

Experiences of Spiritualism;

OR,

THE ADJURATION OF SPIRITS:

WITH A THEORY ON TABLE-RAPPING
AND OTHER PHENOMENA.

BY A LATE MEMBER OF MR. HOME'S
SPIRITUAL ATHENÆUM.

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"Beloved, believe not every spirit; but try the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

"Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

"And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of Antichrist, whereof you have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world."

1 St. John iv. 1, 2, 3.

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EXPERIENCES OF SPIRITUALISM.

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It was whilst suffering under the heaviest trial a mother's heart can be called upon to endure, that I entered upon my first experience of Spiritualism.

Its views were not in the least strange to me, for my lost darling had ever seemed near—near as the air I breathed; and I well knew we were “encompassed by a *cloud of witnesses*,” not *angels* only, but redeemed, glorified saints.

Thinking thus, and feeling thus, I was following up one of the wishes that I knew had been strong in my child's heart (that of having a separate likeness of herself to give to those she specially cared for), when the subject of Spiritualism was introduced by the wife of the artist to whom I entrusted the work—a believer herself, and with Miss N——, a powerful “medium,” in her house.

I plunged at once into the delightful, intoxicating science (for I know no other name by which to call it); and when (*without asking*) I

was informed that my darling was in the "sixth sphere,"—in glory and bliss unspeakable—I could not, neither did I try to, resist the longing desire to hold communion with her.

Nothing, however, particularly striking, except messages through the brother of Mrs. S——,* in the spirit-land, reached me, until one Sunday Mr. C—— had been specially occupied with our two little boys, and was passing through the hall with the elder one, when *both* distinctly heard on the stairs the footfalls of a playful child—our lost treasure, as they instinctively felt—passing to the first landing, and stopping at the nursery door.

Thus Mr. C—— and our eldest boy were *both* the media in this case, and I felt quite depressed at my own comparative obtuseness.

Shortly after, however, having to arrange about the completion of a miniature, I went alone to the artist's house, and finding it was the dinner-hour, I went up to the portrait gallery, where all the manifestations took place, and chose to wait there in the twilight.

I felt inexpressibly sad, and my mind, filled as usual, with thoughts of my child,—seemed literally to *realize* her presence, and hold communion with her. In about half an hour Mrs. S—— and the medium entered, and, quite to my surprise, proposed we should have a short *séance*. On sitting down, before we had time to

* The artist's wife.

breathe, raps came, and Mrs. S——, supposing they were from her spirit-brother, began asking questions. She soon, however, found herself puzzled and mistaken.

The raps were quite different from before—delicate beyond expression, light and rapid.* They might be compared to the touch of a cedar pencil on the surface of a table from which the cloth had been removed.

“Were they *my child’s*?”—quick, gentle, but eager affirmative raps.

Thrilled and excited beyond measure, I gave myself up to the fascination of the moment, and spoke as a mother would speak to a long-absent child. I even heard her little footsteps running *to* and *around* me, and I was so totally overpowered that I laid my head on the table, and shed tears of passionate yearning and love. I so longed to have my darling again!—and to have her even *thus* seemed so sweet! All this time the raps seemed under my very hand, as if to comfort and cheer me by their love and nearness.

The presence of a dear baby I lost two years before was announced by *tiny* raps, and its little footsteps, *with* hers, sounded as “good-night” before I left; coming apparently high above my head, and passing completely down into the street.

* The raps were given according to the mutual understanding or compact, agreed to between the medium and spirits, in the following way:—one rap, “no;” two raps, “doubtful;” three raps, “yes.”

All the questions and answers on this occasion were perfect; we were told the steps heard by her papa on the Sunday previous were hers, and "a little air was rapped on the table, and recognized by Mrs. S——, the medium, and myself, as 'Home, sweet home!'" her favourite air, and one which she used to play on the harmonium as a duet, with her papa. Mrs. S—— offered to sing it. A vehement "*No!*" was given, the air was recommenced, and played through perfectly.

I gave myself up to the delight and consolation of the moment, and went home in a state of mind that baffles all description—nothing in life could equal it,—and in no after *séance* did I ever experience feelings of such unalloyed happiness.

For the next fortnight I was unable to leave the house, but Mr. C—— took two friends of his to Mrs. S—— (complete sceptics in Spiritualism), and manifestations were repeated, but those coming from our child were so very brief, that Mrs. S—— could not help remarking, "She cannot remain long absent from her mamma."

No footsteps were heard, but she *wished* her papa to *sing*, "Home, sweet home!" accompanying him throughout with raps, increasing and diminishing in power as the air was soft or loud, just as she had been in the habit of marking "*crescendo*," or "*decrecendo*," by the expression stop of the harmonium.

The other gentlemen, in spite of their deter-

mination not to be convinced—regarding the whole as *trickery*,—had communications from deceased relatives, heard *heavy* footsteps, and were very much disturbed the same night by incessant movements of the drapery of their bed. Mr. C——, meeting them again on the following day, and alluding to the *séance*, one of them said, “I wish E—— had never had anything to do with his grandmother” (from whom the communications purported to be); “we have had no rest all night!”

And now I hasten to the last three days of our “experience.”

On the Friday Mr. C—— purchased a small table expressly for experiments, and it immediately responded to his touch, and, what was more striking, to the touch of *one hand alone*.

