclusions.

Besides, to carry out fully his dogmatic theory that an independent faculty of sight, in addition to the normal, ordinary, visual organs, if not in himself can be

in no other human being—he will need to give creative faculties to all men or to none. He will need to put genius out of the catalogue of human attributes because all men possess it not. He will need to abandon all evidence of a mental character, which originates independently of himself.

Mediums, like men of genius, have special missions, and develop powers of an individual character. Some are simply gifted with the power to attract Spirits to tables when tiltings and rappings only occur. Some are the media of communications spelt out by the aid of the letters of the alphabet. Some are gifted with higher mediumistic capacities, and form what are termed writing mediums, seeing mediums, and talking or trance mediums.

The writing medium finds his hand guided mechanically, without a voluntary effort of his own, and ends the sitting by perceiving a communication of a short or lengthened character in the well-known handwriting of some dear departed friend.

The seeing medium beholds the Spirit communicating, wearing the earthly form and features, and attired as in life. The talking or trance medium becomes *en rapport* with Spirits, and in a kind of mesmeric state speaks at the bidding of spirit-will, his vocal organs being used or played upon similar to the keys of a musical instrument.

The various forms of mediumship are as marvellous to the reflective as are any of the ordinary mysteries of matter or spirit.

The writing medium failing in the mediumship of sight might dispute *that* mediumship and *vice versa*—following in the steps of the materialist, who disputes the whole order of spiritual visitation, lacking the gifts to perceive it.

In all things we behold evidence of the Almighty's

law of design. The order of nature is ordered by the Designer for legitimate purposes.

There are more bricklayers and scavengers than poets and philosophers. More hearers than preachers—more readers than writers. Were this not so, we might build our houses of poetry and roads of logic—turn sermons into bread and books into meat.

It is not meet that all should possess an equal series of gifts. Whether we quarrel with the Almighty's handiwork or pronounce it the evidence of eternal wisdom, the broad fact stares us in the face, that organizations have individual characteristics which shine prominently through all national features.

Diamonds differ in quality and value, and add additional proof of the wondrous perfectability of the law of design. In the material creation a magnetic chain connects and surrounds all things. So in the mental. Instincts and thoughts have their affinities, and man, bearing the likeness of God and Man, finds himself still a being distinct not only in his personality but in the possession of a mental individualism which fits him and him alone for the purposes of his existence.

It is in the diverse differences of talent and taste that we perceive that true eternal harmony which characterises the works of God something more than chaotic or chance disorder.

In the composition of the human organization legs, arms, and heads are the possession of all. These members are common to mankind; they are not only external evidences of human but of animal organizations. They give the character of beauty and proportion, but *use* is the most visible in them. The purposes of their existence are so apparent that a child knows their uses so soon as he begins to exercise them. We judge the inward soul by the outward body and woefully err.

Analogy fails us because we compare not like with like—but like with unlike. The limbs of the body being visible are not transparent—bearing a physiological character they are still only sign-posts on the road of human life. The body may be diminutive and yet the soul within be gigantic. The physical externals may be stalwart in ponderous proportion, and yet the soul within be dwarfed and weak.

Statures differ in bulk and height. There are the tall stature, the middle stature, and the low stature. Thus the very proportions of the physical man are classified. But out of these separate classes, the giant and the dwarf claim spheres of their own, and cause wonder because of their unusual character.

Why Dr. Johnson should weigh heavier than Tom Thumb, and possess strength of brain as well as body over the average of men, is a question the materialist should answer, who cannot accept mediumistic theories because he is unconscious of his own medium powers.

Why the ordinary domestic cat should wear a tail and yet the Manx cat should be doomed to exist without one, he should likewise say. Why noses differ in length and type and colour, whilst his own nose retains individual marks common to his class, the materialist who denies the medium-gift should be prepared to reply.

Arguing from analogy we gain an insight into many mysteries, and discover effects from legitimate causes; but there are spheres of mental research in which our analogical deductions are lost.

The spiritual ocean opens the way to new worlds, of which we have had no conception, and which our materialistic vessels cannot reach. Matter demands material powers, Spirit spiritual powers. As we grovel with earth we gather dust for death—as we soar to heaven we realise love for life.

It is right that the things of matter should obey, not rule, the things of mind. It is likewise right that the voices of the Spiritual should be heard singing their divine melodies, without the logic of doubt being forced by the materialistic brain to deafen the soul's finer sense.

Through mediumship we perceive the glory of immortality and the invisible spiritual ocean whose illuminated waters bear upon their bosom the eternal glorified barque of life. Through mediumship Christ appears, bearing with him holiness, divinity, salvation.

There is but one Christ even as there is but one God. The Saviour is the only medium through which we can behold God, even as faith is the only medium through which we can view the Saviour.

Our visual organs look upon the stars and give the mind an idea of distance and size; but through the medium of a microscope how vastly the distance and size increase. The mind receives its impressions through the medium of sensation. And the eye beholds every object in nature through the medium of light.

Opinions are formed through the media knowledge, ignorance, prejudice, and circumstance.

Life is impossible without mediumship. What the microscope is to the eye mediumship is to the soul, a means of strength, certainty, and security.

We learn and profit from mediumship. But like every form and substance of creative power it has special purposes and is adapted for marvellous uses.

Mediumship is a looking-glass in which we behold the features and facts of life. But Spiritual Mediumship is a crystal whose wonderful virtues far transcend the necromancy of orientalism, in which disembodied spirits are visible to the soul and progressive spiritual life established.

In England spiritual mediums are scarce, because

they are unsought and untried. They are more numerous in America and some parts of France. Mr. Howitt informs us that in Lyons alone there are upwards of 3,000 mediums.

In all parts of the world Spiritualism is spreading, less rapidly in this country than others, but still it is growing into a giant, whose strong limbs shall, Samson-like, raze the Gaza-walls of Doubt, and bury old material philosophies amid the *debris*.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THEOLOGY AND ITS SCAPE-GOAT.

THE materialist on the one hand objects to spirit-communication, because he sees all things through the media of matter. The Theologian on the other hand objects to them because he fails to comprehend his own creed through any other than the orthodox media.

The Spiritualist stands midway between the two, and finds his task defined although difficult.

The truth makes progress all the better for the stimulus of opposition.

Of course the theologians, involved in the labyrinths of their pet dogmas, hurl scripture and argument at the heads of the Spiritualists. It is in vain that they are prepared calmly and earnestly to give the scriptural phase of the subject consideration, and bring substantial testimony from the Bible to support the modern appearances of the old Truth.

The hobby-horse of cant is mounted and ridden to death. Texts bearing literal significations are taken figuratively, and texts capable of allegorical meanings are given literally. Thus the orthodox principles are rendered temporally strong at the bidding of sectarian jealousy, whilst the zeal of sect burns up the truth of fact.

The clear, obscureless, spiritual idea still shines out through all the uncharitable and selfish forms of fanaticism and zeal. The idea has grown into one of magnitude and forces itself upon the consideration of the Theologian. With a mass of overwhelming evidence he is driven to confess that the actual truth favours the absolute spiritual idea. In this dilemma he resorts to Beelzebub and burdens him with the whole weight of the spiritual question. It is needless to say the question is begged. Surely the Great Father of iniquity had already enough to answer for without being thus suddenly forced to bear this new badge. How convenient in the ordinary course of life it is to have a common reservoir where we can pitch useless rubbish or awkward truths? Beelzebub is the Theologian's cesspool which conveniently opens to receive all metaphysical odds and ends. His powers of absorption are somewhat exhaustless. The zealous Theologian ought to pay him some honourable respect by acknowledging his use. But perhaps he is ungrateful as well as uncharitable, if so, Satan must needs bear and forbear.

It is amusing in no slight degree to wade through the books which have appeared with a view to shift the Ghosts of Spiritualism on the Ghost of Theology. But it is painful to view the loss of time and the sacrifice of learning which follow in pursuit.

The rector of Screen, a Mr. Nangle, in a small pamphlet, has hunted the subject to the confines of hell and disposed of the matter at once. He admits freely and gives argument in support of his admission—that the majority of the alleged spiritual séances take place. Here there is no cause for disputation between himself and the Spiritualist. But when the Ghost Beelzebub is ushered in amid a volley of theologic thunders—the ground is one of war.

His illustrations, taken from reports of spirit-communications received around tables, are mostly selected with a view to give evidence that lying spirits and not true ones are permitted to revisit this earth. Meagre, indeed, are the citations given by him of the better order of spirit-communication. However, let us freely confess that the evidence justifies the conclusion that lying spirits come to us. This admission by no means settles the question, and precludes the appearance of truthful spirits.

The Spiritualist having a conviction that the spirit has to pass an eternity of progressive existence in states or spheres for which he is adapted, has only additional evidence of the truth of that conviction in every false communication received. He does not apologise for the sinfulness of the departed any more than he does for the sinfulness of the living. But he finds a consolation and satisfaction which the theologic hell fails to supply, in the glorious spiritual fact testifying Divine Wisdom in the order of progressive development.

As we *are* here so *shall* we be hereafter. Every false and wicked spirit discovered to us, and their name is legion, is branded with the sinfulness of earth; and instead of exercising a seducing and hell-preparing influence over us, if we are rightly imbued, will operate reversely, causing us to so order our lives that we may grow in likeness of Christ and ensure the holier conditions of spiritual being for our spirits when we are changed from the mortal to the immortal.

We are further told, "Spiritualism comes forth as a new and supplemental revelation. This implies the insufficiency of scripture."

The newness of Spiritualism might be better termed the exorcism of Spiritualism. Phoenix-like it has risen from the ashes of Materialism, having slumbered

for a period, awakened, slumbered again, and again awakened; older than the Bible it has existed under modifications from all time. It establishes not its own sufficiency nor proves the insufficiency of scripture, but the all-sufficing sufficiency of Almighty Truth. It offers no new religion, but affords a medium through which the religious life becomes transfigured. Proving the idea of eternal progressive being, it renders Hades a passage only to the Christian's Heaven, substituting gradual progression for sudden transformation. Christianity has no voice against Spiritualism. Dogmatism may have, but dogmatism is fallible and necessarily faulty. Surely the establishment in the convictions of mankind of the fact that disembodied spirits substantiate the great truth of eternal progression, need cause no such alarming symptoms in the theological mind. Why should Luther's ideal hell be more correct than Dante's?

Creeds or mere forms of faith have undergone phases of change since the beginning, and from the nature of progressive development must do so. But the eternal Truth remains through it all the same, unchangeable and perfect.

Whilst theologies have been waging hateful warfare with each other about dogmas and ceremonies, the great eternal Truths of immortality and salvation have still been prominent.

It is ever the same; the carcass and not the soul, the shell and not the kernel is the shibboleth of Theology. Names are substituted for things, fanaticism takes the place of reason, and the rumpus of antagonism commences. Scriptural phrases may bear constructions as numerous as themselves, and faith may change and disputation commence. Still the eternal Truth is the same, whether it be buried in doubt or enveloped in the robes of falsehood.

Beelzebub has been invoked and charged with the guilt of the Spirit. He has conveniently relieved a number of earnest theologians of the difficulties of an awkwardly difficult subject. But the spiritual facts exist nevertheless.

They can neither be ignored nor argued away—so they are attributed to the prince of darkness, and the fears of a multitude are excited whilst the bowels of compassion are opened for the benighted and deluded Spiritualists.

Putting aside the question as to the character and origin of spiritual visitations, how are their manifestations to be cancelled and their communications destroyed? Granted, that in many instances their communications are unreliable and capable of betraying, still, those possessed of mediumistic power, even where they fail to invoke the Spirits, find themselves impressed by them, and involuntarily compelled to fulfil their mysterious bidding.

To argue that spiritual communication is wicked is to hold by the logic that having faculties we yet must cease to exercise them.

We have shown that involuntary instincts, which find their gratification in the aspiring after spiritual fellowship, are common to mankind—what so satisfactory to these instincts as spiritual visitations and intercourse? We have likewise shown that mediumship is a gift possessed by a small unascertained number of human beings. What is this gift for, if not for the purpose of spiritual intercourse?

Call it wicked and make social penalties attendant upon the exercise of any one of our faculties, still the proscribed faculty, under the guise of stealth or otherwise, will assert its right to exercise.

The plain unmistakable facts of life may be shot at and handed over to the keeping of Beelzebub. The

thunders of the churches—the horrors of the inquisition of persecution—may all be set working—yet still the facts remain facts, and stubbornly refuse to change their character, either to please the churches or their scape-goat Beelzebub.

We are surrounded with mysteries. Turn which way we will, we are compelled to halt and wonder at our own limited insight into nature's facts, and the Almighty's laws, spiritual and physical. Our duty is to exercise all our faculties, so as to develop them for the end of our being. With legs we walk—with eyes we see—with brains we think—but in the exercise of these organs we find limitation and cause for wonder, and longing for enlarged spheres of action. He who would bid us rest and forget our mission would violate all human experience and render us inanimate and useless.

The faculties of the soul are far more important than those of the brain and body. Possessing genius, shall we repose in careless indifference, and allow the ideal conceptions of the poet, painter, and sculptor, to be destroyed, and an eternal seal to be fixed on the envelope of art ?

Possessing emotions that delight the soul with anticipation of angelic communion, shall we crush them as Iconoclast the images ? Possessing mediumship which is capable of reflecting the Spirit's hereafter, and useless for other purpose, shall we pronounce it wickedness to exercise it ? If we do there is no logical reason why we should not subdue any other of the faculties of the brain or body, and thereby take upon ourselves the presumptive character of forbidding the finite the exercise of the gifts of the infinite.

The very mysteries of existence should make us humble, and lead us to conceive the possibility of scriptural texts bearing meanings which favour views

differing from standard ones. At any rate the Spiritualist only follows in the track of the thousand and one sects which have sprung out of the Reformation, and is as likely to be right as the theologian in his renderings from Bible Truth.

The Beelzebub of modern Theology is a ghost more frightful than any modern spiritual shade. He is burdened with the sins of all men, and good naturedly submits to bear the sins of the fanatic, and the so-called pious, who in mental lassitude hand over to him all Spiritual powers which manifest themselves.

It is sorry work reasoning with illogical opponents, or convincing the dogmatist that he has not all the truth or that truth is beyond him. Prejudices take deep root in the human character, and when ages of culture have served to make them firm, the uprooting of them becomes almost a life-labour or an absolute impossibility.

Settle the matter of Spiritual visitation and communication as coming from Beelzebub, and all their marvellous teachings are only serpent sirens alluring the soul to destruction.

Settle the matter on the other hand as ordained and permitted by the Almighty, for eternal and divine purposes, and Spiritualism exhibits fields for mental research, where fruits of the Spirit grow in perennial plenitude on trees whose leaves never fade in orchards celestial.

Whether Spiritualism come from Beelzebub or from God is a question which opens up a field for controversy. Let it be entered and the debate commenced. Honest investigation and truth-loving desires need to guide the combatants, and the cause of Spiritualism and Christ will triumph.

But if the question is to be begged and thrown over to Beelzebub at once, without full, fair, and impartial

adjudication, the combat must end where it begins, and the possibility of Spiritualism being of God remains, as the sure carrollery of facts that speak with all-convincing voices, and tell of immortal existences, progressive developements, and eternal beatitudes.

## CHAPTER X.

THE THEORIES—INVOLUNTARY MUSCULAR PRESSURE—  
MECHANICAL CONTRIVANCE AND MAGNETISM.

SITTING at a table with a few friends when a gentleman of position and sceptical furor was present, I remember his stare of suspicious certainty when the table gently rocked and ambled towards him. His exceedingly argumentative style of pushing his objections were most imperative—nevertheless they were puerile. After calling with no very devout feelings for the appearance of the Spirit of the Holy Ghost, and finding his presumptive scepticism strengthened by the non-appearance of that Spirit, he deliberately placed his hands upon the table, and exerting great physical effort, every time the table rose, brought it back to *terra firma*.

He challenged the Spirits to a practical test of power, and was not a little pleased at being the victor. It was useless to argue that the disembodied Spirit, like the embodied Spirit, had limited strength—or that the Spirits were not to be commanded and insulted into compliance, but that they possibly claimed a will of their own as independent as ours. Our quondam sceptical friend said, if the force applied to the table were of a spiritual character, it must necessarily be

all-powerful—ergo, if not all-powerful—omnipotent—it could not be spiritual. How his brain was forcibly forced to that conclusion is a query that logic and mathematical acumen fail to answer. A thorough disbeliever in spiritual re-appearances, he nevertheless assumed to speak of their attributes, first, with insulting levity, then with an authority self-imposed and stable. How does the table move if not by independent supernatural force? he was asked. His reply proved that he, like the theologian who favours Beelzebub with the onus of the argument, wanted a scape-goat to run off with the difficulty—so he seized upon the medium's wrist (not physically, but argumentatively), saying, how was *he* to tell the strength there was in her wrist. Thus, with a vehemence of sincerity impressively powerful and a fund of general scientific facts worth retention, he who, in ordinary life matters, would assert the mystery of fact and discuss bones of contention with intellectual and logical gusto, was doomed in spiritual matters to resort to an artifice and make a scape-goat of the medium's wrist.