In former years he had tried table-turning, but never alone,* and never with any serious thought. *This* surpassed all his previous experience. From the Friday to Sunday we had a constant succession of the most beautiful manifestations, the table answering (*in this case*) by tilting and rapping on the floor, or against a large centre table.

On Sunday, when the children were saying

* It was always by way of amusement; asking trivial questions, the answers of which used to pass away time, and greatly delight all present, especially young people. Once, however, having been deceived by the table, and asking *why* it told such untruths, the answer came, “Because I am *Beelzebub*!”

their catechism to me (the table being present). it rapped in the most eager manner to *anticipate* their answers to many of the questions, and in a note I give the principal questions and their answers.*

The story of "Elijah" was chosen from amongst many others named, and afterwards that of "Joseph and his brethren."

So completely absorbed were we, that in the evening Mr. C—— went out expressly to bring *another* friend, and convince him, by proofs, of what we so firmly believed.

On this occasion a communication came, purporting to be from a deceased brother of this gentleman, and his *mental* questions were answered, as ours had been,—a thing which so startled him that he asked, in the most solemn manner, "Are you *truly* the spirit of my youngest brother F——?" On which, to our great surprise, a very emphatic "No!" was rapped.

"Are you a spirit *representing* him?"

"Yes."

This was the first cloud in our spiritual horizon—the first feeling of doubt and uncertainty

* "How is the apostles' creed divided?"

"Into *twelve* parts or articles" (twelve raps).

"How many Gods are there?"

"ONE."

"Are there more persons than one in God?"

"Three persons."

"How many *natures* are there in Jesus Christ?"

"Two."

that troubled our perfect faith. But the next day we were led to believe that we had no more spirits "*representing*" others, and more proofs, if possible, were given of the identity of *our* pure and blessed spirit-child.

The school which our child attended, close to our own house, re-opened on the Monday, and from that day until the following Thursday, when the climax of all arrived, nothing could be obtained from the table during the hours of morning study.

Regularly from a quarter-past nine until half-past twelve,* the children's dinner-hour, there was silence; then raps again, and conversation the rest of the day.

We arranged to have our first *séance* with the medium, Miss N——, at our own house, on the Thursday,† and I received a note from Mrs. S——, saying that it was "agreeable to *all parties*" (meaning *spiritual* ones) that Thursday should be the day, and informing me that, although they had two other invitations for the same week, they were "permitted" to go *nowhere* but to us.

* When Mr. C—— asked where she had been, the table spelt, as before described, "F——."

† The names of persons to be invited were given, eight in number; but owing to the short notice, the Rev. Mr. —— and his wife were unable to avail themselves of the invitation, whilst Mr. B—— (the gentleman who had seen the manifestations the preceding Sunday) declined joining the *séance*, saying, "*J'ai peur*." Miss F——, the principal of the school, was detained at home by a violent attack of neuralgia.

On the preceding day (Wednesday) we had scarcely any manifestations.

About four in the afternoon the table *walked* (if I may use the expression) *wearily* into the drawing-room, and, on being questioned, spelt "I gath— flowers!"

We guessed the end of "gath—" (*gathered*), and on asking, "Are we then to receive flowers?" the answer was rapped, "Yes, one for mamma and one for papa."

"Is the *séance* to be a dark one?" we then inquired.

"No."

I had been requested by Miss N—— to send her "something I was wearing at the time." "They" (the spirits) "wished it," she said, and my "*flounced petticoat*" was particularly specified; but not having one exactly answering to that description, I inquired from *our* table what I should send, and after suggesting a great many things, which were all negatived, a large jet cross, given to me years ago by my mother, was fixed on. Accordingly, it was sent to Miss N——.

Strange to say, owing to the several disappointments explained in the preceding note, the only person present on Thursday evening, besides ourselves, Mrs. S——, and the medium, was a dear friend of mine, Mrs. B——, whom we were expressly told *not* to ask, "*lest it should make her ill.*"

However, she risked the chance of illness, and came, and whilst I was dressing, ran up into my

room, and remained chatting until Mrs. S—— and Miss N—— came. I then proposed going downstairs, and, intending to extinguish the lights on the dressing-table, I said, as they passed out, "I will follow you immediately."

Miss N—— turned back to assist me; and almost at the moment she was engaged in putting out the candles, I stooped to pick up a brush from the rug. In the very act of stooping, something fell on my head with a kind of rushing sound. Miss N—— screamed, and I called out, "What is it?" at the same time putting up my hand to find out what had struck me.

The *ground was strewed with flowers*, or, rather, the *leaves of flowers*.

Every one ran upstairs to see what was the matter, and by the fire-light we found two beautiful white and red camellias, scattered to pieces by the fall, and wet with dew, or (as we afterwards thought), as if they had been *kept in water* since the previous day, when we had been told by the raps, "*I gathered flowers.*"

The sensation I experienced was as if the flowers had been thrown down from a considerable height.

Besides one of them, which seemed to have been scattered by falling on my head, another rested on the mantelpiece, the larger leaves being shaken off apparently by the same cause, some being actually found in a bath that stood under the bed.

I am thus particular, because many persons would fancy Miss N—— (the medium) had brought them with her, and thrown them in the manner described; but besides the fact that she is singularly *bond fide*, and was *herself* startled, it was utterly impossible that she could have thrown them from the place where she stood to all those different parts of the room.

Mr. C—— afterwards told me that he had heard *three raps* as he sat in the drawing-room, about the time the flowers were thrown, and had the strongest impulse to go upstairs, but did not. Had he done so, my belief is, that one of the camellias would have been thrown to him.

But to proceed with my "strange story."

On going to the drawing-room, it was proposed immediately to sit down at the large centre table (first carefully removing the aquarium, which had been specially objected to, by raps), and begin our *séance*.

Mrs. S—— and Miss N—— sat on opposite sides; Mrs. B—— between them on one side, and Mr. C—— and myself on the other.

Very soon light raps were heard. I looked at Miss N——, and noticed that she became very uneasy and agitated. She said, "I do not know what is the matter, for I never felt so greatly excited and nervous before."

Soon I noticed that she kept constantly looking *behind* ME, and an irrepressible thrill of fear crept over me. The expression of her face said so

plainly that she saw something we did not see, whilst her silence only heightened my own nervous dread. Presently she whispered something to Mrs. B——, and then *both* looked towards the place I occupied.

I begged Miss N——, to tell me frankly if she saw anything, and she said, "I certainly *do* see something, but I cannot divest myself of the idea that it is a delusion." I entreated her to tell me if she saw my child, and she answered, "Yes. *Where* is she?" I exclaimed. "Close to you."

Then the alphabet was proposed, and we asked, "Are you there, darling?" "Yes!" "*Where* are you?"

"I *lay** on dear mamma's shoulder."

Miss N—— said, in evident amazement, "CAN'T you feel anything?"

But I did *not*, although *she took my hand in hers*, and laid it on my shoulder, where she said the beautiful shape of my child was leaning.

Soon after she exclaimed, "She is not there now, she has moved."

We then asked, "Where are you, darling?" and the answer immediately came, "Dear papa, I lay on your shoulder, I am surprised that Miss N—— should call it a delusion!"

This struck us all very much, and we asked

* This mistake in spelling was, according to our interpretation, intended as a proof of identity, our child being far from perfect in that branch of her studies when she died.

N—— to describe exactly what she saw. She said that our child was dressed in white, and her beautiful hair falling over us, as she reclined on our shoulder, adding, in a way that thrilled us to the heart, that she had turned her little face towards Miss N—— as she nestled in my arms, and the resemblance to her picture, framed and hung up (life size) in the drawing-room the very night before, was absolutely startling.

“Mr. S—— must have been *inspired* when he drew it,” was her final remark.

Mrs. B—— then exclaimed, “Come to me, dear O——!” but Miss N—— saw nothing, and we could only obtain, in reply, the message, “Dear Mrs. B——,” not a word more. Shortly afterwards (and still communicating with Mrs. B——), “Ave Maria” was spelt, and Mr. C——, thinking the litany of the Blessed Virgin was asked for, got up and played it, raps accompanying him the whole time.

Miss N—— still appeared fearfully nervous, and on being asked to see if our darling was standing beside her papa, she glanced hurriedly round, as if afraid to look. But she saw nothing; and here I may add, that she told us nothing was seen whilst the raps sounded, adding in explanation, and speaking of our child, “She cannot be in two places at once.”

Mr. C—— had placed his hand on the *little* table, and Mrs. B—— went with him to the harmonium to see its efforts to play, by striking itself on the keys.

We were told by tiny raps, that it was the spirit of our baby boy.

Presently it moved, with Mr. C——'s hand motionless on it, to the large table, and *leaned* against me, and as I placed my hand caressingly on it, my *other* hand being still on the centre table, the cloth of which was turned up, we asked if our child could touch us, and whether we *should* have this much-desired manifestation. An affirmative answer was given, and almost immediately I became conscious of a feeling as if something was sitting on my dress, under the table. Then almost directly I was touched *twice*, and my dress gently pulled.

But here I must pause to add, that although greatly excited and moved to tears, I had an uncontrollable feeling of repulsion to that touch, for it was *not like* her touch, and I could not rid myself of the impression that it was *not* her touch.

Mr. C—— was very anxious to have a similar manifestation, but for some minutes there was a complete cessation, as always seems to be the case when any special manifestation takes place. Mrs. S—— kept saying, "They are getting ready something for us," &c., &c., and these moments of anticipation were to me the most intensely trying of all.

A "*battery*" was proposed, formed by all joining hands, and Mr. C—— changed places and

went next Miss N——, whilst I remained between himself and Mrs. S——, standing up, for I was too frightened to sit down.

Still nothing occurred.

But when Mr. C—— placed his hand on the little table, he was almost immediately touched, as I had been, and, bolder than myself, he urgently wished for further manifestations, entreating, "Come on my knee, darling,"—and this again and again.

The table moved back with noise and effort, away from Mr. C——, and pushing Mrs. B—— on the opposite side, as if it was making room for his request to be granted; but beyond a feeling of intense cold above the knees, nothing further took place. I may, however, here add, that the greatest unwillingness was manifested by raps to our leaving the table, and I am convinced that had we remained longer, manifestations of the most extraordinary kind would have taken place.