It is always more easy to fling a difficulty overboard than allow it to remain on board, to vex and torture, but the wise plan is to meet it fairly and abide by the result.

Men who value Truth have no need to hide its glory behind a cloud. They lose by the act. The Truth to the truthful is the light of life, put that out, and their lives are in darkness.

It is more difficult to meet the objections of the illogical than the logical, because the former lack the instinctive appreciation of correct logical deductions, and receive them as the fool receives wisdom to make folly of.

In spiritual matters logicians either forsake their logic or come out of the argument favourable to

spiritual views. This is a necessity dependent on investigation. The truth is the truth, and cannot be examined without giving evidence that it is genuine. Thus the earnest and the truth-loving seek to find, and find without difficulty. Whilst the dogmatist, fanatic, and sceptic, deluded with the false phantoms created by their self-assumptions, seek not to find, and find not.

Spiritualism is capable of logic, as well as materialism, and rests upon syllogisms, as perfect and convincing. It offers no resistance to nature, yet presents something beyond nature. Its laws are a cosmos of perfect order. It sets aside no material laws. It is a world ætherealised, destined for the habitation of the soul, whilst the body tenants the mundane grosser world about us.

Of course human ingenuity is canvassed to supply legitimate causes for the phenomena, which have become too frequent and have made too many respectable, reliable witnesses to be overturned by a pooh! pooh! kind of illogic.

Professor Faraday's "involuntary muscular pressure" theory is one of the material shells supplied to kill spiritual table-turnings, but verily, it is only a very indifferent tiny shot, and is too puny almost to notice. But since it originated from a man who has done the state some service, and who deserves personal respect on account of his great scientific acquirements, we cannot forbear touching upon it.

It will be observed by persons who have witnessed manifestations at a table that the hands of the persons forming the circle or séance are lightly placed on the top of the table. If any pressure be supplied it must tend, according to all known physical fact, to keep the table to the floor. Yet, in very opposition to this theory, the table, to the astonishment of all witnesses, often mounts into the air and remains there several

seconds, returning gradually and lightly to the floor. What involuntary muscular pressure could effect an apparent reversal of the law of gravitation? The little finger of the medium, perhaps a child, has been alone rested upon a heavy table, and it has performed evolutions of a powerful order. Are we to accept the professor's theory and believe that involuntary muscular pressure could lend such marvellous force to a child, whose physical powers, unaided, could not even lift the piece of furniture a few inches from the ground without the blood turning the face crimson with the exertion of the effort?

Again, at some séances the sitters sit round the room away from the table, yet still the tippings take place and answers to interrogatories are forthcoming. Will Professor Faraday inform us how his theory meets the question in this form? Where no hands are placed, no pressure voluntary or involuntary is possible. Verily, the professor's theory is only a scientific scape-goat, similar to the theologian's Beelzebub and the sceptic's "strength in the medium's hand."

The table, as Galileo said of this earth, "moves;" there is no mistaking it, and without "muscular involuntary pressure" or "mechanical contrivance," another materialistic shot at the spiritual truth as powerless as Faraday's yet a little more plausible. The table moves in a manner that neither involuntary muscular pressure nor mechanical contrivance could effect.

Let us see how the mechanical shot hits Spiritualism. The assertion at the outset involves the idea of thorough and complete deception, and puts aside all testimony, whether it come from Napoleon or from the lips of thousands of devout and intelligent witnesses.

Mechanical contrivance applied to a table by a complication of parts may easily cause it to rise in the air and dance and perform other movements. But in all

cases the movements of the table will be methodical in character, and be made to perform so many evolutions and no more, according to the mechanical contrivance which gives the motive force. The order of the tip-pings would assume something like the order of a clock, and run on accordingly without variation, until a dead stop set the machinery at rest.

What mechanical contrivance could be connected to a table, and yet be undiscoverable—for bear in mind tables at séances are searchingly scanned, turned over, lifted up, and unceremoniously subjected to sceptical scrutiny; yet the “contrivance” eludes discovery. How comes it that the movements of the tables at one sitting are so weak that they are scarcely perceptible, whilst at another sitting they are strong and marked by evolutions sudden as transformations, and as numerous and volatile as French manners. It would, indeed, require a contrivance of almost infinite appliances to produce the mere physical movements. But when intellect shows itself in the table-movement, how does the mechanical contrivance theory fall away! It will not do to persuade even the Spiritualist that mechanical contrivance can be the originator of intellect, and think out problems of mental philosophy which puzzle the skill of the learned. Mechanical contrivance is the receptacle of an intelligent idea, but it is incapable of either improving it or creating new ones. It simply performs a series of movements receiving its momentum from the idea of the inventor and obeys certain mechanical laws. It is dead matter set in motion by living mind. Mind, therefore, is the dominant ruler in the universe. Mechanical contrivance, although formed and set in motion by mind, has conditions of its own which mind can neither subvert nor destroy. One of these conditions is that it cannot think, if it could it would be equal to its maker.

But thought is apparent in some of the movements of the table, and since mechanical contrivance owes its action to mind, being itself matter, the table-movements must necessarily owe their origin to mind. Hence the mechanical contrivance theory may trot off like another scape-goat.

The involuntary muscular pressure theory will not do, neither will the mechanical contrivance theory. The reflective materialist must look about him for some new, more feasible, and powerful shell, or he will fail to batter down the citadel of Spiritualism.

Drive a mouse into a corner it will essay to scale the wall, and if overtaken will exert itself for escape. The mouse of materialism has been forced into a corner and is crawling up the wall of magnetism. It exults in fancied security and looks wonderfully wise on its pursuers.

Learned philosophers and illiterate Spiritualists meet at circles, and scepticism in its magnetic robes becomes Sir Oracle. The last effort at a victory over the supernatural looks promising. Surely the philosopher's stone must have been found, for wisdom to look so satisfied.

Here is the modern juggler that is to astonish the world with his necromancy, and then show how it is all done. The Natural is to triumph at last over the Supernatural law, for magnetism is turned into a convenient scape-goat and the Spirit-mystery vanishes.

Wonders never cease ; learned philosophers who only a few months ago regarded pschycological and mesmeric phenomena and all the electro-biological manifestations said to belong to magnetic operations as gross delusions, practised by charlatans, are now ready to go into ecstasies at the idea of giving magnetism the onus of the more marvellous spiritual operations. Anything to get rid of the awkward spiritual idea,

lest the pet materialistic philosophies which, are feeding and growing fat on the absorption of the soul, should be driven from their stubborn strongholds.

The laws of magnetism have possibly subtile relationship with those of Spirit; at any rate, the Spirits evidently use them for their own purposes, in a manner beyond our material senses. Magnetism is an agent in nature's economy, which human discovery at the present can only measure by ascertainable operations, and which requires a speculative philosophy to attest.

Magnetism may and doubtless does influence the table movements, but it is the instrument and not the workman. Sitting round a table with a view to obtain a circular movement, a number of persons may in the result behold convincing proofs of magnetic effort, possibly involuntary muscular pressure may aid. But such table turning resembles spiritual operations like a wheel resembles a wagon.

By what theory of magnetic operations, without the guiding hand of intellect distinct from the persons constituting the circle, can the communications from departed friends be accounted for? How will magnetism, unaided by spiritual influx, present to our wondering eyes fac-simile autographs of those who have exchanged the mortal for the immortal nature, and are permitted to commune with us in love and holy fellowship?

Intellectual movements presuppose an intelligent mover. Where the manifestations are the most imperfect they still evidence design. If magnetism is the prime agent in the manifestations it is reasonable to expect that they will come in a legitimate order, but the case is often different; sometimes when certain movements are expected, others of a different character take place. How is this fact to be set down to

magnetism? Opponents make no allowance for imperfect mediumship ; they overlook all testimony and make conditions of their own, by which alone they will consent to receive the truth. Magnetism concentrated in sufficient quantity may move a table in a given direction, but how is it to answer intelligent interrogatories intelligibly is a question more puzzling than even the spiritual theory. Either the communications come from independent sources or from ourselves. If from ourselves, then we can at any time produce given phenomena and might reasonably expect always to have such communications, and such alone as are desired ; but facts prove in thousands of instances that the more marvellous operations come unexpectedly. With this knowledge how are we to go back to magnetism and satisfy ourselves that that is the modern juggler that does it all? Admitting the absolute impossibility of intelligent movements taking place without an intelligent mover, and finding that magnetism will not take the onus of the argument, what escape have we from spiritualism?

In company at a circle, with a facetious friend, the subject of spiritual causation was discussed. He wittily conversed on the Phenomena, maintaining the new-found magnetic theory. When at the table his jokes set the company in titters of laughter, and evidently affected the manifestations, for the table signalled a kind of hearty pleasure at the fun. In the height of his hilarity, he called upon the table to say, "if a spirit or any other man were present who knew him." The responses from that time became less decisive and frequent, evidently proving that either the magnetism was becoming exhausted, or the unseen intelligences communicating, by no manner of means cared for the joke.

This magnetic idea has a seductive but dangerous

influence on the conduct of the persons present. It stimulates scepticism and makes materialism triumph to the disorganization of all sincere Spiritual invocation and profit.

On another occasion, my ludicrous friend found his magnetic idea associated with *will* force entirely at fault. The table had been proving itself pliable to the mysterious agents at work. The question was asked of the communicating agencies, if they would allow a boy to sit upon the table, and would carry him round ; tiltings testified assent. Immediately the boy was seated upon the table, it ambled round with a creaking noise to the delight of the company. It was next suggested that a baby should be held upon the table. It was done, everyone expecting, and willing, and using magnetic influence for the table to move a little faster round as before. But, as if intended to set our friend's magnetic doctrine off its pins, it actually rocked with a motion similar to a cradle, and kept up this undulating motion for several minutes, as if desirous of rocking the child into a sound sleep.

Nothing could be more convincing of the false- reckonings of the materialist when he presumes to palm upon magnetism all the operations of the mysterious Spirit-world, than this simple, pleasing incident. There was evident independent, intelligent force at work. What more reasonable than to conclude that that force was of a Spiritual character ?

It would be a pleasing theory enough to place magnetism in the way of these modern marvels, but for the stubborn nature of certain numerous confuting facts.

Even the lower order of manifestations impress the beholder with an intelligent cause, much more so does the higher. Where does this intelligent cause origi-

nate? Neither in the table nor in the pencil and letters of the alphabet, used for the purpose of obtaining sentences, but in some other independent form. It cannot originate in the brains of the persons present, or all the communications would relate to facts and incidents and persons in their thoughts.

Every person acquainted with Spirit-circles, knows the names of persons long dead, whose images had long been lost to the recollection, have been spelt out, together with a statement of the date of their departure from earth, their age, and other particulars which on investigation have turned out correct. What does this argue? Why, that neither involuntary pressure, mechanical contrivance, nor magnetism, but an invisible, individual, and intelligent cause, and that cause Spiritual, is the only safe rocking horse to carry the argument.

Involuntary muscular pressure, mechanical contrivance, and magnetism are the favourite scapegoats of science and philosophy, even as Beelzebub is the scapegoat of modern theology.

These goats may trot off and lose themselves in the thickets and recesses of the wild wilderness of Doubt. The law of the living Truth, eternal and unchanging, with matter for its footstool and faith for its throne, still smiles in the light of Spiritualism like a sun in a full clear sky.

## CHAPTER XI.

## SPIRITUAL AFFINITIES AND PHASES.

“SURELY the Almighty would never permit the disembodied spirit to communicate with mortals,” exclaimed an intelligent professional gentlemen, when told by the writer that a fair complement of the published spiritual facts might be relied upon.

But the exclamation is answered in the fact, the disembodied spirit *does* communicate with mortals. It is not a matter for our choice ; Spiritualism is permitted as much by God as Materialism. We have to accept it, not so much from a desire of our own as from an inherent necessity in the order of the Almighty’s designs.

Spiritualism knocks at our hearts and enters to redeem us from grovelling sins and shallow form-worship. It gives us assurance of future progressive happiness as the interest paid by the eternal banker on the good conduct-coin of this life. Instead of looking at spirit-visitations as an infliction distasteful to God and of unholy origin, we ought rather to offer up our most earnest and sincere expressions of gratitude to the Supreme for his divine consideration in permitting us to hold sweet intercourse with the departed spirits we loved on earth and still love in heaven.

It is no proof that Spiritualism is false because some

spirits are, any more than it is a proof that Christianity is false because some who profess its doctrines are.

There is a good spirit to counteract the influence of the bad one, even as there is the good Christian to counteract the influence of the hypocrite.

With a full knowledge that the disembodied spirit bears the sins and good deeds done in the flesh thick upon him as he enters at the closing scene of this life into the life to come, the Spiritualist is prepared to accept with caution spiritual communications, and learns to be wary and wise in his dealings with them ; but he nevertheless gains blessings from the loving fellowship of good spirits. He feels happy in the certainty of reward following virtue and punishment attending vice—that is if he love the good and hate the evil and dispose his soul for holiness.

As like seeks like in this state, so like is attracted by like in the spiritual state. The intermediate invisible spheres have each their spirit-tenants whose natures commingle together in mutual relationship. Angels and devils by a law of repulsion or antipathy never associate, but angels greet angels, and devils greet devils, the law of sympathy binding them together.

Angelic beings sympathise with aspiring struggling souls on earth, and by the sympathetic law of their being, are drawn to earth to console and inspire.

Demoniac beings, in a like manner, are attracted towards the grovelling and sinful souls who lavish affection, passion, instinct, intellect, and life away, amid the polluted lazar-haunts of vice.

The question thus puts itself forward. By the discontinuance of spirit-invocations do we end spirit influence and gain goodness ? We are more in danger from secret than from open foes.

A known foe may be guarded against, but an un-

known one may fall upon us in an evil hour and entirely subdue us.

Our spiritual foes have influence over the human soul to an extent limited by the laws of sympathy and antipathy, whether we meet in circles or not. Had we not better recognise this awful truth and prepare ourselves for righteous warfare, lest the spirits of darkness make dark our future?

The more we fight against sin the further we drive the evil from us—because the conflict supposes a love for goodness, and goodness draws down sympathetic angels, whose holy natures repel demoniac spirits—for the like seeks not the unlike.

If we seek the good we shall find it both in the material and the spiritual worlds. The good is in all truth and can be seen through all dogmas. Do we not therefore lose goodness rather than gain it by not associating with angel-spirits, who, by a law of heavenly sympathy, stimulate our love for it?

The argument so often used that it is better to have nothing to do with spirit manifestations is the argument of apathy and has a sleepy inactive condition about it.

Accustomed as we are to accept for granted prejudicial ideas when directed against themes beyond popular conception, it is no wonder that the argument above cited should be common. But it might be applied to every new or old Truth that could not be turned into bread and cheese.

It is better to have to do with all goodness, temporal and spiritual, and the more we study the true the more we shall love it and the better we shall grow.

It is better to have nothing to do with the false, whether temporal or spiritual. But the true belongs to the good, and goodness flows like a living stream eternally from the mind of God. In so far as

Spiritualism is true in its fundamental teachings it is good, and belongs to the divine order from which goodness flows.

It is better to have to do with God, for He is love, and love is everywhere. How can we reach Him but through the medium of Spiritualism? Spiritualism opens the way for soul-communion with Heaven, and is the great receptive reservoir wherein the stream of divine love eternally circles, and from which it permeates this sublunar world.

“If the Spirits of the departed were permitted by God to hold intercourse with mortal natures they would surely manifest themselves through more exalted media than tables and chairs,” is another of the common remarks of objectors.

But the fact that they *do* manifest themselves in the manner objected to settles the question. First prove that the disembodied cannot hold intercourse with the embodied Spirit. Then the subject drops, and neither articles of furniture nor media of other character need to be discussed.

To the materialist, spiritual appearances and communications are simple impossibilities. He looks at the subject in all its bearings through the media of his dimmed materialistic glasses. Thus the spiritual life is absolutely lost to his vision. He argues from data within the range of his own mundane sight and settles the question accordingly. He pauses not to ascertain the fact that there is a glorious spiritual range, boundless and infinite, which affords data of another character. With his eyes thus bounded by matter, what knows he of Spirit or the conditions of its operations? He is satisfied with his own knowledge, and like the Spaniards who regarded Columbus as a madman before he discovered the new world, he regards the voyagers on the spiritual ocean in like manner.

Spirits do not confine themselves to tables and other articles of furniture, although they commonly manifest themselves through these media.

Granted that the idea of spiritual intercourse taking place by the agency of table tiltings and rappings to the uninitiated may present ludicrous aspects, it by no means destroys the evidence that the intercourse takes place nor settles the ridiculousness of the matter.

To suppose that departed Spirits can hold loving communion with the living without conditions, is to suppose that life can continue without oxygen or matter without mind. It is a common error to regard Spirits as free from the authority of law and absolute in independence and power. This supposition disposes the mind to set Spirits on a level with the only absolute independent God.

There is nothing to laugh at in the fact of a Spirit drawn by his affinities to the earth making a table or other piece of furniture the means of communication. He has limited strength and limited powers, and must abide by the conditions of his existence. He can neither act nor think independently, being the subject of an unchangeable and eternal King.

The table is a common piece of furniture—no apartment could be considered furnished without it. Human beings congregate around it to discuss cherished principles and delight in domestic and social fellowship. It stands in sober, solemn, and silent loneliness, affording a support for the edibles and good things of life. It is companionable without the ability to speak. It bears upon its surface the sacred Bible and the student's lore, the author's manuscript, and the aching head of the distressed. It is of general use and serves its purpose well.

What more appropriate in the household than the table for a means of Spirit intercourse? The spiritual

powers must obey some conditions of their mysterious life. Why need we quarrel with them for making themselves heard in their own way?

We ought rather to be thankful to them for deigning to commune with us in our own apartments and at our own tables. There we can sit with comfort, feeling secure in the bosom of home. And is not this an advantage? Suppose for instance, like Hamlet, we needed to go to a certain solitary place at the witching midnight hour, in order to gain spiritual communion-ship, there would be a conflict of the feelings which might render spiritual visitations solitary indeed.

Possibly, had we have sought for spiritual fellowship in haunted houses with the same zest we now appear at tables, the Spirits might have chosen to linger with us long and frequently; but being unsought by us in the haunted solitudes of midnight, drawn towards us by their eternal sympathies, they come in our own chambers and knock out their mission with the legs of our tables.

It is indeed an evidence of the marvellously mystic relationship of the spiritual powers in earth and heaven logically forcible, this fact of table-communication. The affinities of the soul are the cords which bind the spiritual to the spiritual. The disembodied Spirit is only the embodied Spirit freed from gross decaying flesh. It enters on a new sphere, but it leaves none of its attributes, sympathies, antipathies behind, but carries them all with it.

Ranging the sphere wherein it is stationed and imprisoned, its sympathies and antipathies operate, with the same unerring certainty as the laws of repulsion and adhesion keep the order of nature perfect. Freed from the world of matter it is nevertheless drawn to the world of Spirit. Yet it makes use of material agents to work its ends. Thus the table is made to

obey its will and its purpose becomes known. By the simple plan of table-intercourse we are enabled to enter on a field of spiritual labour where the noblest and truest affections of the soul can find full and progressive developement.

It would indeed be a matter for laughter and degrade us to the level of asses did we continue the ordinary table-correspondences, without the unmistakable certain knowledge that the Spirits communicate, and that we are neither the victims of involuntary muscular pressure, mechanical contrivance, nor magnetism.

The so-termed logic of the opponent of spiritual fact is proved to be illogic, and that of the common order

Suspicion certainly puts the senses on the alert and often does the cause of progress good service by pouncing upon craft and imposition, and tearing their specious masks from them. But suspicion unduly cultivated heralds doubt and strangles faith, and turns religion into a seeming lie, and spiritual light into a creation of necromance.

Suspicion stalks the earth with Argus eye and bony form, unhappy from its own restlessness. Like all extravagances it needs guarding, or consequences of a costly character will prevail.

Be suspicious if you will, but let not suspicion haunt you like another ghost. Accept statements of facts out of your reach with due caution, but condemn not with the slander of suspicion until you have heard and seen, and satisfied the fair and legitimate demands of investigation.

If a man says he has seen a spiritual appearance in a given locality, it may be reasonable to suppose he is the victim of a spectral illusion; but if several men confirm his statement and all describe the supernatural

visitation agreeing in the main, it then becomes subject for grave consideration before we palm the ghost upon imagination.

A. B. and C., unknown to each other, witness a supernatural appearance. They each go their separate ways, giving a description of the unearthly object which differs in no important particular. D. E. and F., hearing the fact and utterly disbelieving in ghosts, visit the spot of the alleged appearance and see it not. Are they justified in concluding, because the phantom is invisible to them, it was invisible to A. B. and C.? Certainly not—neither would it settle the matter to say that A. B. and C. were simply deluded with an imaginary spectre because the description given by them exactly agrees and they have no intercourse with each other.

The more reasonable conclusion is that A. B. and C. had the medium gift, and that D. E. and F. had it not. With this idea the fact becomes easy of acceptance and the matter rests.

In all human adjudications testimony is the essential particular. We carry testimony into our literature—our pulpits, and our courts of law, and judgment is rendered accordingly. Those who witness alone can testify to the guilt of a prisoner, or the truth of a statement. Testimony rides upon the horse of Time and carries with it history and power. Human associations and all the vast order of social economy are the testimony of the age which models history for the future ages.

What we ask is, that testimony may have fair and open field and be allowed to assert its majesty in matters appertaining to things spiritual as well as temporal.

If this be allowed the self-assumptive negations of the materialist will sink down to their own element,

even as the imperative and scornful intolerance of the sceptic will fall away into the abyss of oblivion.

The testimony of Spiritualism is so vast and conclusive that it would rivet conviction upon the understanding so firmly that neither Time nor Doubt, nor all the phalanxed forms of matter, could unfasten. Why, the testimony of Spiritualism is a mighty compendium of historic facts which had their origin with death. It enlarges with the years and unfolds to the observer an illimitable store of spiritual wonder. It is testimony founded upon the life of the human soul. Possessing a wealth of spirit-fact which makes rich—a catechism of spirit-love which makes holy—and a marvel of spirit life which aspires to the immortal; it is priceless beyond all testimony which touches only the bounds of this world and enters not on the boundaries of the life to come.

Let the testimony of spiritual intercourse weigh in its favour, and God, Heaven, eternal Truth, beatific Love, and never ending Hope will be the jewel-words worn in the hearts of mankind.

Materialists and Theologians alike seize upon testimony which favours their own particular views. But they display less eagerness to gain testimony of another character. Whilst spiritual testimony is kept in the back-ground the old forms of materialism and theology will continue to supplement their dogmas in the place of the Spiritual Truth.

It is a sacred duty devolving upon the Spiritualist that he be up and doing, keeping the lamp of Truth well supplied with oil, that he may direct the way through the circuitous routes of materialistic darkness into the glorious labyrinths of spiritual light.

The oil of testimony must be ever burning, it is consumeless and brilliant in character, and needs only to be used to be of service.

## CHAPTER XII.

## DREAMS.

WHEN the mind, relieved of its ordinary wakeful routine of stubborn themes, enters the dominion of slumber, it becomes subservient to new conditions, and in dreams realises phantasmagorical pictures, unreal as fantastic. It is usual to dream, but unusual for the dreamer to set any very precious value on his dreams. He knows that disturbing causes may operate in disturbing the brain during the day, and so set the mind working during the night, creating visionary and vague phantoms which a tranquil brain would be a stranger to. He knows likewise that a derangement of the nervous system may excite an unhealthy condition of brain, and render it marvellously receptive and productive of illusions. With this knowledge it is right that he should regard his dreams as the mere froth of his imagination, and take no heed of them in the regulation of his life-affairs.

We all of us have a memory stored with the imaginary creations of dreamland, and could relate singular and startling, pleasing and frightful incidents which have occurred during our slumbers. But we mostly forbear, from a delicacy on the side of strength, lest we betray a credulous weakness. The belief in dreams, however, is not yet defunct. Certain old women of

both sexes stubbornly persist in asserting that events of a fatal character have been foretold to them in dreams. We of the masculine order, placing no confidence in dreams in general, had better pause before we do so regarding dreams in particular.

We cannot ignore facts however startling and strange they may seem, and however impossible they may be to ourselves.

Extraordinary cases are on record proving incontrovertibly that mere accidental coincidence alone could never bear the onus of the argument. It is, however, certain that the persons who dream the more remarkable events, which circumstances attest, are in a very small minority. But a single exception to the rule proves the rule imperfect. If a multitude discover no reliable incident in a multitude of dreams, and a few persons discover events foretold, and behold the perfect images of persons whom they have never in their normal condition beheld, and whom they afterwards in their wakeful condition pick out from a crowd as the persons of their dream, it becomes highly probable that the unsubstantial creations of their slumber had substantial origin, of which they were but the semblance, as a photograph is the semblance of the object photographed.

In this condition the brain is rendered clairvoyante or magnetically facile. The spirit seems to leave the body to traverse almost illimitable distances, and to commune with strangers and departed friends. The wonderful life-like appearances it meets, the extraordinary truthful information it obtains, and the spiritual glory it tastes, all to the natural mind have an almost infinite series of mysterious phases which set comprehensibility and normal mundane philosophies at bay.

Let us briefly animadvert on dreams. Have they

no uses in the Spiritual if not in the material economy ? To argue that they have not, is to suppose that the Designer failed in skill and in the perfection of that universal order which characterises all His works.

In the sacred scriptures the dream is occasionally spoken of, and its uses made clear. Pharoah had two dreams. In the first dream, Pharoah stood on the brink of a river and beheld seven fat-fleshed kine which came up out of the river, and then immediately afterwards seven lean-fleshed kine appeared, and ate up the seven fat-fleshed kine, and remained still ill-favoured and lean-fleshed. In his second dream, seven ears full and good came up on one stalk, and seven withered and thin ears, blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them, and devoured the seven full and good ears. Joseph interpreted Pharoah's two dreams to forebode seven years of famine, to succeed seven years of plenty in the land of Egypt. Thus Pharoah was warned of coming danger, and enabled to adopt legitimate and wise measures to avert the threatened destruction of the land.

Jacob dreamed his dream of the ladder reaching to Heaven, down which the angels of the Lord descended and up which they ascended, and he beheld the Lord himself above it, who gave him assurance of protection and future distinction in his seed through all generations. Thus, in his dream, the Patriarch was foretold events which gained fulfilment.

Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel had dreams which were pregnant with forewarnings. The Lord made a covenant in a vision to Solomon. Job, Ezekiel, and Isaiah had visions. A vision of the horses, and visions of the four horns and of the four carpenters, a vision of the flying roll, and a vision of the four chariots are related in the book of Zachariah.

In the New Testament we read of the angel of the

Lord appearing to Joseph in a dream, and telling him to fear not to take Mary, the mother of Jesus, to wife, because she was conceived of the Holy Ghost. In the Acts of the Apostles the accounts are rendered of the marvellous manner of Peter's conviction and Paul's conversion, through the instrumentality of visions.

To add other testimony from the sacred writings we might take the whole book of Revelation and gain an array of evidence, in favour of dreams, the most imposing.

John seeth Heaven opened. "And the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking to me." "The book with seven seals" "The opening of the seals in order," and "the angel sealing the servants of God in their foreheads." "And there appeared a great wonder in Heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." "The dragon cast out of Heaven," "The vials poured out." "The angel with the key of the bottomless pit." "And the river of the water of life."

In all these instances there appears design in dreams and an evident utility. It is impossible to read carefully either sacred or profane history without discovering facts in support of the idea that dreams are purposed for some wiser end than merely to disturb the brain during slumber.

"The baseless fabric of a vision," under peculiar spiritual influences, is calculated to leave, not a wreck, but a substantial conviction of spiritual truth behind. When the dreamer is absorbed with the Proteus phantasms of his dreaming state, it is certain that his brain has undergone some subtile change—it has been rendered subservient to laws of an indefinable yet impelling and attracting character. It is reasonable to

conclude that he is under magnetic influence, and not at all unreasonable to conclude that the magnetism may be of spiritual quality.

Spiritual magnetism is the finer essence of soul and effects marvels that mere human magnetic aura can never aspire to.

There is, doubtless, a sympathy between the two essences, the lower ministering in a measure to the higher. But the lower must keep to the bottom, being the heavier, as water when associated with oil.

In dreams persons sometimes gain valuable knowledge and realise invaluable joy, but the conditions of these gifts are independent of the dreamers. They can only exercise their will in the effort for slumber; when they are asleep their volition is at rest, and they are bound body and soul by the fairy silver links of phantasy, and are doomed to a certain term of fascination imaginary or spiritual. The freedom of the will is gone, and the very desires of the heart are charmed into the fairy circle surrounding them.

“Imagination bodies forth the forms of things unknown,” and spiritual powers have “tricks that strong imagination” fails to grasp.

In the wakeful, normal condition, we lose the invisible spell, which bade our spirits mount. Under new conditions of a harder but not purer character, how easy to laugh at the recollection of our dreams, and settle the matter by calling them simple workings of an unhealthy and excited brain.

If it be possible for Spirits to appear unto us when we are wide awake and free from imaginary phantoms, it must surely be highly probable that they can make their appearance in certain cases when sleep shuts the gates of day and opens those of night.

Human magnetic operations, in the names of mesmerism, clairvoyance, electro-psychology, &c., open

fields of research which lead to marvellous experiences. But they require using as a clock requires winding up. A subject will not go into a mesmerised condition without a mesmeriser. What is called spontaneous mesmerism may be the work of invisible Spirits, but it cannot take place independently of magnetic influence. Effects follow causes, but they cannot cause themselves. In dreams, when the dreamer is in the exalted condition of clairvoyance, what power of magnetism but the Spiritual takes place? To produce a given result intellectual purpose is apparent in the means employed. When dreams foretel events which are to happen and give other evidence with a view to warn and protect the dreamer, there must be an intelligent agent for the purpose. That agent we have evidence strong enough to warrant us in concluding is spiritual. The Spirits themselves magnetise the sleeper, and induce the lucid clairvoyante condition of brain which allows him to behold the marvels of the future.

The exalted states of somnambulism and spiritual second-sight are of rare occurrence; nevertheless, they are possible states, and cause us to feel that "we are fearfully and wonderfully made."

How far the influence of our dreams unconsciously affects us we have no means of ascertaining. That we are influenced in some mysterious and silent manner by them is self-evident from corollary evidence. Dim and indefinite and uninterpretable, arrayed in all the grotesque drapery of imagination, as many of our dreams appear—nevertheless, a purpose is visible in their very nature, which we may fail fully to understand but cannot entirely overlook.

Taking the spiritual view of the subject we find an easy solution to the problem of strange events foretold in dreams.

Placing on one side a vast collection of facts, proving that dreams are mostly vague, indefinite, and deceptive, and that a strict dependence on them would inevitably mislead us, we must yet be dull indeed if we can forbear to behold the wonderfully prophetic and imperatively truthful character of *some* dreams.

Our senses may be either carried away into the mysterious spirit realms of dreamland, where all that is ethereally beautiful and magnificently grand, or all that is frightful and impish, may appear. We all of us know by experience the intense pleasure which subdues all desire for change when the former takes place, and the sudden terrified shrieking manner which startles us from sleep and dispels the horrid vision of the latter. It is the same in dreamland as in ordinary life; there exist the true and the false, the light and the darkness, good and evil influences, which work upon our spirits either to their heavenly profit or loss.

Dreams come to us more vivid and more poetical in character at one time than another. It often happens that the impersonators of dreamland are as clearly visible in every feature and movement as anything can possibly appear in the outer world to the wakeful normal vision.

Dreams, when full of divine, sublime, and holy characteristics, must surely be intended to feed the soul with a foretaste of Heavenly joy.

We enter on the silent threshold of sleep, our senses dead to the outer material world, and we dream, perhaps—a vision opens upon our devotional and aspiring souls—of surpassing spiritual glory. A world infinitely more beautiful than this world, yet something resembling it in form, but without its grossness, redolent with the fragrance of never-fading flowers whose glorious leaves shine with the pellucid softness of an unsetting sun. A sky overarching the flowers,

where the sun shines like the face of God. Suddenly appears a celestial comet with a tail reaching nearly to the ground; then with magical fleetness out of the comet comes forth an angel in white robes, with a brow serene as beauty and tender as love, bearing with it a little child. Another change—the glorious angel ascends to Heaven up the tail of the comet, looking down with glances of divine tenderness upon the innocent child which it had given in our charge.

Another vision:—Carried along the stream of care, along a wild and weary route, we are pursued by savages, who yell and dance and shoot their fierce arrows at us. It is night, and darkness shields us from the pursuers, yet the stream rapidly bears us to an uncertain haven which may be death. The moon is full, under a cloud. The yells of the pursuers are distinctly heard, but they themselves are invisible. A magic transformation. The cloud disappears and the beautiful moon shines with perfect brilliancy, and lo! an image of the Cross, with the Saviour fastened to it, appears in the moon. We look upon it and all danger departs.

Again we dream. Ascending a mountain in the heat of the burning sun we rest and then plod on. The ascent becomes more steep and we rest exhausted and terrified. At the base of the mountain a wilderness of forest, and a number of wild animals repose. The ascent is impossible and the descent dangerous. We look for water and find our eyes fascinated by a serpent, whose steady magnetic glances allure us to destruction. At this juncture we are caught up and carried to the mountain's top, over which stretches a vast array of cornfields, streams, undulating hills, canopied by a sky of jasper clearness. We receive a nectar from the hands of our deliverer, and looking into his face behold the Saviour.

In dreams of this character there is a poetic beauty and force of pathos capable of making the remembrance of them sacred. Granted, they want interpreting and applying to soul-profit. Yet to argue that they are absolutely useless in the divine order of things, is to place a veto of doubt on divine wisdom.

#### THE SEXTON AND THE STILLBORN CHILD.

Conversing with a lady living in Hastings the other day on the subject of dreams, she related several dreams of her own, all of which put mere accidental coincidence at fault. She said that throughout her life she had warnings of events which always took place in the way her dreams foretold.