But both Mrs. S—— and Miss N—— were evidently anxious to conclude the *séance*, the latter being on a visit to a sick spiritualist friend, Mrs. B——y, and having been four hours without the slightest refreshment. So all we could ask for was, that we might hear the little footsteps before we rose.

Footsteps, accordingly, sounded on the floor (not *under* the table, but at our side); but again, I declare, they were not like those I heard at Mrs. S——'s house,—they were *not* the footsteps

of my child. How to explain my conviction on this point, I know not; but after reading the concluding part of our "week's experience," it may not seem so surprising when I say that whilst sitting at the table I had earnestly prayed, and was only deterred by a feeling of false shame from asking Mr. C—— to begin the *séance* with prayer, as Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall are always in the habit of doing.

Mr. C—— afterwards told me, that he wished I had done this; for so completely absorbed was he in the events of the evening, and so perfect was his trust, that the idea never for a moment entered his mind.

"Whene'er across this sinful flesh of mine
I draw the Holy Sign,
All good thoughts stir within me, and assert
Their slumbering strength divine.

And who can tell but hateful spirits round,
For their brief hour unbound,
Shudder to see, and wail their overthrow."

Lyra Apostolica.

Whilst corroborating, by my own testimony, the veracity of the above statements, having been myself an eye-witness to every one of them—nay, the "medium," as usually termed by spiritualists, through which the manifestations have been obtained; I shall undertake to give a simple but strictly-correct account of the "finale" of this week's experience in Spiritualism.

J. O. C.

On Friday, January 25th, being the day after the *séance*, as soon as I came down, and even before going to breakfast, I went to place my hand on my small round table, which had of late become to me as it were an inseparable friend, with whom I always felt the same longing to converse. Indeed, I was under the strongest conviction that, through that medium, however inexplicable it might be, I was truly put into communication with the spirit of my departed

child. Most earnestly did I wish the table to move, most eagerly did I entreat the spirit to manifest its presence, by raps or otherwise,—but all was in vain, and no communication of any kind was made; the table did not attempt even to make the least movement under my hand. I sat down at breakfast, rather despondent, but still having the table as usual at my side, my left hand resting on it, the best part of the time expecting, of course, the coming of the spirit. Breakfast was over, and no manifestation had yet come. I took my table—my companion, I might say—with me, into the drawing-room, and there sat down, my hand resting on it, for more than an hour, whilst reading or writing, as I had done previously; for, it must be observed, that it was generally when I least thought of it, that the shaking or rapping of the table apprised me of the presence of the spirit. That morning, however, all was disappointment; and I began to feel alarmed lest, for some reason unknown to me (as all is mystery in Spiritualism), I had lost my “power.”

Having returned home at twelve o'clock, after the absence of an hour and a half, I put my hand on the table again, asking it to walk, as usual, to the dining-room. Disappointment again!—no rap could be felt or heard. After having thus waited patiently for about a quarter of an hour, in spite of the repeated intimation from the servant and the children, that “dinner was on the

table," &c., &c., and just when I was going to give it up in despair, the table suddenly lifted itself up, giving repeated light and gentle raps on the floor, which were unmistakably the announcement of the presence of the child's spirit. On my *wishing* it to "walk" to the dining-room, it started at once; the steps of a person "*walking*" being imitated by two of the legs advancing alternately on the floor, whilst the other leg remained pointing out, as it were, the way onwards, and never touching the ground. I was struck by the heaviness of the steps, and remarked they were different from what I had hitherto heard; and certainly very unlike the footfalls of a young child. I exclaimed, "This is *not* the spirit of my child! if so, I want no other manifestation;" and, at the same time, stopped the table. It moved on again in spite of me, and not being able to get any positive answer, either by means of raps or the alphabet, I was reluctantly led to the dining-room, fully persuaded that my table was going to take its usual place, at the left side of my chair, close to the dining-table, there to join in our conversation, &c., &c. But, to my great surprise, it suddenly took a different direction, turning at right angles, when it came near the place, which the innocent child used to occupy. My first impulse, I confess, was to offer resistance, thinking there was some mistake, and inadvertently attempted to make it turn again, in what I considered to be the right direction. In spite

of my efforts, wishes, and pressure, the table went on, *sneakingly*, if I might use the expression, to hide itself in one of the corners of the room, away from the dining-table, and as near as possible to the crevice of the door. There, all movement ceased. This was apparently the place which the spirit meant to occupy. Was it to give me another proof of the identity of the child? as, sometimes, our darling had been sent away from her own seat at dinner, for some little trifling childish misbehaviour. This construction might have been put on that strange manifestation; and the children smiled, unconscious, of course, of the real meaning of the fact. As for myself, the suspicions which had already alarmed me, increasing more and more in my mind, I said, bending my head over the table, as if in the performance of a sacred duty, "If thou art not the spirit of my child O——, 'march' out of the house." In my excitement I used the word "march," and the table did indeed "march." I cannot compare the noise the two legs produced in moving on the floor, to anything else but the loud and well-measured footfalls of a heavy dragoon, pacing up and down under the influence of some violent excitement, or strongly-determined resolution. At the word of command, therefore, the table moved on, literally shaking everything in the room, and went, my hand always resting upon it, to another corner, near the drawing-room door, where it stopped. Being ordered to move on, it suddenly

walked backwards a few steps, then turned round and led me to the right-hand side of the window, between the wall and the damask curtain; from whence, after a short pause, it took its final resting-place in the darkest corner of the room; that being a recess between the left hand side of the window and the fire-place, and the curtain keeping the light off. I repeated, and almost in the same words, my wish, order, and command, that "the spirit should leave the place;" but in vain; the table remained motionless. All doubt seemed at once to vanish from my mind, and the full persuasion came to me, as sudden as lightning—a ray of light, I firmly believe, from the mercy-seat,—“This is *not* the spirit of my innocent child!” Solemnly adjuring the spirit, which evidently was present, although refusing to declare its identity,—“Do you confess that Christ has manifested Himself in the flesh?”* (a violent rap shook the floor),—“No.” “Then you are not of God?” “No.” “In the name of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, unclean spirit, accursed devil, I command thee to go out

* It must be remembered that this text of John, “Believe not every spirit, but *try the spirits*,” is continually quoted by spiritualists, and may be considered as the “motto” of Spiritualism. Having, therefore, deeply studied the subject, with the same motto, for a period of upwards of fifteen years, before arriving to the climax of this “Week’s Experience,” I have naturally been led, in the course of my various inquiries, to become acquainted with the forms of exorcisms, and found them ready at hand when needed.

of this house." The table obeyed, walking into the drawing-room, the folding-door being open, and hurried its steps, when I repeated the adjuration. In the middle of the room I pronounced the name of "Jesus," when suddenly the table slid from under my hand, the space of about two yards. . . . I followed it, but it fell down heavily, reminding me of the text, that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth."

Taking up the table, I again adjured the spirit, in the name of God, to leave the house: and in a few steps the table reached the door leading to the hall, violently knocking against it, and incessantly shaking the handle, as if anxious to be let out. I opened the door, and the table, resuming its truly horrible steps, "marched" through the hall, in the direction of the street-door, at which it began knocking, shaking the handle, &c., &c., as it had just done, inside the drawing-room.

Before letting the spirit out, I repeated the text of John, "Do you confess that Christ has manifested himself in the flesh?" One knock on the door, three times as loud as before, emphatically answered, "No!" and the table knocked again, or, rather, roughly shook itself, on the handle. I opened the door, wondering at the time why a spirit should require a door to be opened to get out of a house.* The door being

* I may be permitted to remark that every sincere in-

shut again, the table remained perfectly still in the hall; although, my hand resting upon it, I wished whatever spirit was present to manifest itself, by knocks or otherwise. Leaving the table in the drawing-room, I came back to the

quirer into the phenomena of Spiritualism ought carefully to study the various passages of the Bible on the subject of "*spirits*," "*familiar spirits*," "*witchcraft*," "*possessions*," "*casting out of devils*," necromancy, &c., &c.; as we may often find, by analogy, the *possibility*, if not the full and satisfactory explanation of apparently inexplicable phenomena produced under our eyes. . . . For instance, Christ proved His Divinity by casting out devils, in His own name; and we are told that they only obey *in the name of God*. But this was often done, under circumstances no less striking than the harmless, though apparently senseless condition of opening a door. "*A certain man had a devil . . . and Jesus commanded the unclean spirit to go out of that man. . . . The devils, therefore, went out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were stifled*" (St. Luke viii. 33).

I confess I do not see *why* spirits should require to enter into a herd of swine to be let out of a man, and the herd be stifled in a lake. . . . Again, I do not see why, when the devil has taken possession of a man, he should make no worse use of his power than occasionally "*to have that man bound in chains, and, afterwards breaking the bonds, to drive him into the desert*" (St. Luke viii.)

Although missing the "*dignus iudice nodus*," I still admit the facts, on the authority of the Bible. In the case of the door being required to be open to let the spirit out of my house, I admit the fact on the evidence of my senses: seeing is believing.

On the other hand, conditions of the most extraordinary and inconsistent character are being daily put to spiritualists, and carefully submitted to when spirits are to be evoked. Can we not reasonably infer that conditions equally extraordinary may be put to the law of nature by which spirits are to be expelled? (For further explanation on this subject, see "*THEORY*," p. 36.)

dining-room, where my wife, children, and even the servants, were, of course, waiting for my return, in a state of great excitement: having witnessed all that had passed, heard all the knockings, and specially the last one, at the street-door. I hardly dared to speak on the subject, for fear of alarming the children; and I thought very little of my dinner. Getting up from the table after a short time, I went alone into the drawing-room, and shut the folding-doors, to prevent any further alarm or comment. Having put myself in communication with the table, by the usual means, I expressed the wish that "if there were any spirit present it would manifest its presence." The table softly gave the sweet, welcome, and gentle little raps, which I had not heard for more than twenty-four hours, although constantly asking for them: for it must be remembered that on the whole of Thursday, up to half-past seven in the evening, that is to say, the time appointed for the "*séance*," I had been unable to obtain a single rap; a disappointment which, to our idea, was simply explained by the message received: that the child was "gathering flowers," and preparing for some wonderful manifestations.