On one occasion she dreamed that she was walking by a church-yard, where she saw the sexton digging a grave—by his side stood a small box, which, he said, contained the remains of a still-born child. The dreamer desired to know if the clergymen were going to say a prayer over the grave. The man gruffly replied in the negative, and went on with his digging. “Then if he will not I will,” she said, and she offered a few words of prayer to the Almighty over the grave of the still-born infant. Exactly six weeks from the time of her dream which had passed from her mind, the lady was out walking, and without any premeditated intention, passed the very church-yard visible to her in her dream, and she saw the very sexton and box and every particular, as they appeared in her dream. Advancing irresistibly to the sexton, whom she had never before seen, except in her dream, she inquired if the clergymen were coming to say a prayer over the grave; he replied, gruffly, “no,” and went on digging exactly as he had done six weeks before according to the dream. “Then if he will not I will,” she said, and did so.

## THE COFFIN AND THE CORPSE.

On another occasion she dreamed she saw a coffin, and lifting the veil from the face of the corpse beheld her own child. A few weeks after this dream her child was dead and laid out, and when the mother went into the room where the remains were coffined, every particular brought her dream to mind. There stood the coffin in the position she had foreseen and the veritable veil over the face of the deceased, together with other facts, all-convincing, making accidental coincidence look feeble.

## THE DUBLIN SERVANT.

Another of this lady's dreams, which she related to me, indicates an actual spiritual appearance. She dreamed that she was sitting up with her husband and family, when of a sudden she saw enter the apartment an old servant who resided in Dublin. The visitor had her face covered with a veil, yet her identity was beyond a doubt. Advancing slowly along, the intruder gained a corner of the room, halted, and lifted the veil from her face, which was white and motionless. The dreamer touched her husband and asked if he knew who the visitor was. He said "perfectly," and the lady awoke very much distressed in mind. She took a note of the hour and determined to write to Dublin and ascertain if anything had happened. A letter in reply brought the intelligence back that the old servant was dead, and gave the particulars of the manner, time, and date of her demise. The coincidence was startling. The lady saw her in her dream simultaneously with the moment of her death.

It is in vain that we apply the material tests to the spiritual—they afford us no satisfactory resting places.

It is easy to say that the natural laws are the all-in-all, and that no supernatural law can be discovered by naturally constituted brains. But the spiritual laws out-balance all objections, and force conviction to our minds that the human soul has affinities and aspirations that materialism cannot reach. If we were simply lumps of animated matter and possessed of no independent spiritual life which submits to other than material laws, the philosopher's stone of Truth might rest on mundane rock and all its virtues be circumscribed to the limited boundaries of this globe. But the reverse idea is the one thing needful. The philosopher's stone of truth rests on the rock of Immortality. It is guarded by spiritual alchemists, and all the travellers who walk in the light of Spiritual Faith seek it and find it where Matter cannot soar and Doubt can hold no place.

Admitting the appearance of Spirits in dreams, where their character is of a nature which accidental coincidence cannot approve, it gives our mind a sure resting place, and not only answers the stale objections of "the cannot-take-place school," but it gives us assurance that dreams, like every gift of psychologic existence, have a purpose, whether that purpose be remote or apparent.

The writings of ancient and modern times, whether sacred or profane, contain statements of such wondrous dream-revelations, that on any other than a reasonable assenting conclusion regarding their truth and utility, the mind cannot rest without throwing all reliable testimony to the winds.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## HAUNTINGS.

PASSING from the consideration of the nature and character of dreams, it becomes an easy matter to enter upon the ground of hauntings.

Admit the fact that Spirits influence and mysteriously manifest themselves to us in dreams, it will not be very difficult to admit the fact that they haunt certain old ruins or houses, manifesting themselves sometimes in visible proportions, but mostly so in monotonous rappings, scratchings, or sepulchral tones:

Every little hamlet has its chronicles of the Supernatural. The traditional history, which never dies, although Intellect, Science and Theology, laughing at it, point to other historic features of a common character. There are the old poor ignorant people still living who, when free from the fear of persecution, tell you that all the lawyers, parsons, and squires in the world cannot overthrow what they have 'heered,' or convince them that 'nater' is the cause of 'them ere' noises, in the shape of raps and voices which 'heering' is believing.

Of course, the wise, after the manner of abstract material wisdom, smile and pity these illiterate believers in hauntings, and produce their scientific ap-

paratus to prove by experiment that it is all a delusion ; that the noises in question can be imitated, therefore they are natural and not supernatural.

Still the noises increase in variety and power, and other manifestations of a more stubborn and palpable character ensue.

A poor woman wakes in the night time and hears sundry loud "rappings" in a given part of her room. She awakens her husband, he hears them too. The clergyman calls the next day and is informed of the mysterious rappings of the over night. He accounts for them by assuring the couple that they must have been caused by the cat. "But we have no cat." "Then the dog." "We have no dog." "Well, perhaps it was the wind?" persists the clergyman. "But, sir, how could the wind beat noises like heavy rappings from one's knuckles?" "You must have been mistaken, my good people, possibly you were not quite awake." The couple look at each other to see if they are awake now, and offer sturdy defence in support of their conviction that the rappings were of a supernatural origin.

The clergyman is puzzled, but it will never do for him who has taken his degrees at Oxford or Cambridge to stand confounded by two simple illiterate people. He opens the Bible and reads:—

"There shall not be found among you . . . a consulter with familiar Spirits, or a Wizard, or a Necromancer, for all that do these things are an abomination to the Lord."

He then dwells at large impressively on Satanic influences, insisting on attributing the rappings to Beelzebub.

"But, sir—the rappings we heard were not sought after by us—neither did we desire them, but they came nevertheless. What shall we do?"

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, for he alone can make you wise unto Salvation.”

“We do believe on him. But the rappings came nevertheless—what shall do to rid ourselves of them should they come again?”

“Pray! and close your ears.”

The clergyman departs—the rappings recommence, the old couple pray and close their ears, but still they make themselves heard.

Neighbours hear the noises and the sceptical iterate and reiterate the whole range of arguments headed “Impossible.” Still the rappings continue.

The clergyman brings with him a clever scientific friend, who talks learnedly of Baron Reichenbach, and thinks he clears up the mystery by charging the phenomenon to the account of automatic cerebral action, maintaining that brain, without mind, can rap and even move substances at a distance, mentioning the case of “The Drummer of Tedworth, who is said, while he was in gaol, to have executed on his drum all his accustomed points of war, the said drum being at the time at the house of Mr. Mompesson, at a distance.”

The poor unlearned couple wonder what he is talking about, finding it infinitely more difficult to understand *his* naturalism than to believe in supernaturalism.

Theology and Science have had their say, the one concluding with “close your ears,” the other breaking off with automatic mental abstractions; still the rappings are heard.

Aye! “close your ears, ye people!” or the re-awakened voices of spiritual truth will preach to you with power, causing you to seek for life and not for ever live for death.

“Close your ears,” or the Truth will make you free. The Eternal Almighty Spiritual Truth.

“Close your ears!” This is the old shibboleth of Assumptive Arrogance and the ricketty crutch of Logical Impotence.

It was in use in the days of Christ when his enemies sought his downfall.

It was in use when Romanism succeeded Paganism, when Lutherism seceded from Catholicism, when Sectarianism seized the garments of Dogmatism and tore them into shreds. It has been in use in all parties, political and social, wherever intolerance has up-reared its banner or partizanship made itself imperial.

“Close your ears,” but you may lose good as well as evil, and the loss in the one case may be more than the compensating loss in the other

Better open your ears and your eyes to, and listen to all and see all, reserving your own faculties of reason to aid you in choosing the good and eschewing the evil.

There is no other safe way of getting through the difficulty. You cannot close your ears and be sure you lose no good thing.

#### A MYSTERY UNCLEAR.

I remember a curious circumstance which occurred some few years ago at the house of a Mr. Tyers, Nash Mills, a village a few miles the other side of Watford, in Hertfordshire.

All of a sudden the bells were set ringing, and the crockery commenced rattling in very unmusical tones. There was a general belief that some trick had been played. The servant was closely watched, still the invisible hands pulled the bells, and still the crockery shook as though subjected to the force of a distant earthquake. These unusual phenomena continued at intervals several days and nights. Yet despite the vigilance of a host of learned and unlearned men, some of

whom mounted to the roof of the house armed with pistols or guns, the discordant noises were heard. Some said they were brought about by some secret magic, known only to the servant. Everybody believed that the cause was natural, although undiscoverable.

The servant was discharged, and the bells and crockery were silenced. This latter fact stimulated popular prejudice against her. There is little doubt but that she was innocent of all premeditated trickery and even ignorant of her own medium-power. The noises ceased the moment she left the house and have not since returned. Neither have any persons from that day to this discovered a clue to the mystery. They have settled the matter prejudicially, and the truth remains far from them.

#### STRANGE NOISES.

Sleeping in London at a house adjoining a Coffee-House near London Bridge, I was on one occasion kept awake by a number of noises which were various and exceedingly annoying. I was shown up into a bedroom at the top of the house, a piece of candle being supplied to me just about long enough to enable me to see my way into bed. I was not long before I had extinguished the light and had turned myself over in a comfortable position for sleep. But alas! no sleep would visit me. I heard a noise like rats gnawing the inside of the wall. I got in a sitting posture and listened again. The noise changed, and resembled the fluttering of a hundred birds. I seized the candlestick remembering there was still a wee bit of candle left in it, and felt for some lucifers, but—confound the girl—she had given me none. I listened again. The sound of gnawing in the wall came back. I would dress myself and find the street door and finish my night in the street. But I now remembered the fact that I was in

a large house, and might descend to the door and find it locked, and having no light, might find myself in a worse condition. I lay down and tried to "close my ears," but it was useless. I listened again. The noises changed. They now resembled the sound of a waterfall. Oh, how I longed for morning. Presently all noises ceased, and I thought I should be able to fall asleep and forget them. Just as I was dozing off they came again, in a trio of sounds—*gnawing, fluttering, falling*, like rats, birds, and a waterfall.

The morning came, never more welcome to me. I dressed myself, rushed down stairs into the coffee-house, making my misery audible. I was told that "Gentlemen who had slept in that bedroom before had never complained. It was a pity I had been so disturbed."

"Have you any birds kept in that room?" I inquired.

"There used to be some pigeons in a room adjoining, but there are none now."

"Have you any water running down in heavy quantities?"

"Not any."

"Do you suppose there are rats in the room?"

"Can't say there are not, sir, but I think it very unlikely."

Here the matter dropped. But had all my queries met with an affirmative answer the peculiar nature of the noises was such as to make it highly probable that other than mere Natural causes were at work in their production.

It is easy to say "They must have had a Natural origin!" I might answer "They must have had a Supernatural origin!" The affirmative exclamation, in either case, giving no proof.

That unusual rappings are heard by persons at dif-

ferent times in certain places, is an established fact too self-evident from collateral testimony to be denied. It is of course requisite that every possible natural test should be applied in order to ascertain the *cause*, and every coincidence connected with it. But when all is done, and still the fact remains, while the *cause* is involved in mystery, it becomes the height of self-arrogant assumption to declare that the Supernatural has nothing whatever to do with it.

On the other hand a too ready repose on supernaturalism will tend to allow strict and careful inquiry to fly away, whilst that which is in reality natural is taken for the supernatural.

With a due regard to all known methods of ascertaining ordinary truths, it is, however, necessary that we overlook not the methods of ascertaining extraordinary truths.

There is a tendency in the human mind to fly off at a tangent from extreme to extreme, whilst truth often lies between them. Thus materialism is lost in Spiritualism, or *vice versa*. But extremes are only such when they are tested by persons of mediocre stature. For instance a thousand men six foot high are unconscious they belong to the order yclept extreme until they are brought in contrast with men of lower medium statures.

On further discovery it is found that all things tend towards culminating—extreme points. It will not do to stand still in the centre of a road because it leads two ways to opposite extreme endings. That which is small to one mind becomes great to another mind. The middle of a brick is an essential part, so are the extreme ends. A dwarf may be extremely small in the eye of a giant, and a giant extremely large in the eye of a dwarf, yet in reality the one is great and the other small, only by a law of comparison.

To argue against extremes is to set a veto on progression, and maintain all middles and no ends.

To say, therefore, that Spiritualism is the opposite extreme to Materialism is only to give them the position of ends, not to settle the question of their relative titles to truth.

But in reality Spiritualism has its culminating points in immortality and endless progressive existence.

It is not to be supposed that hauntings have no existence in fact, because intellect and science have failed to recognise them. The knockings, scratchings and sepulchral groanings which now and again disturb the tranquil minds of people do not cease, although the age has become learned, and a belief in modern supernatural manifestations is voted insane.

If we allow testimony to maintain legitimate influence over our decisions, we shall discover a mass of testimony, well founded and modern, which has never yet found publicity out of certain defined localities, outbalancing all objections against actual spirit hauntings.

#### DISTURBANCES AT ROMNEY MARSH.

Lately the villages of Bilsington and Bonnington in Romney Marsh have been excited beyond measure by the accounts which have sailed on the sea of rumour. It appears that a double house, occupied by an old woman on crutches, one Mrs. Gates, her son, and a little servant girl Ann Smith, on the one side, and a Mr. Luckhurst, his wife and family, on the other side, has been the scene of extraordinary doings.

The report goes that the furniture has rocked and jumped about in all conceivable ways—that the crockery-ware has become disorganised, and after dancing and rolling has completed its evolutions by

suddenly jerking up to the ceiling, pails of water have become sprinkling fountains, boots and shoes have been tumbling in all directions, bedroom-ware has been walking down stairs, beds and blankets and such articles have been disarranged and turned about and tangled in such a way as to put the patience of Job to its utmost test. A bible has left its place on the top of the drawers in the bedroom, and, after finding a passage down the stairs, taking a turn into the kitchen, and hitting a little girl on the shoulder, has darted through a broken window into the garden.

All these spirit-tricks were confined to the part of the house tenanted by Mrs. Gates, who states to Mr. Cooper, who has taken the trouble to visit the spot, that the whole disturbance commenced with boots and shoes being thrown at her while she was in bed.

Ann Smith, the little servant girl, has been dispensed with. The clergyman of Bilsington and Bonnington is said to have viewed "the wreck of matter and crush of crockery-ware," and to have locked the bedroom door after having the beds made, taking the key away with him, and has returned and found all undisturbed.

The clue to this Romney Marsh mystery remains a profound secret according to the unbelievers in supernaturalism, who have heard of it and who are unable to conclude that the phenomena did not take place.

The probability is that, like the Nash Mills incident, the servant is unconsciously mediumistic. It is worth a test to ascertain whether she would prove effectual at a séance.

Sometimes a Spirit raps, making ominous the night, until it turns out that certain guilty ones are punished and the law of eternal retribution is satisfied.

In conversation the other day with the relative of a

lady who was poisoned, I listened to an account which admirably illustrates this fact—

#### THE POISONED LADY.

A Mrs. Head was given some drink containing arsenic. Two persons, a male and female, were suspected of being concerned in the dark deed. The lady died and was buried, but she was not forgotten or even unheard, although her body was under the grass, for her Spirit remained in the house as though intent on bringing punishment on the guilty.

The candle-sticks and crockery-ware shook violently, loud rappings and occasional dying groans brought terror into the countenances of the guilty and even appalled the innocent. This continued for some time; at last, the female, who was an alleged participator in the guilt, finding it impossible to nurse her horrid secret, allowed it to find vent. The result was that legal proceedings were instituted—the body was exhumed and arsenic was found in the stomach. The female prisoner becoming insane, the evidence was wanting to convict the male.

No sooner was the affair properly investigated than the invisible originator of the rappings, groanings, and other noises, as though appeased, ceased further disturbances. It will possibly be urged that guilt created the noises and not the Spirit of the poisoned lady, but others who were innocent and who had no conception that the lady's death was occasioned by unfair means, heard them as well, and can vouch for the fact.

#### THE HAUNTED MALTHOUSE.

In an old malthouse, familiar to me, in Sussex, which has borne the character of being haunted, I have taken some trouble to glean some reliable facts concerning

the matter. For several years rappings and other noises have been heard, and at times have brought terror into the faces of the men who have been in the building. One man declares that he was endeavouring to sleep in one of the lofts connected with the building, when he was lifted up and borne several feet across the loft and placed carefully down again, as though he had been lying in a particular place, which for some reason or other was not suitable to the Spirits. Another man, being down stairs at night time by himself, heard heavy rappings at the bottom of a cistern, which was overhead. He thought it would be as well to baptize the unaccountable perpetrators of the noises, so he turned on the water, but, on looking, he neither saw ghost nor mortal.

Other men declare they heard noises like those produced by the shovelling over of the malt. Sometimes the rappings are faint and continuous, at other times loud and sudden, and frequently there are sounds like a man walking heavily upon the floor. These are still occasionally heard.

With a novel view to ascertain if the presence of a medium would afford a solution to the mystery, one was taken into the building.

It was not long before a communication was received from one, who by the aid of the Alphabet gave his name "*Chapman.*"

The question was put :—

"Can I do anything for you?"

A pencil was placed in the medium's hand which was rapidly moved across the paper ; the words written were "*You must find out the man for me or I shall never cease haunting.*"

A number of questions brought answers which gave the idea that the man alluded to was a Dutchman. Another spirit present, who was asked to say if she

knew the spirit, Chapman, answered "yes." "Can you tell us anything about him?" The significant word, "Rogue," came out. There was a deep mystery evident in this affair. Chapman was unhappy, and the Dutchman was concerned in some way with him.