Alone, therefore, in the drawing-room, I received, as I was naturally led to consider it, a proof of the identity of my child. On my asking, "Are you my child?" the table gently rapped three times on the floor, meaning "Yes." Opening the folding-door again, and my heart

full of sincere joy, I exclaimed, speaking to my wife: "Thank God! the bad spirit is gone; this is now the spirit of our darling: how different her steps are from the others!" and at the same time I followed the table in the direction of the dining-room.—Had we not been told that bad spirits sometimes come to us, as well as good ones?—A doubt, however, arose in my mind, and I repeated: "Are you *really* the spirit of my child who died five or six months ago, and whom I believe to be in the bosom of God?" Three light raps immediately gave the answer, "Yes." "In the name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I command thee to say if thou art the spirit of my child?" "No." The rap was so loud, that it startled everybody in the room. I went on: "In the name of God, was I in communication with the spirit of my child last night?" "No!" another loud rap unmistakably gave the answer. "Go on, unclean spirit; by the Holy Trinity, I adjure thee to answer, "Was it my child who brought the flowers?" "No." "Was it my child whom Miss N—— described as laying on my shoulder?" "No." Each negative was expressed by the same loud single rap. "Then it was a bad spirit representing the shape of my innocent child?" Three distinct and loud raps were heard, "Yes." "Then I have been deceived throughout!" "Accursed devil! by the living God, I adjure thee to speak the truth: Has the spirit of my child *ever* been put in communication with myself or her mother,

through the means of this or any other table?" "No, never!" "It has then been deception from beginning to end, and we have been the dupes of the spirit of darkness, taking the appearance of a spirit of light. By the living God, by the true God, by the holy God, who is to come to judge the living and the dead, I exorcise thee, unclean spirit, accursed devil!"

At once, and without any need of further order or command on my part, the table "marched" to the door leading to the hall, and then to the front door. I need not repeat the frightful manifestations which took place whenever the name of "Jesus" was pronounced, or the adjuration repeated. Let it be sufficient to say that the scene at the first adjuration, as already described, was re-enacted four times in the course of three-quarters of an hour: leaving me *clearly* to understand that five evil spirits had been expelled from my house, in the name of God, rendering due homage to the name of our Redeemer.

At half-past one o'clock, my usual occupations called me away. On my return home, at half-past five o'clock, having *again* "tried the spirits," I found that I was deceived, and no truthful answer could be obtained as long as my questions were *not* asked "in the name of God." Gentle little raps having announced the presence of a spirit, the answer "Yes!" was unvariably given to my first inquiry: "Are you the spirit of my child?" But an emphatic "No!" by a loud rap, answered

the same question, when accompanied with the adjuration, "In the name of God." Four times, again, in the course of three hours, evil spirits had to yield to the Supreme Power, in which they believe, and in whose presence they tremble, and *not one* of the spirits that came to us by means of Spiritualism had proved to be "of God." It was then between ten and eleven o'clock at night; the children had gone to bed, and I and my wife were alone in the dining-room. We both agreed as to the only path of duty now opened before us, that is, of discontinuing our experiments.

When I first became a member of the "Spiritual Athenæum,"* I declared that, if at any time I discovered that there was, in table-rapping, or Spiritualism in general, anything contrary to the teaching of the Bible, doctrine of Christ, or morals—in short, anything bad in any way whatever—I would, from *that* moment, have nothing more to do with it. Now that the time had come to determine, it cost me the greatest effort to do so: for, I confess, we had spent a week in happy delusion; and, to imaginative, as well as to seriously inquiring minds, the subject of Spiritualism is one of the most fascinating and irresistibly "*entraînant*." To leave it off is, indeed, a sacrifice; and both my wife and myself felt it a heavy one at that moment. The

* The "Spiritual Athenæum" was inaugurated with great *éclat*, January, 1867, at Mr. D. Home's residence.

sacrifice, however, *was* made; and I solemnly promised that thenceforth I would have nothing to do with Spiritualism, except to condemn it and point out to others, as much as it lay in my power, its deceptions and dangers. Accordingly, with a firm but calm determination, taking the table, I broke it to pieces, threw the fragments into the fire, and found no peace till the whole of it had been reduced to ashes. Fulfilling at once the second part of my promise, I wrote to Mrs. S—— and Miss N——, the medium, informing them of what I had done, and begging them to have nothing more to do with table-rapping, &c., &c.: saying that I had arrived at the conclusion they were both deceived, as I myself had been, and that their Spiritualist experiments were most dangerous. I took care that the letter was posted that night, and I felt as if God, in His mercy, would bless us and our children, for what we had done, with a spirit of faith, and for His own glory.

But, according to the doctrine of "Spiritualism," when the Spiritual Telegraph (*sic*) has been once established between this and the other world, any spirit is at liberty to come, even when *not* called for; and evil ones, finding the road already open, become unexpectedly the daily, or rather nightly, visitors of the "media," whom they seem to delight in frightening by sudden and violent knocks on the floor, on the walls, at the head of their bed, &c., &c. . . . I do not believe

in the "Spiritual Telegraph," but I am obliged to confess that my experiments in table-rapping seem to have given to evil spirits a power which they certainly had not before, at least as far as I know, over my house.

At night, after every one had retired, knockings were heard in different directions on the second and third floors; all the bells rang at once; and, for several nights, the servants were alarmed and disturbed beyond description. But I limit myself to what I have *personally* witnessed.

One night (I believe it was on Saturday, January 26th), when I was alone in the dining-room, I heard a loud noise coming from the top of the house, as if one of the empty baths had been dragged up and down on an uncarpeted floor. Now, I knew the servants were all downstairs; and, having sufficient reason to attribute the noise to the intervention of evil spirits, I turned my thoughts to God, and pronounced the words of adjuration. As I was mentally doing so, a sudden knock at the door startled me. "Come in."—Strange fancies crossed my mind as I uttered these words.—The door, accordingly, opened; it was one of the servants coming to ask me if I heard that "fearful noise upstairs." I pacified her, and told her not to mention any of these "noises" to the children, nor even to her mistress, for fear of alarming them; but to tell me, and all would soon be right, as I felt convinced it would.

For a whole week similar nocturnal noises were occasionally repeated, and I can here solemnly declare that each night these noises ceased as soon as the adjuration was pronounced ; and no more disturbances occurred in the course of the *same* night.

On Friday, February 1st, I was attending a large meeting at the "Spiritual Athenæum," having been required by several ladies and gentlemen to give a public account of my week's experience, or what is termed amongst them "mediumship," I related all that had occurred in my house. A small round table, very much like that which I had burnt a week before, served to exemplify the raps, knockings, march, and falling on the ground which accompanied the adjuration.

As I was describing the effect of the name of God over evil spirits, a "lady medium," who was standing near the centre table, suddenly became restless ; her right hand being repeatedly raised up to the level of her head, and abruptly brought down again, as if moved by a powerful electric machine. Her clenched fist nervously knocked on the table, whilst the incessant hissing (produced by the repetition of the word "yes," convulsively uttered), unmistakably informed us that she was in communication with her "familiar spirit." . . . I stopped to inquire what was the matter, when the "lady medium" addressed me in these words : "Mr. C —, had you done at first what you did at last, you would have discovered that it was really the spirit

of your child which visited you." I replied, "What proof can you give of this, when I have been assured to the contrary by the spirits when adjured, in the name of God, to speak the truth?" The "lady medium" again placed her hands on the table; seemed to consult her spirit for a few seconds, and then, turning towards me, she said, her voice shaking with excitement: "Mr. C. —, you have put the cart before the oxen." To which I answered, hardly able to control a smile, "that I sincerely wished I had put 'the oxen before the cart,' as, in that case, I should not have been a whole week in discovering the truth." A general laugh put a stop to the remarks of the lady medium, and I went on undisturbed.

The narrative of my "mediumship" being over, and my apologies given to ladies, lest I should have hurt the feelings of any one, warm discussions and comments began in small circles, which formed themselves in various parts of the two large rooms. Several gentlemen came round me, asking for further explanations and details. I was asked to put my hand on the table and make it rap or turn. "Never!" I said, "except to condemn Spiritualism." I proposed to bring forth, by means of adjuration, the confession of any spirit, whose presence might be manifested, there and then, in the room, through the mediumship of any one; and to prove that they were *all* "evil spirits." But my appeal or challenge

remained unanswered, although there were several persons present who "piqued" themselves on being "media." . . . That night—no one could say why!—no manifestation of any kind could be obtained from the spirits, save through the lady medium, as already described.

The Witch of Endor was alluded to, as a proof that *good* spirits, sometimes, are permitted to appear: Samuel having appeared to the woman and spoken to Saul. But the text itself might be sufficient to prove that it was *not* the spirit of Samuel which was then present; for "the woman saw *gods* coming out of the earth" . . . and the voice said to Saul: "To-morrow thou shalt be with me." These words might be true, from Satan to the sinner Saul; but, would certainly have been a mockery in the mouth of one being with God.

Whatever the belief of spiritualists may be, the diversity of religious views amongst them is certainly to be noticed as a remarkable fact, each individual being told by his or her own familiar spirit that his or her own belief is the right one. All of them, however, agree in one point—*i.e.*, that there is no such thing as eternal punishment. . . .

Instead of temporal punishment, the "Spiritual Teachers" have introduced a new doctrine, which seems, at first sight, to be merely an improvement on the doctrine of Purgatory, as taught by the Roman Catholic Church. For they say

that there are in the next world six spheres, through which every departed spirit keeps on ascending, gradually being more and more purified, until he arrives at the supreme state of happiness—that is, the sixth sphere ;—and, accordingly, a man who died a materialist, and is now supposed to be in communication with his sister on earth, informs her, that it has taken him twenty-five years, to get where he is now (the fourth sphere), and that his sister must lose no time in getting all the communications she may require from him, as he will very soon get up in the sixth sphere, from whence no spirit can communicate with earth, on account of the perfection already obtained by them. Hence, in the first sphere are to be placed, according to the spiritualist teaching, all murderers, idolators, adulterers, thieves, drunkards, sorcerers, &c., &c.

But, after all, this is only for a time ; and all these souls will, in the course of a few years, become the associates and equals of those that are the nearest to the Most Holy and most pure—the God of all justice !

This doctrine, being contrary to the belief of all ages, as well as to the teaching of the Bible, should be, to a Christian mind, an evident proof that a spirit through which such doctrine is conveyed is *not* of God. . . . By their fruits you shall know them.