"Would he appoint another meeting and find the Dutchman?" was the request. He wrote "yes."

"What time?" he wrote again. "*Meet me at half-past three.*" At half-past three the sitting was resumed, when it was discovered that the Spirit of Chapman and the Spirit of the Dutchman were present. The latter spirit was requested to communicate. The hand of the medium was quickly and forcibly guided across the paper, and the singular words were visible in large letters:—

*"He knocked me over into the sea."*

"But can you not make Chapman happy?" He wrote—

*"I can do nothing for him."*

"Come, see if you cannot come to some amicable terms."

*"I will try to make him happy."*

After a pause the medium's hand was again guided and the words were written:—

*"We have seen each other, and I will try to see what I can do for him."*

"Can you say anything more?" They would meet us the following day at twelve o'clock, a.m.

"Say good bye?" "*Farewell,*" was instantly written. "Will you make some raps similar to those heard on the premises?" Immediately came in bold letters—

*"I do not want to."*

The next day the circle was opened by asking—

"Is Chapman here?" "Yes" was intimated by knockings with the leg of a chair.

“ Is the Dutchman here ?” “ Yes.”

“ Will you tell us what the time is ?” Ten minutes and-a-half past twelve was knocked out.

This was the exact time. “ Now communicate.” The medium took the pencil and with a flourish the words appeared :—“ *I have nothing to say.*”

It was then asked, “ will Chapman communicate ?” He wrote, “ *He has forgiven me.*”

“ Can you give us a brief account of your doings in the past ?” “ *No! I wish to forget.*” He then wrote his name “ Chapman.” The Spirit of the Dutchman was requested to say something more. The words appeared, “ *I can do nothing more for him.*”

“ Say farewell ?” “ *Good bye*” was immediately written in large characters. “ Anything more to say ?” “ *No*” was twice written backwards.

Some very interesting physical effects followed. The medium sat in the chair, and was rocked gently once or twice, and then kept in an inclined position with the chair, which was held back with a force defying the efforts of three men single-handed to overcome.

An engagement having been entered into we all met once more, strangely interested in discovering further particulars from our invisible communicants. After the usual preliminaries the medium’s hand was again in motion and the words came

“ *I am here.*”

“ Say something else ?”

“ *George Chapman died 70½ years ago,*” was instantly written, forming a *finale* to the whole affair.

With a view to ascertain if any truth lay hid in the mysterious handwriting, I have taken means to gather an insight into a few past events which have lived in the recollection of the oldest people living within reasonable distance from this old building. Some few

incidents related to me I put into a sensible shape, and discovered that one George Chapman, some seventy or eighty years ago, was the owner of the building in question, and did business as a miller. He likewise connected himself with a band of men who did pirating, smuggling, and other work of a fierce character. There were several squabbles with the Dutch, who were met on the sea within easy distance of the Sussex coast, some of which ended in blood and death. One Dutchman had his back chopped, and was pitched over into the sea, suspicion falling upon Chapman. A lady of title was murdered and her rings taken from her fingers. At a ball which took place at Hastings one of the smugglers was "on the light fantastic toe," when his partner observed on his finger one of the rings which belonged to the murdered lady. The affair created great excitement. Some of the smuggling crew were pursued and captured, others escaped. George Chapman was one of the prisoners; he was placed under guard, but he cleverly outwitted his capturers; his comrades supplying him with an old woman's wardrobe, he passed all barriers in disguise, and made a safe retreat to France.

On a tomb stone in a churchyard a mile or two distant from the building, are still visible these words, "George Chapman, died August 11th, 1793."

Perhaps these few items may serve at least to make Probability a present which the mysterious writing may support.

These are strange facts. I can vouch for them coming under my notice without any strain or adjustment being favoured.

#### DEATH TOKENS.

Mrs. A——, a lady with whom I am often in conversation, describes several singular events of a super-

natural character. On one occasion she was with a female friend in her bedroom in the day time. She felt her dress suddenly pulled with a violence which a human being could hardly have displayed, yet it impressed her with such a degree of certainty owing to its reality that she immediately looked under the bed with a view to discover the hidden delinquent. Her search was vain. The next day a letter brought the intelligence that a cousin had died about that time.

Another incident—the same lady was carrying a coal scuttle when her hand was clasped by a palpable invisible hand. She dropped the coal scuttle from the electrical force of fear. This event preceded the sad news which assured her that an aunt had just died.

The most singular of all the supernatural incidents which have been numerous in Mrs. A—'s experience, is the following:—

Her father was in a dying condition on the sofa. Mrs. A. and her mother stood together looking at him. Presently two unseen hands seized Mrs. A. by the shoulders and held her with such energy that she found it difficult to breathe. Whilst she was thus transfixed and oppressed with the unaccountable weight of the hands upon her shoulders, her father, still living, yet near his death, looked up with an expression of agony in her face, and with difficulty said "Harriet." When he had spoken the invisible hands were no longer felt, and the lady breathed as freely as ever.

Mrs. James, living in London at the time of the following incident, was in Somersetshire. She was in the habit of placing a table against her bedroom door on retiring to rest—this was a precaution she rarely, if ever, overlooked. In a room on the other side of the landing others, connected with her family, were asleep. In the middle of the night she was awoke by hearing rappings on

the door, and hearing a familiar voice call "Mary ! Mary!" She got up and, moving the table from the door, opened it, but could see no one. She knocked, and aroused the slumberers in the house, informing them that she had distinctly heard herself called by name. But they expressed themselves ignorant of the fact.

Mrs. James re-entered her room, closed the door, replaced the table, got in bed again and reflected. At length she recollected the strange voice which had awakened her as resembling that of a friend whose name was Stafford, and who was miles away in London at the time.

Mrs. James persisted in asserting her opinion that no one's voice but Mrs. Stafford's could have called upon her in those characteristic tones.

Two days later a letter was received by Mrs. James which informed her that Mrs. Stafford was dead. The time of death corresponded exactly with the time when she heard her door rapped and her name called.

Similar instances, varying only in manner, can be obtained in thousands, justifying the conclusion that invisible supernatural agencies are mysteriously working in our very midst.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## APPARITIONS.

WHEN a boy I had occasion to pass over a lock across "The Cut" or river. The moon was bright and the white frost was crisp upon all visible objects save the water. The hour was twelve—the hour when ghosts are said to walk. I had been taught to believe that all persons who said such unearthly visitants as Ghosts had any other possible existence out of their own brains, were *non compos mentus*. I had likewise, never having seen a ghost, swallowed the knowledge-pill manufactured by the chemist Science, which worked my mind into sturdy disbelief in all Supernaturalisms, be they attested by learned or illiterate people, and supported by evidence clear or dim. The arguments—"Apparitions are the shadows of Fear." "They have a close affinity to diseased minds." "They never appear to us." "They are like the fanciful creations of Shakespere—" "Airy Nothingness," made me deem myself proof-strong against either belief in their possible existence or fear of the approaches, at any hour, in any place, of other than human and perfectly natural phantoms.

I had the privilege of conversing with an old man—a Wesleyan local preacher, who had belief strong in spirits strong, yet who took considerable pains to arm my young mind with weapons strong against Spirits

weak, such as appear before you, and utter intelligible words, and instead of running down your throat like the aforesaid spirits did, in which the local preacher believed in, do the other thing, vanish without being consumed. He often delighted my eager mind with stories about haunted houses, and how it all came out that Nature was the Necromancer, and everybody had been duped who happened to be concerned in the matter, and who, failing to support reliable faith in the *real*, abandoned it all for the *unreal*.

Only a few weeks previous to the ever-memorable midnight when I stood on the lock, the old minister, after having supported his spirits with a full quantum of the other sort of spirits common to the distillery, drew his huge oaken chair before the fire, and sitting his huge body down in it, and making his manner wise—in this wise, commenced—

“Don’t heed the silly people who tell you that ghosts are visible this side of the grave. The Almighty never permits the disembodied spirit to return to the habitation of the body, which is doomed to lie under ground to await the Resurrection Day, when the graves shall be opened and their tenants be brought forth to find judgment.” After a deal in this fashion, the veteran began the following story, and triumphantly concluded it by saying, “and that is the way the whole range of the stories about Apparitions and Hauntings can be overturned.”

#### THE LOCAL PREACHER’S STORY.

A certain gentleman living in a certain house was awoke from his sleep by curious and continued noises like the feet of some animal running on the cellar stairs. He got up, and, taking a lantern, went down into the cellar, but nothing could he see. The next night the same sounds ominously greeted his ears and kept him

from sleeping. It was in vain that he went down into the cellar. There was nothing which he could discover to account for the phenomenon. He now began to be nervous, because he began to think of the Supernatural. He got friends to sleep with him. The mysterious noises still came, always about the midnight hour. At length the news went abroad that the house was haunted, and the gentleman all at once discovered that it was unsafe for him to allow himself to sleep any more in the house. On leaving it he decided on testing the nerves of his neighbours, and announced that whoever felt disposed to live in the haunted house, might continue to do so, rent free, and should be entitled to have all the house contained, in the event of their deciding, after a fair trial of nights, to make the house their home.

This liberal offer was too good to be forfeited. Two men talked the matter over, and decided on making the trial. Everybody admired their courage, but expected to see them terrified, returning to their homes.

The two men armed themselves with pistols and spirits—the former to kill and the latter to keep up their courage while they did it. Twelve o'clock came, and so did the noises. The men, lanterns and pistols in hand, rushed to the cellar stairs and down into the cellar, but nothing visible met their view. They returned to their spirits in the bottle, and enjoyed themselves much. The next day some sawdust was procured and spread upon the cellar stairs. When midnight came, pit-pat, pit-pat came the noises. The men rushed to the stairs and shot at vacancy. They then looked carefully, and lo! the marks of ghosts' feet in the sawdust!

The third night came. Pit-pat—pit-pat—pit-pat—pit-pat—bang! went one of the pistols. The ghost was killed and rolled down the stairs in the shape of a

goodly sized rabbit. Here the mystery was explained. On a careful examination several nests were found in the cellar, which contained a splendid harvest of rabbits.

This story added considerable force to my scepticism regarding ghosts. A few evenings after I had listened to the local preacher I had other substantial proof of the unsubstantiality of ghosts.

#### A GHOST OF FANCY.

I was walking along a narrow path in the centre of a meadow. It was dark, the stars not being out. As I advanced just a few yards in front, a monstrous phantom stood before me. Involuntary fear seized upon me and I stood still, hesitating to proceed and unwilling to retrace my steps. At length, with a courage backed by the account I have related of the way the rabbits cleared up the mystery of the haunted house, I pushed on, not, however, without a few terrors. The end came, and I laughed at the whole matter. The huge phantom was a donkey. I thought if, donkey-like I had run away braying out "ghost! ghost!" what numbers of simple people would have taken up the echo. I was now doubly armed. The "rabbits" and the "donkey" served me for scape-goats. What unforeseen influences could work me into faith or fear?

#### THE MIDNIGHT SPECTRE.

With my mind full of the stubborn thoughts of my own disbelief in spiritual apparitions, I stand in the centre of that fatal lock-gate at that midnight ghostly hour. The moon makes everything visible as daylight. Presently my hat is lifted slightly above my head and my eyes dilate. Good Heavens! What horrid shade approaches stealthfully towards me? There is no mistake, his face is familiar to me, yet it is

white as chalk, and around his head and body dull white garments hang loosely. I know him for a man, and fear him for a ghost. He advances on me, and I — oh, God! am in the centre of the lock gates, in danger of falling into the water in my electric speed to gain the firm tow-path. I search for some stones of bulk with which I determine to test the reality of the ghost, but alas! either fear blinds me, or none are to be found, save small pebbles. I look; the apparition looks too. I speak. He speaks too — and that voice! Surely I should know it. I look again. The ghost leaps on to the lock gates and follows me. I can no longer resist. My heels crush out all courage, and I find myself excited and safe at my lodgings, with my face full of the traces of fear, and my hair almost upright.

The next day the mystery of this ghost, like the one of the Haunted House and the other of the Phantom in the meadow, gets cleared up. It appears that a man named Mutton, whose form, features, and voice I had distinguished, knowing that I should be passing along about the hour mentioned, to please some of his companions, chalked his face and robed his head and body in felts, and enacted the part of ghost to test the practical effects of Fear—a test which no sooner became generally known than it was pronounced monstrous, and of the most dangerous character. Adding this ghost of Fancy to the others detailed, although I could not answer for being altogether proof against fear, I certainly could answer for being proof against conviction of the reality of spiritual Apparitions.

But how have the strong evidences of Fact operated in proving that I am not proof against conviction any more than I am proof against fear?

In the chapter on Dreams, I have shown that any other than a belief in the Spiritual Realities around us

will make the subject of "Events Foretold" and "Things beheld in Dreams," only the more involved in mystery. It is in vain that we shirk the great Spiritual facts which appeal to us with all the strong force of probability.

That Apparitions are visible at times, and under peculiar circumstances to some people, possessed of medium-power, is self-evident from the number of cases on record which bear marks of supernatural agency, and put the question of chance coincidence altogether out of the argument. If we have no eyes how shall we see? And not seeing ourselves shall we say that others *with* eyes cannot see? We cannot all be mediums for spiritual intercourse, even of the lower kind, much less of the higher kind. The *seeing* medium has eyes peculiarly gifted with spiritual seeing powers. We who have not the medium-gift, shall we say that others have it not? If we do, we presume to set our finite thoughts higher than the Infinite Wisdom by decreeing the limits of His power.

The mysterious appearances which come as the harbingers of death or the instruments of retributive justice, which in all ages have brought with them proofs strong of their reality, cannot be annihilated either by Theology or Science.

Those who say they will not believe when they hear, even when the testimony is accredited, should say the same of every mysterious problem which material philosophies cannot grasp; then they will at least be consistent. But, to accept for granted teachings which are common to the schools of theology without asking for testimony, and which are quite as mysterious, and even more so, than mere apparitions, and then when spiritual mysteries are spoken of, and their reality proved by a weight of testimony which neither logic nor doubt can subdue, to turn away with

the word "Impossible" on their lips—shows a mistrust in the weight of evidence, in their own faculties of perception, and an inconsistency exceedingly puerile.

The bold ghost-fact presents itself before us. It must be faced by a manly and fair bearing.

When admitted what good is it? Admit it as a fact you prove it of use. That which *is* has a purpose, and that purpose may be either good, evil, or both good and evil.

Grant the fact that apparitions appear to persons who have seriously injured them when they were in the flesh, or to people who have held unholy bond with them on earth. You cannot settle the question of apparitions here, because the argument leads on to the "appearances" of a holier character, where the beings, blessed with medium-sight, gaze upon the serene, angelic, pleasing countenances of departed friends, whose lives were of the best on earth, and whose "appearances," the result of their divine sympathies and affinities, draw them to earth to cause their friends to long for better lives, and to find an angelic stimulus to good works. Every face has two sides—let us look upon its bright as well as its dark side.

The spiritual face has its two sides, the bright side bearing more beauties than the dark side scars. Point out the scars, but in justice gaze upon its beauties. Had we a perpetual night we might look for nought else but scars or blotches in Spiritualism.

But the day is visible when the night disappears. And so Spiritualism has its beauties with all its defects and apparently dark spots.

The great fact that apparitions are realities visible to certain persons, is after all, the question for consideration and settlement.

A description appears in the 10th chapter of Daniel,

of a vision wherein an angel presented himself to Daniel, touched him, and addressed him—

“And I Daniel saw the vision; for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them so that they went to hide themselves.”

In this incident the men that are with Daniel have “a great quaking,” evidently spiritual, and supporting the fact of the vision being a reality.

But they are without the gift of mediumship in the way it was possessed by Daniel, or it was not called into service by the spiritual agencies, for good reasons.

Very similar to this account presented of Daniel's vision are the accounts so often related of apparitions making themselves visible to one or more persons, whilst others looking in the direction only see vacancy. Why it should be so that one person only out of numbers should be gifted in this peculiar manner? is a question better answered by asking, why it is that certain rare plants only flower once in a century? or why the bloom upon the peach is more delicate than that upon the plant? Or why the passion-flower dies when it is cut off from its stem sooner than the rose? Or why the law of growth should work slower in the development of the animal structure of one species than of another? Or why bees should not be all queens, or men all kings? And so on. You answer—“In all these cases nature is working out her own purposes.” But still the differences open up as much food for curiosity as this question of mediumship. Granted, nature *does* work out her purposes in the gift of mediumship as well as in all her works.

In rare instances speech comes with the apparition, and its mysterious mission becomes known. Sometimes it is seen with the vestments about it which it wore when it was living in the flesh. At other times the

apparition shows itself in robes of a more ethereal cast.

At the moment of death the spirit seems to have the power of flying immense distances, and presenting itself to the eyes of one to whom it is linked by a chain of affinities which reaches from earth to Heaven.

When Spirits are only heard by some persons they are seen by animals.

They sometimes pay a single visit only, and reappear at set intervals, never entirely disappearing until the load stone drawing them to the spot be removed.

It is probable that some Spirits fail to make themselves either heard or seen, yet possess power to hover around us and impress us with their good or evil natures.

It is remarkable that so many incidents of apparitions at the moment they have left the body should be well attested, and yet not accepted by men who pretend to be inquirers.

A circumstance occurred wherein the Spirit of a person was plainly visible to his friend at a distance, when it was proved that he was living. This opens up the question as to the possibility of the Spirit leaving the body for a time during sleep and returning to it again. The probability is in favour of such an idea.

The Spirit drawn by its affinities sails on magnetic pinions, and explores realms of spiritual aura.

The cases of the Spirit of a sleeper being seen by friends at a distance are necessarily rare, because the opportunities for social intercourse and friendly communion are frequent, and the Spirit can partake of these pleasures while it has life in the flesh. Not so with the departing Spirit. There is the consciousness that it is flying off into an unknown sphere,

and it is leaving behind friends allied to it by sympathies that death fails to sever. In that dread moment of change from one condition to another, there is the strong impelling desire which it cannot control or subdue, to pay a parting visit to a friend. It bursts the band that binds it, and drawn by its affinities gains the presence of the object of its desires.

It is not unreasonable, on the knowledge we possess that some Spirits are seen the instant they are disembodied, to build the idea that most Spirits fly to the persons whose sympathies with them are the strongest, but owing to the want of mediumship their presence cannot be made manifest.

This subject may be one for the Spiritualist to discuss, it may possibly lead to fresh fields of research, and cause him to find additional proofs of the mighty truths of spiritual life.

#### THE GHASTLY HEAD.

Mr. T., the gentleman who sat at my table whose medium powers were discovered in the way I have described in the early part of this book, was, according to his own statement, possessed of the gift of seeing Spirits. He was retiring to bed on a certain night, being free from unusual excitement, although excitability runs through his whole nature. He had just got his legs beneath the bed clothes and was in the act of lying down; at that instant he saw rise from the foot of the bed, in a phosphorescent atmosphere, a human head. The countenance wore a ghastly appearance, resembling the features of a man who had been hung. In a moment the shade disappeared, and Mr. T., much affected, fell asleep, and doubtless found his sleep disturbed by his excited thoughts. He went about his ordinary duties, vainly endeavouring to settle the vision

on imagination. A few posts on, a letter came with the news of a relative's death, and the particulars of the way and the time he died. The singular facts that the gentleman died in a fit, and that the time the death took place corresponded with the time the shade appeared to him, go far towards proving the fact that apparitions are not mere phantasies resulting from disease of brain or other of the lame causes which the fancy of the sceptic produces.

In this case the ghastly appearance resembling the features of a man who had been hung, has its corresponding relationship with the substantial circumstance that the deceased died in a fit. Besides, Mr. T. had no previous knowledge or forewarning that his relative would be ill, or had he even in any way been troubled about him. Therefore the supposition that his own brain invented the phantom is unsatisfactory, and much less probable than the one that the apparition was a reality. Then comes the remarkable coincidence of the time of death corresponding with the time of the appearance. How this is to be attributed to disease of brain is an unsolvable problem.

An incident which occurred to Mr. Cooper may serve to illustrate the fact that animals see Spirits when human beings cannot see them, but yet may hear them.

#### THE INVISIBLE BIRD AND CAT.

A few years ago, when Mr. Cooper was a heart-and-soul disbeliever in the supernatural, he was preparing to go to bed, but his attention was arrested by a fluttering noise, like a bird flying across the room. The fluttering noise ceased upon the top of a picture-frame which hung just above a chair upon the wall. At that precise moment the cat, who had been attracted by the invisible flutterer, jumped upon the chair and settled

her eager eyes upwards towards the top of the picture-frame, remaining a considerable time intent as though watching a mouse.

Mr. Cooper immediately felt along the edge of the picture frame, but nothing palpable to touch was found. He thought the circumstance strange, to an extraordinary degree, and was much puzzled. He thought likewise of numberless cases he had heard or read, of tappings and singular noises being heard as the signal voices of death. With no belief in them, yet with a desire to test his own experience with coming events, he determined to watch and wait.

He had neither to watch nor wait long before he was alarmed to hear of the sudden death of a healthy child, which was found dead by the nurse's side.

In this case there is only probability to favour the idea that the cat saw the flutterer, which was invisible to Mr. Cooper. One thing is certain, it either saw or heard it, and perhaps both its senses of sight and hearing were called into service.

#### THE APPEARANCE OF ALLEN PEARSON.

At the Old Town, Eastbourne, lives one Mrs. Pearson, a poor woman who obtains her livelihood by going out to wash and scrub. Hearing of her having been visited by an apparition, I visited her, to glean particulars.

She appears to have lost three husbands, and although upwards of sixty years of age, is at the present time able to do a good day's work.

Allen Pearson, her last husband, was originally a soldier, and carried arms for his Majesty the King on the plains of Waterloo. He afterwards settled at Eastbourne, where he died.

Mrs. Pearson was engaged to work out at the house of Mrs. Griffin, stationer, Eastbourne. The morning

she started from home the rain fell in torrents. Allen wished her to have the use of his great coat to shelter her from the wet, and although he was bad with rheumatics, did not appear unusually ill. She left him in bed and gained the kitchen at Mrs. Griffin's, and busied herself scrubbing the floor. Whilst she was in a stooping posture she felt a tap on her right shoulder. She took her pail and looking round beheld her husband, Allen Pearson, standing before her in his shirt. Surprised at his presence in such a manner, and doubtless with some involuntary exclamation, she advanced towards him. That instant he was gone. Mrs. Pearson looked about her and hunted on the stairs for him, but he was not again visible. She felt no fear owing to the reality of the apparition, but when it was gone she knew that something of a supernatural order had taken place, and feared to think of probable consequences. Mrs. Griffin came down in the kitchen to lunch. Mrs. Pearson described the particulars of the appearance of her husband in his shirt, but she was told it was only a spectral illusion created by her own mind. When her work was done, Mrs. Pearson went home, and then the fearful truth of the apparition was manifest. She found her husband in his shirt, dead upon the floor, blood oozing from his mouth. He had broken a blood vessel, and had doubtless got out of bed in a vain endeavour to obtain assistance. Perplexed with the awfulness of his situation, his Spirit, sped on by an irresistible impulse, had mysteriously presented itself to his wife.

The news soon spread of the remarkable appearance of Allen Pearson to his wife at his death, a few persons only believing—the rest pronouncing the whole matter an invention of Mrs. Pearson's. But there is this awkward fact against them. Mrs. Griffin corro-

borates the fact that Mrs. Pearson told her of the apparition long before the discovery of the corpse.

It appears from what I could ascertain from Mrs. Pearson, that she has before had warnings—and once the apparition of her grandmother, who brought her up, stood at the foot of her bed and bent over her in an attitude of grief.

Distinct knockings of an unmistakable character were heard by her before her second husband died. Six weeks before the death of Allen, she says that she awoke him from sleep and made him cross by telling him of three loud knocks which came upon a little box that stands under the window.

The testimony in favour of the truth of the reality of the apparition of Allen Pearson wants no link to fasten it to truth. Had the woman failed in making Mrs. Griffin understand that she had been visited by her husband, it might have satisfied scepticism to brand Mrs. Pearson with delusion or falsehood, but it can scarcely do the like with Mrs. Griffin, who neither favoured the reality of apparitions nor Mrs. Pearson's imperative manner of insisting on the actual occurrence of the visitation.

Conversing with Mrs. Griffin, with a view to satisfy myself that Mrs. Pearson's statement could be corroborated, I obtained another illustration of apparitional truth.

#### APPEARANCE BEFORE DEATH.

A few years back, Miss Griffin, a little girl 10 years old, retired to bed one very cold Thursday night. She had a little bedstead with white curtains, which were usually thrown back over the top of the bedstead; on this eventful night, however, the girl thought, for the sake of warmth, she would have the curtains drawn

close. Accordingly she pulled them down and drew them together. She soon fell into a profound sleep, and had a strange dream. She saw, as she thought, her sister Agnes, a little girl  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years old, who was living 70 miles away, take the curtains in her hands and hold them apart, while she stood gazing upon her. The dreamer awoke, got up in bed, and said, "Oh! Agnes, what brings you here?" Immediately the curtains dropped and Agnes vanished. Miss Griffin was much frightened and hid her head under the bed-clothes till morning.

That Thursday Agnes was taken ill and was no more a week hence.

In this case we get the fact established that the spirit can leave the body on peculiar missions, even before death takes place.

#### THE FIGURE AND THE CORPSE.

The particulars of the following were supplied by a gentleman who can vouch for their authenticity:—

Mr. ———, a medical student, who prosecuted his studies with uninterrupted ardour for a number of years, was taken ill. He was engaged to Miss ———, a young lady, to whom he was much attached.

The lady awoke from sleep on a certain night and to her dismay saw a figure, like a shadow, with its finger pointing downwards in the direction of the head of the bedstead. She felt an irrepressible desire to look where the figure pointed. The next second she beheld her lover, as she thought, in his clothes lying beside her bed on the floor, a corpse. The figure and the corpse both disappeared, leaving the young lady much distressed in mind. It was afterwards proved as a finale to this shocking incident that the student was dead.

My wife informs me while I am writing this that

her mother saw the apparition of her brother-in-law, Samuel Short. She was in the back yard three miles from where Samuel resided. He appeared before her, causing her to make the remark, "What, Samuel! is that you?" but Samuel, without replying, vanished. A little time on the news reached them that Samuel was dead, and it was ascertained that he died exactly at the time he appeared before his sister.

Cases of this kind of appearance are as numerous as pebbles on the beach. But they are generally kept snug in the remembrance of the family to whom they are familiar.

The following instance of a spirit appearing and speaking to a lady living in Australia I have from reliable testimony.

#### THE WIFE'S APPEARANCE TO HER HUSBAND.

Mr. —— left England with his wife and children and settled in Australia, he came over to England on a visit, intending to return in a brief space. He was staying with a friend, and, after retiring to bed, was made conscious of the presence of his wife, who, in the form of a spectre, stood before him and addressing him, said, "Take care of the children." In the morning Mr. —— related the circumstance of the appearance to his friend, adding strong expressions of belief in its supernatural character, and inclining to the fear "that all was not well in Australia."

He returned in due time, and found his children but not his wife living. The disconsolate husband ascertained the conclusive and startling fact that he became a widower exactly at the time when he was made conscious of the presence of the apparition.

#### THE MOTHER'S SPIRIT.

Sarah Neville, a native of Horsham, sitting with her

children, distinctly saw the spirit of her mother, whom she had not seen for twenty years. She saw the figure enter a small door-way leading through a passage and deliberately march into the room. She exclaimed, "What's that?" but neither of her children sitting with her saw the apparition.

Mentioning the circumstance to a sister who visited her some considerable time after the appearance, Sarah Neville learnt that her mother, then living at Seaford, had died at the time she had seen the spiritual intruder march into her room.

#### MRS. DOWNING'S GHOST.

Mrs. Downing, an old woman lately deceased, is said to have reappeared in ghostly guise, and to have made herself visible to several persons.

In her life-time she inhabited a small house or hut near the sea, Eastbourne; bull's-eyes, spirits, and beer forming her stock-in-trade. She managed by dint of illicit commerce in spirits to make money, and made the sweet-stuff bull's-eyes serve the purpose of a *ruse* to the exciseman. Her memory does not appear to be a sweet incense in the nostrils of her neighbours, some of them speaking of her conduct in strong declamatory terms. One thing is quite certain, the old woman made a deal of money and displayed a miserly greed in her general dealings, even curtailing her own supplies of meat and other articles of diet. She lent a man a heavy sum of money, which he seemed disposed to refrain from repaying, denying the loan. The affair went through a process of law, which ended in Mrs. Downing regaining her money. Mr. Cook, living at the present time in Mrs. Downing's house, and who never saw her while she was on earth in the flesh, saw her apparition standing by his bed side about one o'clock in the morning, some time in the

month of December, 1863. He related the circumstance to Mr. Hide, a nephew of Mrs. Downing, and afterwards to others.

About half-past five that same morning, Mr. Hide and his two sons were out. The morning was dark, yet the three could distinguish plainly the figure and features of Mrs. Downing. She appeared in a dark cloak and her old cottage bonnet, and seemed to have something in her hand.

I put several questions to Mr. Hide, who gave intelligible and apparently truthful answers.

“What distance do you suppose there was between you and the apparition?”

“About fifteen yards.”

“You say the morning was dark?”

“So dark that no human being could have been observed at that distance.”

“And yet you saw her plainly?”

“Yes, as plainly as I ever saw her in my life.”

“Did both your sons see her at the time you did?”

“Yes; but I advanced a little in front of them, towards the figure, and shouted ‘Halloa,’ which shout was heard by a neighbour.”

“You got no answer?”

“No: but I said to my boys, still looking at the shade, ‘I’ll see who you be,’ and I immediately advanced quicker towards it and it receded as quickly from me.”

“What took place next?”

“The figure, which was looking at me full faced, turned side faced.”

“You mean you saw the profile?”

“Yes; and then a kind of fire, a luminous ‘halo,’ came about it, which made the form and features the more distinct—then it vanished.”

“Do you think there is reliance to be placed

in the statements of Cook respecting the apparition?"

"Yes, because Cook described her so vividly to me, and he never saw her in life?"

"Has any one else seen the phantom?"

"Yes; a Mrs. Knight."

"What motive could Mrs. Downing have, do you suppose, to cause her to make her appearance here?"

"I don't know. It was just such a figure I don't wish to see any more. I never done the old woman any wrong. She assisted all the others, but would never let me have a penny to do me any good. The reason of it I don't know. She knew I was a staunch teetotaller."

"Do you suppose she appears out of remorse for her selfishness towards you?"

"It may be so, but I certainly prefer that she should make no second visitation, although I expect she will."

Nothing could induce Mr. Hide to admit the possibility of his senses being deceived. He said he never saw an apparition before, and why should he have seen this if there had been no reality in it?

The testimony in this case is so satisfactory that there is no escape from the conclusion that the apparition was genuine without concluding that Mr. Hide and his two sons were played upon by fancy, or allied to propagate a series of wicked lies. It is very unlikely, indeed, that three persons at once should be made the victims of a delusion by fancy at the same time, and, that the delusion should possess similar characteristics to all. The fact of Mr. Hide being a teetotaller will at least settle the stale remark that "people who see spirits without have plenty of spirits within."

At a sitting which took place soon after the rumour went abroad that Mrs. Downing had been seen,

we called for her spirit, and received affirmative responses alleged to have come from her.

“Is it true that you made your appearance to Mr. Cook?”

The table gave the affirmative response.

“Did you likewise present yourself to Hide?”

Another affirmative trio of knocks.

“Are you happy?”

A single negative knock.

“Will you state the cause of your unhappiness?”

Three knocks.

“Will you communicate it through the alphabet?”

On receiving the affirmative response, the letters were called over, and the bold word BRANDY was signalled out, to the amusement of some and the surprise of others.

A gentleman, living within a stone's throw from my residence, who by the way declares that he had no faith in supernatural manifestations, has kindly favoured me with the following facts of a spiritual visitation.

#### THE WINE MERCHANT'S CLERK.

He had a friend some nine or ten years ago living in Hammersmith, whose name was Topham. On a certain occasion the friend was taken ill, and was attended by a medical gentleman who was related to my informant. Topham was engaged at a wine merchant's, and was in the habit of kneeling on a stool in his office and looking out at the people passing on the outside. He had been missed some time, reports reaching his friends that he was in a most precarious condition.

On a certain occasion Mr. —— and his wife stood together in their shop, which was opposite Topham's office. Mr. —— exclaimed, with great surprise, “Why there's Topham, I thought he was unable to leave his bed!” The wife looked, and replied, “So

there is." Topham was seen kneeling in his usual manner upon the stool looking out into the street. A few minutes afterwards the medical attendant entered the shop with the intelligence of Topham's death, stating that he saw him die but a few minutes back.

#### THE SUICIDE'S RETURN.

While I am writing this book a curious case of an apparitional character has become connected with the career of a Mr. George E. Harris, residing in London, whom I have known many years.

For a long period Mr. H. was associated with a Mr. William Neal. They were bosom friends, and sympathised with each other's struggles with more than usual zest. But unfortunately poor Neal, owing to a morbid condition of brain, committed suicide by shooting himself in the head. Mr. H. felt the loss of his friend, and went about his duties with a sad heart. He grew materialistic in his tendencies, and held many a stout argument in defence of absolute naturalism. I know no man who would have been more likely to laugh at alleged supernatural appearances than my friend Harris. But wonderful are the workings of the Spirits. For some time, owing to adverse circumstances, Mr. H. has been in a melancholy mood and has found it difficult in the extreme to resist an impelling desire to commit suicide. One morning about 9 o'clock, when he was quite awake, he looked up and saw the form but not the features of his friend Neal—he called out loudly several times for his wife, and rushed after the figure which vanished.

He was so disturbed with the mystery of the visitation that he could not resist a desire to go to a séance—accordingly arrangements were made for a sitting, and the spirit of Neal communicated to him telling him that he had appeared unto him.

When asked his reasons for so doing, he knocked out the words—"To save you from committing suicide."

#### APPEARANCE IN A BOAT.

A remarkable case of appearance, at the time of death, took place at Selsey. Some fishermen were together in a boat that had not left her moorings. The morning was so dark that they could scarcely see each other. Mr. —— distinctly saw the figure and features of his brother standing up in the boat. The apparition was without a hat. Mr. —— exclaimed, "That's my brother Charlie." But no one save himself saw the figure. That same day the lifeless body of Charlie, without a hat, was found. He had gone out in a boat without his brother's knowledge, and was, with another person, drowned.

The list of cases of apparitions might easily be lengthened. The difficulty being greater to choose than to obtain illustrations.

If the few facts noted be not accepted, testimony must have less weight in Supernaturalism than it has in Naturalism. I find the testimony full and complete, and must needs give it scope.

## CHAPTER XV.

## THE ONE THING NEEDFUL.

As well might the sceptic allege that the *foci* of spectacles have all equal strength as to assert that nothing out of the range of his probability-spectacles can exist—yet this is the practical force of his over sturdy antagonism to the modern forms of Spiritualism.

The dimness of sight which necessitates the use of glasses evidences generally the decay of age. The dimness of mental vision which occasions a proclivity to spiritual doubt, requires a medium of strong focus to enable it to perceive clearly the glories of truth.

The quarrel of the sects with Spiritualism resembles a quarrel between the wearers of spectacles, if it can be supposed that they could quarrel because they could not see alike through all spectacles. As well might such a *melée* take place and with as much reasonable ground of dispute, as the *melée* of the foes of Spiritualism taking place, because the glasses through which the mind views surrounding objects and phases of faith have not an equal *foci* or media strength.

The blind might as well declare that because they themselves cannot see surrounding objects, neither can others who are blessed with the faculties of sight, and there would be no more unreasonableness in the declaration than is exhibited in the inconsistent decla-

ration of the materialist, that since he beholds facts through the media of naturalism, there are no other media through which facts can be viewed, and no other state of existence beyond his own.

He knows that even in ordinary conversation on all topics difference of opinion results from difference of view ; whence comes this difference of view ? Is it not the same through all ages ? The point of sight observed by one generation is lost sight of by another. The opinions held intact and sacred by one people are from the very fact of a difference of media, regarded by another people as demoniacal. Hence sectarianism and partisanship have instituted intolerance, prejudice, and persecution, from a want of a correct knowledge of the laws of media.

The history of the world teems with evidences of this fundamental truth. "If the blind lead the blind they will both fall into the ditch together." How many are there who seeing clearly through true media are fitted to guide the spiritually blind ?

Looking across the open plain from an eminence the eye can reach far to the horizon, but obstruct the view by a wall and the prospect beyond is lost. Whenever obstructions appear they occupy space in the mind, to the exclusion of the more delightful objects beyond. Thus the obstructions of prejudice, ignorance, and scepticism, which rise, strong and high, like walls, break the prospect which Spiritualism opens to the soul's eye. "The one thing needful" is to rise above them.

If we would behold an extensive prospect we must mount to the highest eminence and choose a clear day or we shall find our vision considerably obstructed. Remaining *statu quo* on low ground, like men with spectacles of false *foci*, we see the obstructions in the shape of walls and houses, and lose the glorious

prospect beyond. "The one thing needful" is to reach the eminence and view the prospect through the most powerful telescope. We shall then be in a position to say that the little plots of houses and walls which are near us constitute only a minute portion of this terrestrial sphere.

In like manner, looking at Spiritualism through feeble glasses from low ground, we perceive only the obstructions (objections), the tables and chairs, and lose sight entirely of its ethereal prospects and benign glories. The "one thing needful" is to aspire to higher ground, that, with the aid of the spiritual telescope (mediumship), we may know the stubborn obstacles in its way are not its Alpha and Omega—its beginning and ultimatum.

A church has been burnt, and amidst its flames 2000 unfortunate females have perished. The Priests were engaged, not in saving the sufferers, but in preserving from destruction the internal elaborations of the church. Can anything be more horrifying? more convincing of the blind devotion which leads to intense fanaticism than this fact? Clinging to the outward form, the Priests ignored the inward Spirit of Christianity. It is ever thus—the truths of progress are opposed. The priesthood of dogmatism are allied, not to display the spirit of Christ, but to protect their church elaborations, their ricketty and crotchety forms. Like the perishing females in the church at Santiago, the seekers after spiritual truth may perish. The rituals—the hollow form-worship of an inane faith—the symbol and silken adornments of the Temple—are they not "the one thing needful" to theology?

Who dare question the right of the established sectaries to their separate assumed infallibilities? Are not their elaborations and rituals perfect? Will any one upon Protestant (private judgment) principles

say they are not? Fie upon him. Beelzebub or Infidelity has hold of his conscience, or he would bend his knee in humble adoration, not of the one only true God, but, of the universal ritual—and symbol-worship of the age.

What right has he to question the supremacy of any one of all the sectaries extant? If he be allowed to do so of one, why may he not of another? The least dissent from the original opens the gate of progress, and makes fallible the assumed Infallibles; Hence Romanism made fallible “Infallible” Paganism; Lutherism made fallible “Infallible” Romanism; and hydra-headed “Infallible” Protestantism made its singular “Infallible” plural and its fallibility an infallible certainty.

Thus in the order of progress the “Infallibles” are proved to be Fallibles. They hold just their own legitimate space in mental philosophy and no more. Their very existence gives the credentials of their imperfection, and strips them of all genuine infallibility. If this be true, it is no sin either against the Holy Ghost or against Truth to call upon the sectaries to meet us on common ground, to “come and let us reason together.” “The one thing needful” above all needs, is Truth. We ask for fair treatment—not as infallible, but as fallible beings, conscious that an appeal to either of the religious organizations of the age is an appeal to fallibility. Besides, why need we urge the fallibleness of human creatures and endeavour to urge our right on that ground to a full and impartial hearing? We prove in all our history, in our executive and municipal, religious and secular governments of every form and shade, that there is “the something” we want to reform or to omit—that “something” is just the small pebble that disturbs by its numerous expanding circles the still sea of “Infallibility.”

Will any one urge, "Yes, all this is quite true; we know we are fallible or we should not be sinful, but then our creeds are not—they are ever the same."

How incongruous the subject grows—the pebble grows too and the circles increase.

How can fallible beings weave infallible creeds, or even comprehend the idea?

Why this intolerable toleration of pretentious "Infallibilities?" This rage of assumptive sectarianism?

The pebble of dissent disturbs the waters of "Infallibility," the circles in geometrical ratio expand and increase, and save the waters from becoming stagnant. Who are those that stand on the road of progress crying aloud, "Woe unto ye all who seek after new symbols and silken ritualisms?" Why, the sticklers for infallibility who sanctify their own fallibility by accepting the baptism of dissent. Let them in the name of consistency withhold their cries. They at least should learn that "the one thing needful" for them is silence.

Human nature never changes its inherent qualities, only the forms of their development. The intolerance of the ancient Catholics is very like the intolerance of modern sectaries, with this little item of distinction, it shapes itself to the customs and usages of modern existence.

It is an appalling picture to contemplate—the picture headed "Intolerance." In its back ground lie the martyrs who, like Cranmer, met the flames which surrounded them with heroism, to prove their devotion to faith stronger than death. In bolder relief are the veteran puritan Bunyans, carrying their burdens to the Slough of Despond—fighting against the intolerance of opposing sects, but yet growing themselves intolerant to others. Thus the picture glows,

full of interest and instruction. Nothing short of "Private Judgment" ought to rule the desires of Protestants—Private Judgment and Fallibility. If they turn from the direct route and act out a new act in the drama of Dissent, are we to follow them? That is their business, not ours; let each keep their own doorway swept, but let them not forget that the point they start from was gained by Fallibility, and the point they arrive at takes them further from "Infallibility." Do they dare in the face of this fact still to cry—"Woe unto ye all who seek after new symbols and silken ritualisms?"

It would be a source of felicity if we could find some of our fellow creatures to whom we could look up as to gods, and know that they possessed "the only true knowledge and were wise withal, beyond earthly wisdom;" but seeing that like ourselves our fellow pilgrims on the road which leads through death to immortality have only limited capacities and imperfect lives—since we have no guarantee that our reasoning powers are not as good to guide as theirs—we are to be lauded rather than condemned for a legitimate pursuit of reason.

"The one thing needful" is "Truth," but what Truth is becomes the problem. How many of us have solved it? Those who have let them make "Infallibility" their escutcheon; give us evidence of the fact and we will bow to their authority.

The "Bible," shout the Catholics, that is our guide, by *that* and *that* alone we will be content to be judged, but we must beg the favour of having our own special pleader in court. The "Bible," shout the followers of Luther, that alone is our defence, we are saved and sustained by *that*. We challenge controversy, but we must beg to allow Reason to plead a *little* in our favour. The "Bible," shout the adherents of

Dissent in every theological form, *that* is our beacon, we will consent to be tested alone by *that*, but in the manner of the test we claim in various degrees the authority of Reason to serve us, to the end that we may be judged fairly. The "Bible," shout the Spiritualists, that is in itself a strong pleader in our cause, we have no objection to submit our doctrines to its teachings, providing Facts be allowed to plead and Reason to speak out.

To the law of the living testimony we bring our faith, and find no manner of fault therein.

Will any tell us that it was right for Luther to split Catholicism in twain with the axe of Reason, that it was still right to split Lutherism in innumerable fragments by the many-headed axe of Dissent ; but that it is not right to wield the axe again—that the work of reformation is accomplished—the final act of religious liberty is performed, and the weapon Reason is to rust. Either *statuo quo* authority or progress, either stagnation or motion, either definite fundamentalism or indefinite liberty must hold rule. If the former, all the modern forms of Dissent are innovations ruinous to the interests of humanity. If the latter, the march of Reason and Liberty is the march of God and Truth.

The laws of Christ and of Nature irrevocably set the *statu quo* spirit of ancient authority at rest and open up channels for spiritual progression. Christ assimilated the moral beauty contained in the Mosaic laws with his own pure and perfect teachings. "The eye for an eye" and "tooth for a tooth" philosophy of Judaism he disavowed, imparting the grand lessons of patience, humility, and forgiveness. Being himself a Jew, he nevertheless overthrew Jewish idolatries and Jewish severities. His doctrines were simple and beautiful, and culminated in his two golden commands—Love to God and Love to Man.

He broke the bands of Authority and gave us Freedom, making his doctrines and his life examples of Wisdom and Truth. Are we to remain *statu quo*, denouncing reason and progress, and, by so doing, instead of learning from Christ, to make our own wills supreme? Christ abandoned the old Mosaic rituals and made his followers free to the letter and spirit of freedom. He taught simplicity not ambiguous ritualisms. He bade no man violate reason and bow to any other authority than that of the Father and Himself.

He gave his disciples work to do. He did not inform them, as many of our modern teachers do their flocks, that salvation depended solely on belief. He bade them love one another to do good, and such was his regard for good action that he pronounced it right, not only to perform cures, but to attend to sheep and cattle on the Sabbath day. It is the direct evidence of extreme dulness on the part of the sticklers for the Bible when they indulge their fanaticism by hurling old scriptural texts at the heads of Spiritualists, and suppose that the severe and savage laws of Moses are "The one thing needful" for our guidance and profit.

The laws of Christ were a code superior to those of Moses. That code supplemented the Jewish code. There was innovation, progress, and divine beauty in Christ's order of government. Let our lives be brought not within the forum of Moses but of Jesus. He taught progress—we learn it from him. He taught goodness—like him we desire to be good. He taught gentleness, peace, humility, patience, and compassion. As He was, so should we aspire to be. But how we can accept old Testament rituals for other than mere matters of history, and at the same time follow the example of the Saviour, is a problem we cannot solve.

Christ is our great High Priest. His teachings

are at once elevating and pure. The priests of Santiago sought to save the trappings—ornaments of their burning church, not the dying inmates. Would Christ have so lost humanity or faith in his own golden maxims of love? Spiritualism, recognising God and Christ supreme, receiving truth from Scripture and truth from Nature, has also its legitimate claim to Reason.

“The one thing needful” for Theologists to learn is Christian Truth from the fountain head. Let them “prove all things and hold fast that which is good.”

## ERRATA.

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- Page 18 line 10 for the word *were* read *was*.  
" 23 " 28 for the word *assume* read *assumes*.  
" 23 " 31 for the word *caused* read *cause*.  
" 60 " 9 for the word *seems* read *seem*.  
" 80 " 3 for the word *carrollery* read *corollary*.  
" 113 " 4 the word *we* is omitted.

## A P P E N D I X .

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THE liberal liberality of "The Press" is certainly something for an Englishman to boast. I have heard it said by a Tourist, that Foreigners will sometimes exclaim, "Ah! Englishmen may say we are Priest-ridden, but then they themselves are Press-ridden." Individuals have their special biases, we must be content to grant due latitude for their *unbiased* expression. How in the name of *common sense* can Spiritualists expect the *free* Press of England to see justice in the way of Spiritualism? The thing is monstrous.

We have been allowed in a few instances to cross swords with our assailants on the ground of "The Press," but then it has always been an understood matter that the moment we appear to gain an advantage in the fence-business, our swords are to be thrust back, and the ground of the combat to be closed against us.

A Local paper, the *Eastbourne Gazette*, gave very premature signs of thorough—out-and-out liberalism in matters pertaining to things "Spiritual."

Mr. Cooper lectured on the subject, and the *Gazette* reported at full length. The Editor, taking neither side, allowed his columns to be opened for a fair "*set to*" between the Spiritualists and their opponents.

One "Veritas," whom the spirits inform us is a Mr. Brodie—threw down the gauntlet and entered the arena of debate. Each side in turn was fairly represented in the paper. At last, Feb. 3rd, 1864, the *Eastbourne Gazette* contained the following—with an editorial announcement that his next issue would close the combat.

### SPIRITUALISM AND SPIRITUALISTS.

Our correspondent, "Veritas," has laid before us a most clever article on the above subject, from the pen of one of the able contributors to the *Quarterly Review*. The article, which is very lengthy, takes up the arguments adduced in favour of MODERN SPIRITUALISM by those who have brought themselves prominently before the public. For the benefit of those who might

be desirous of investigating the subject, we should have been pleased to be enabled to place the whole article before them; but, as space would not permit such, we give a few extracts, selected by "Veritas." It will be seen that the *Quarterly* does not disbelieve in the "rappings," but questions the assumption that spirits of another world have anything to do with the phenomena thus produced. A careful perusal of the whole article would well repay those holding opinions either for or against the doctrine propounded by Modern Spiritualists; and, on account of the talent exhibited, should be welcomed by even those who are disinterested in the question. The following are the selections:—

Spirit-rapping is unquestionably one of the great facts of our time; we mean as regards the rapping, not necessarily as regards the spirits. That Mr. Home and his fellow-rappers can "call spirits from the vasty deep," we no more doubt than that Owen Glendower possessed a similar faculty; but whether the said spirits come when they are called, we are inclined, with Hotspur, to put in the form of a query. Take, for example, the following "spiritual" exhibitions:—

"Mr. Home was then thrown into the trance state, and taking the decanter in his right hand, he walked a few feet from the table, holding it in full view all the time, when, to my astonishment, I saw another decanter, apparently precisely similar to the other, in his left hand. Thus, in each of his hands I saw a decanter; and so real was the second, that I could not have told which of them was the material one. \* \* \* \* \* A little later, Mr. Owen's spirit came, and desired his wife's writing-desk to be placed on the table: and now the room was darkened to see if we could distinguish spirit lights, which were then seen by three of us. Presently we heard the writing-desk opened, and a hand was placed in mine, another in my wife's, and a third in Mr. Home's, each hand differing in size from the others. The alphabet was called for, and 'I fear I may have spoilt your Claude,' was spelt out. We could not understand this; but when the lamp was relighted, we found that some paint had been taken from the box from inside the desk, and had been freely used on one of my paintings, which hung several feet from where we were sitting."—pp. 181-2.

Surely this is a worthy companion to the roasted crab and the three-foot stool of the original hobgoblin, unless we suppose that the 'decanter' had something to do with the double vision and the subsequent phenomena.

Sometimes the departed spirit of a pickpocket exhibits a hankering after his earthly avocation; whether from pure mischief or felonious design is not stated:—

"During the séance I had the border of a white cambric handkerchief just appearing out of the side-pocket of my paletot, which was open; and though I could see no agency, I felt some-

thing twitching at the handkerchief, and very gradually drawing it from my pocket. Simultaneously with this, my eldest daughter, who sat opposite to me, exclaimed, 'Oh! I see phosphoric fingers at papa's pocket!' and, now visibly to all, the handkerchief was slowly pulled out, and drawn under the table; whilst at the same time I felt the arm that was doing it, but which was invisible to me."—p. 77.

The following occurrence admits of two interpretations. The author gives one; we venture to suggest another:—

"One evening, at the chateau, as we were seated at the table, the spirits having requested that the candles should be extinguished,\* the table drawn to the window, and the curtains opened to admit the moonlight, there had been some striking manifestations, and the time had been passing almost imperceptibly to us all, when a gentleman who was present said that he felt much exhausted, and he asked for a glass of brandy-and-water. It was brought, and he took it in his hand, and was about raising it to his mouth, when a spirit hand suddenly appeared, took hold of the lower part of the glass, and disappeared with it under the table. We laughingly said that our unseen friends surely did not believe in the use of stimulants. To this they assented by emphatic raps, and at the same moment the glass slowly rose again before him empty. The windows being closed, we supposed the water had been thrown upon the floor, and we arose to see where it was. We could discover no trace of it. About two minutes had elapsed, when the same glass, which was standing empty before him, was seen without any visible cause gradually to approach the edge of the table, and to disappear beneath it. I do not believe that above two seconds could have elapsed before it again appeared with the brandy-and-water in it, apparently not less in quantity than when first brought in, though the quality had certainly undergone some chemical change, as it had now lost much of its brown colour. By the raps, a warning was given to all of us against such indulgence."—p.p. 170, 171.

Instead of the "warning" we would suggest that, on the homœopathic principle of *similia similibus*, the spirits are themselves fond of spirits; that they drank the brandy-and-water, and substituted a milder liquor in the glass. A German spirit is mentioned by Mr. Howitt as having drunk a glass of beer; why should not a French spirit drink brandy-and-water? † At any

\* The "requests" made at these spiritual assemblies are sometimes curious. The author of "Strange things among us," mentions "a *seance* at a house situated in a London thoroughfare," which commenced by requesting that "Sperrits would be good enough to speak up, 'cos of the 'busses."

† "What was strangest of all, they saw a jug of beer raise itself, pour beer into a glass, and the beer drunk off."—*Howitt*, vol. i., p. 64. We should like to have seen the process of visible beer enter into an invisible stomach.

rate we have seen far more wonderful effects produced from a conjuror's bottle.

We have made these extracts from Mr. Home's book, in order to justify our assertion that it contains some stories which almost refute themselves from their exceeding silliness and want of purpose.

In addition to the ludicrous nature of many of these manifestations, there is something painful and revolting to the moral feelings in the idea of a *séance* for the purpose of holding communication with the spirits of the dead. There are times, no doubt, in the life of most, if not of all of us, when we have ardently longed for such a communication if it were possible; when, in the sense of irreparable bereavement, we have felt that to surrender years of intercourse with the living were a light price to pay for one hour of converse with the dead. But in proportion to the intensity of this longing, is the feeling also of its sacredness and delicacy, as a thing for solitude and privacy, to be kept jealously apart from prying eyes and tattling tongues. The more we love and revere the memory of those we have lost, the more we shrink from the thought of calling up the beloved presence by the arts and devices of necromancy, seeking "unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and that mutter;" the more are we revolted by the thought of making an exhibition of our heart's treasure to an assembly of spectators, met together to gratify a prurient curiosity or to gather materials for a scientific theory. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy."

To show that we are not singular in this feeling, we will venture to quote an expressive passage to the same effect from a work which, under an unattractive title and a dry subject, conceals many vigorous and genial outbreaks of eloquence and fancy. Speaking of *clairvoyance* and *spirit-rapping*, Professor Ferrier exclaims:—

"These, however, are not to be set down—at least so it is to be hoped—among the normal and catholic superstitions incident to humanity. They are much worse than the worst form of the doctrine of materiality. These aberrations betoken a perverse and prurient play of the abnormal fancy—groping for the very holy of holies in kennels running with the most senseless and God-abandoned abominations. Our natural superstitions are bad enough; but thus to make a systematic business of fatuity, imposture, and profanity, and to imagine, all the while, that we are touching on the precincts of God's spiritual kingdom, is unspeakably shocking. Ye who make shattered nerves and depraved sensations the interpreters of truth, the keys which shall unlock the gates of Heaven, and open the secrets of futurity,—ye who inaugurate disease as the prophet of all wisdom, thus making sin, death, and the devil the lords paramount of

creation, have ye bethought yourselves of the backward and downward course which ye are running into the pit of the bestial and the abhorred? Oh, ye miserable mystics! when will ye know that all God's truths and all man's blessings lie in the broad health, in the trodden ways, and in the laughing sunshine of the universe, and that all intellect, all genius, is merely the power of seeing wonders in common things?" \*

But we are told by the advocates of spirit-rapping that these manifestations have been vouchsafed to us for a great religious purpose, necessary at this time—to confute the doctrines of materialism, and to give sensible proofs of the immortality of the soul. "Already," says the author of the Introduction to Mr. Home's Life, "Spiritualism, conducted as it usually is, has had a prodigious effect throughout America, and partly in the Old World also, in redeeming multitudes from hardened atheism and materialism, proving to them, by the positive demonstration which their cast of mind requires, that there is another world—that there is a non-material form of humanity—and that many miraculous things, which they have hitherto scoffed at, are true." To the same effect Mr. Howitt says, "As materialism has made a great advance, this grand old Proteus of Truth has assumed a shape expressly adapted to stop its way. As materialism has tintured all philosophy, spiritualism has spoken out more plainly in resistance of it." A noble purpose, assuredly, if the means were but adequate to the end. But what sort of an immaterialism do these rapping *séances* exhibit, and what kind of an immortality is it which they promise us? What an elevating and cheering prospect is held out to the immortal soul on its release from its earthly tabernacle! To lift tables, knock against wainscots, pinch people's knees, and pull their dresses under the table, daub pictures, play tricks with brandy-and-water, tear up obnoxious magazines, steal pocket handkerchiefs, rap people's heads with guitars, and such like!

If we are not justified in doubting the Christianity of Mr. Home's spirits, we may, at least, on his own showing, set them down as "Christians unattached," since they appear to have faithfully adhered to him through his several phases of belief, first as a member of the Kirk of Scotland, then as a Wesleyan, then as a Congregationalist, then as a catechumen in Swedenborgianism, and finally as a Roman Catholic; though, on his conversion to the last-mentioned faith, he was assured by his confessor that, as he was now a member of the Catholic Church, his power would not return to him. †

\* Ferrier's "Institutes of Metaphysic," pp. 224-5.

† We are told that Mr. Home's last conversion has given great scandal to some of the Protestant organs of Spiritualism in the press, who, however, console themselves with the thought that he may, perhaps, be destined to convert the Pope to a belief in rapping.

I wrote the following reply, expecting, of course, that since the Editor had hitherto acted impartially, he would continue to do so. I gave the M.S. to him; but was told that he should not allow me space for it without I cut it down considerably. "But you should have considered this before, Mr. D—, and have cut down the 'article.' I am quite content to be bound by fair conditions. You gave 'Veritas' a column; allow me to occupy a column."

He carried the M.S. with him, leaving me in a state of perplexity. My next interview with Mr. D— was one of an uncompromising character. If I could crowd a column of matter into the space of a quarter or third of a column, he would give my reply room. This appeared to me more difficult than conjuring, accordingly I went in for the whole space or none, and *none* was my portion. Finding the Eastbourne *Free Press* so magnanimous as to give a column of matter from "Veritas," and disposed to make me small by contrast, I offered to pay for my entire reply as an advertisement. Surely, the *spirit* of "Fair Play" was hovering *away* from Mr. D—. He said he might not object to put it in in the form of an advertisement, a week late. I trust my readers will not class me with the rejected suitors, if they do with the rejected writers.

## TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EASTBOURNE GAZETTE."

### SPIRITUALISM AND SPIRITUALISTS.

MR. EDITOR,—Under the above title you quote from an article in the *Quarterly Review*, which you herald to your readers as "a most clever article;" whether it is a *true* one, remains to be seen. There is certainly a strain of weak satire running through it, which may possibly gratify the weak sensibilities of "Veritas" and those who like him want it all their own way, no matter how facts speak or evidences appeal.

The numerous quotations said to be extracted from Mr. Home's book (I have not a copy to refer to), are, doubtless, *picked* out to offer food for ridicule, and will, probably, have that effect. The *animus* of the writer, however, is better seen in what he *omits* than in what he *extracts*.

The "article" may certainly be pronounced "clever" after it is discovered that all the cleverness lies in turning, what the writer supposes, the worst side uppermost. Any child could do a simple piece of turn-over work.

It is not my place to offer either explanations or apologies for Mr. Home. For *that* which he has put forth in his book, he alone is responsible. He has given the names of many trustworthy witnesses, who have been present at his séances. They have substantially attested his statements. To him and them be the task of proclaiming their own experiences.

Did not "Veritas" take up the cudgels to beat about the bush incited by Mr. Cooper's forcible lecture? Did not Mr. C—

state his own experiences? What need, therefore, was there for "Veritas" to beat about the world for Foreign Spirit-phenomena? Does he for one moment imagine that Mr. Cooper is bound to assert that everything Mr. Home or any other writer on Spiritualism puts forth is either true or false, that, if true, he must call himself a liar, if false, he must consider he stands convicted as one?

If Mr. Cooper assert that a table has moved in his own house, in the presence of witnesses, without human contact; is he necessitated as a direct consequence to gratify "Veritas" by undertaking to further assert that Mr. Home or Mr. Howitt speaks the truth, when one speaks of a spirit exhausting and changing the colour of a glass of brandy and water, and the other tells of a spirit absorbing a glass of beer; "Veritas" must in very truth, find himself in a fix when he needs to run after "The most clever article" in the *Quarterly*.

I once remember hearing of a man who was in the habit of struggling to get the first opportunity of praying aloud at chapel. So eager was he to give vent to his aspirations that he was wont to rise before his turn, and betray his impatience at the length of time occupied by others engaged in prayer. On one occasion, while this same man was on his knees giving energetic expression to his zeal, one of his listeners cried aloud—"Wrestle wi' he! wrestle with the devil, brother!" I apprehend that even "Veritas" would look upon such a scene as disreputable to polite worship, and would scarcely allow a thousand monstrosities of the character to weigh against the truths of religion.

To carry on a perpetual warfare, and, instead of dealing with the questions at issue in a straightforward manner, to pick up every seeming extravagance, and give no attention to facts of the better kind, is generally the policy of weak adversaries.

Spiritualism comes to us not to supplement Christianity, but to verify its truths. It does certainly offer a few explanations of mysteries which have for ages puzzled the human mind. It *proves* that this life is not all, as materialistic philosophers have supposed. It is essentially fitted to modify both the extravagances of Theology and Materialism. It is not very generally palatable. It is nevertheless true.

I assert the truths of Spiritualism to be worthy of the *true*, because I have had illustrative proofs of their reality. Has "Veritas" contrary experiences? If not he needs much patience and perseverance before he condemns.

The "clever" writer in the *Quarterly* quotes from Professor Ferrier on "clairvoyance and spirit-rapping," this dainty piece of scurrility:—

*"These however, are not to be set down, at least so it is to be hoped, among the normal and catholic superstitions incident to humanity. They are much worse than the worst form of the doctrine of materiality. These aberrations betoken a perverse and*

*prurient play of the abnormal fancy groping for the very holy of holies in kennels running with the most senseless and God-abandoned abominations. Our natural superstitions are bad enough; but thus to make a systematic business of fatuity, imposture, and profanity, and to imagine all the while, that we are touching on the precincts of God's spiritual kingdom, is unspeakably shocking. Ye who make shattered nerves and depraved sensations the interpreters of truth, the keys which shall unlock the gates of Heaven, and open the secrets of futurity—Ye who inaugurate disease as the prophet of all wisdom, thus making sin, death, and the devil the lords paramount of creation, have ye bethought yourselves of the backward and downward course which ye are running into the pit of the bestial and the abhorred? Oh, ye miserable mystics! when will ye know that all God's truths and all man's blessings lie in the broad health, in the trodden ways, and in the laughing sunshine of the universe, and that all intellect, all genius, is merely the power of seeing wonders in common things?"*

The Professor thus disposes of the Spiritual Question. But in so doing he has simply concentrated, in a small compass, the spleen of "Veritas," and the "clever" writer in the *Review*. But there is one thing to be considered. The facts are against him. Let us see how Professor Ferrier's Rhodomantade would read thus:—

The doctrines of an eternal, unprogressive Hell "are not to be set down to the normal and catholic superstitions incident to humanity. They are much worse than the worst form of the doctrine of immateriality. These aberrations betoken a perverse and prurient play of the abnormal fancy, groping for the very devil of devils in kennels running with the most senseless and God-abandoned abominations. Our natural superstitions are bad enough; but thus to make a systematic business of fatuity, imposture, and profanity, and to imagine all the while, that we are touching on the precincts of the Devil's spiritual kingdom, is unspeakably shocking. Ye who make shattered nerves and depraved sensations the interpreters of truth, the keys which shall unlock the gates of Hell, and open the secrets of futurity—ye who inaugurate disease as the prophet of all wisdom, thus making sin, death, and the devil the lords paramount of creation; have ye bethought yourselves of the backward and downward course which ye are running into the pit of the bestial and the abhorred? Oh, ye miserable mystics! when will ye know that all God's truths and all man's blessings lie in the broad health, in the trodden ways, and in the laughing sunshine of the universe, and that all intellect, all genius, is merely the power of seeing wonders in common things?"

The chameleon has now changed colour, and I venture to suspect looks none the worse.

Professor Ferrier and his admirers had better take first the beam from their own eyes, or they will fail to perceive the mote in ours.

Good heavens! to tell us that "intellect, genius, is merely the power of seeing wonders in COMMON things!"

Why, such philosophy sets discovery at rest, or at least confines it to the *common*. How long has Professor Ferrier learnt that piece of astounding wisdom that intellect and genius can see no wonders in that which is *uncommon*?

It will be essential for the honour of "Veritas," that he pitch Professor Ferrier over (I mean figuratively) or else that profound metaphysician will injure his cause far more than the "clever" writer will benefit it. But I beg pardon. It was the "clever" writer, and not "Veritas," that dragged Professor Ferrier from his obscurity into notice. Ah! but Veritas sent the article to the *Gazette*, and therefore endorses it. The *bolus* was ready made, his swallow was large, and he found little difficulty in *bolting* it.

Pray, Mr. Editor, accept my thanks for the space you have generously accorded Spiritualism. You have warned me "the *Gazette*" is not to be a spiritual magazine, the opportunity for further debate, therefore, as far as you are concerned, is at an end.

I trust, however, that our valiant friend "Veritas" may find some other channel through which he can play out his "*little game*." It is to be regretted if he cannot once more make prominent Professor Ferrier, if not the "clever" writer, in order to explain how he could allow himself to swallow the Professor's magnificent knowledge-pill.

The "clever" writer's concluding paragraphs are just in the old-fangled style—ridiculous and stale.

"*What an elevating and cheering prospect is held out to the immortal soul on its release from its earthly tabernacle, to lift tables, knock against wainscots, pinch people's knees,*" &c. What his own idea may be regarding the occupation of the spirit hereafter, we are of course not favoured to know—neither do we accept the hypothesis that spirit-manifestations have only an apparently ludicrous aspect. There is a *motive* in the communications. The disembodied spirit finds possibly not so much delight in lifting tables, pinching knees, &c., as in *communicating* with mortals. There are *higher* manifestations which the "clever" writer and "Veritas" have overlooked, by which messages of glorious import come to us.

The embodied and the disembodied spirits have kindred affinities, and are probably nearer to us than we have been taught to imagine. How are we to know they are near us without a manifestation?

I cannot in this place go into the question of mediumship, or I could offer other facts than those mentioned in the *Review*, supporting the idea that the table tipplings and such like phenomena are of the *lower* order of manifestations, but are quite as necessary as are the phenomena of the *higher*.

Let "Veritas" and his friends, Professor Ferrier and the

“clever” writer, give us a prohibition from the gospels against our receiving visitations from departed friends or guardian angels, instead of adopting stale and ragged objections which can only be attributed to “shattered nerves and depraved sensations.” In his pilgrimage “Christian” had to pass through “the Slough of Despond” before he could reach the kingdom. Is it not strange that the progress to the pure is through the impure? The history of the Church may afford us another illustration of this great truth. How came it possessed of its enormous revenues? did they flow into its coffers spontaneously from its *true* adherents? Or were they seized upon and held fast by State authority?

The Slough of Despond—the mire of Theology—must all be passed through before the kingdom can be reached.

Will “Veritas” or the “clever” writer say that Christian could see no brighter bourne beyond the Slough of Despond? If not, how dare he presume that the Spiritualist can perceive no brighter immortality for the soul, beyond the phenomena of table movements, &c.?

The last part of the selected portion of the “most clever article” deals out a full dose of anti-spiritual bitterness, by introducing Mr. Home in the various characters of Wesleyan, Congregationalist, Swedenborgian, and Roman Catholic. I am not in a position to know whether Mr. Home is culpable in these particulars or not. But who supposes him infallible, or even the spirits that are said to be with him?

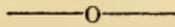
A thousand facts of the kind could not upset the minutest particle of spiritual Truth. If I designed I could cite a list of the names of men who have undergone changes of doctrinal faith, even more various than Mr. Home is said to have done, which would half fill the *Gazette*. But would “Veritas” and his “clever” friend, the Quarterly Reviewer, accept facts of individual apostacy as cogent reasons to make them apostates?

J. H. POWELL.

Eastbourne, February 4th, 1864.

THE END.

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