Moreover—and this is the *last* (but by no means the *least*) striking argument against

spirit-rapping and apparitions, that the *privileges*, or "media," are chiefly to be found where atheism and materialism prevail; and those who, amongst us, have obtained any celebrity in the spiritualist world, are people who, evidently, will never be pointed out as patterns of Christianity. A few exceptional cases may, of course, be found, in which sincere and truly good Christians are sometimes deceived, as we have been ourselves; and we pray that God may open their eyes and touch their hearts: for that is, after all, we are convinced, the only means by which "spiritualists" can ever be brought to abandon their fascinating but most dangerous experiments.

THEORY.

PHENOMENA, as hitherto obtained by means of Spiritualism, are twofold—*objective* and *subjective*.

First. By *objective* phenomena we understand those effects produced on material objects, visible to all present, and to be admitted on the evidence of the senses—such as table-rapping, articles of furniture moving, musical instruments playing without any external cause or hidden machinery. Hands suddenly appearing and disappearing after having been touched by other people than the “media,” and other manifestations of the same kind, must also be considered as *objective*, the phenomena having taken place upon material objects. In all those cases, however inexplicable at first, there has been neither derogation from, nor interruption of, the general laws of creation. The effects have been produced by the application of some natural law—not yet investigated by man, it is true—but known to intelligences superior to ours. Satan, we are told in Holy Scripture, is the “prince of the powers of the air,” and, as such, knows more of the laws of our atmosphere than we do ourselves. These laws, we may infer, are in some measure at his command; and the “power of the air” used to move tables, &c., &c.,

may be nothing but a new development of electricity, the discovery of which, when completed, will, perhaps, make the next generation smile at the credulity and ignorance of our so-called enlightened nineteenth century !

In our opinion, therefore, *objective* phenomena, as now exclusively produced by Spiritualism, may become some day a part of natural science, and be both lawfully and usefully applied. But, in the present state of human knowledge, those phenomena are dangerous and sinful, and must be denounced as the effects of "witchcraft" and "nécromancy," because the "spirits" which are *believed* to produce them are evil spirits. . . . Adjurations in the name of God sufficiently prove this.

Secondly. *Subjective* phenomena are manifestations which are perceivable to "media" only, and can consequently be admitted on no other testimony but their own, such as the shape or shadow of my child lying on my shoulder, and being seen by Miss N——, although invisible to every one else in the room. Another instance may be found in Samuel appearing to the Witch of Endor, although invisible to Saul, who was présent. In these and other similar cases of *subjective phenomena*, the minds of the "media," let them be "witches," "magicians," or *unconsciously* deluded victims, are under the temporary influence of the spirits which they have deliberately evoked. By means of the "power"

which we have already mentioned (and which I at present believe to be electricity in its full development used by Satan and his angels), the organism of the body may have been disturbed,* the brain subsequently affected, and the last and remote effects have been produced on the imaginative faculty of the soul. In that state, that might be called "*Spiritualistic Mesmerism*," the media have seen, as if in a glass, the shape or vision deeply impressed on; and vividly reproduced by, the memory of the fallen intelligence; and we find a familiar illustration of the case in the facts universally admitted that the soul of the mesmeriser and that of the "*mesmerised*" are put in direct communication with one another.

Subjective and *objective* phenomena are almost always produced conjointly; as, for instance, the voice being heard both by Saul and the woman of Endor; the media being bodily raised from the ground, and being seen floating in the air; again, in our case, the table being caused to move as if by the body of my child trying to get on my knee; messages coming by raps on the table, which were heard by every one present, for the purpose of testifying to the veracity and reality of Miss N——'s vision. Under these circumstances my wife and myself were touched by an

* These visions are usually accompanied by unmistakable states of nervous excitement, and are generally followed by a state of prostration.

invisible hand under the table; but *that* was not the touch of a child's hand, as we both agreed after having felt it separately. Was this an *objective* phenomena; *i.e.*, was there a real hand produced, although imperfectly imitated, to touch us; or was it a *subjective* manifestation placing our souls in direct communication with Satan? . . . The very thought makes me shudder. . . . May God forgive us if we have been guilty, and guard us in future against such manifestations!

Good spirits, that is to say, angels and departed souls now with God, I firmly believe, are in communication with us — "I believe in the communion of saints"—but that communication or communion is merely spiritual, *i.e.*, from intelligence to intelligence, from soul to soul. Through these blessed spirits messages are brought from heaven to earth; awake or asleep, the child of God is watched over by the angels. Dreams and visions of saints may be, therefore, in many cases, considered as the whispering of guardian angels or departed friends and relations, now loving us the more, as they are the closer united to the eternal centre of love. By the very fact of these blessed spirits being in a state of perfect happiness, all spiritual, all holy, they can have neither communication with nor power over material elements of earth. For the curse which fell upon Adam and his children, after his sin, has also fallen upon the material world over which he had been appointed to rule

as a king; and it is only from the time of the fall of Adam that Satan has become the "prince of the powers of the air."

By baptism the curse is removed, and the evil spirit expelled both from the body and the soul. And this explains how "possessions," which were so frequent before the coming of Christ, have become much less common since the establishment of Christianity. By special prayers or exorcisms, evil spirits may also be expelled from material and inanimate bodies; and this gives us the explanation of adjurations and exorcisms so frequently used in the primitive church,* as well as the meaning of most of our prayers, both private and public.

Per contra, spiritualist circles, setting themselves against the teachings of Christ, not only increase the power of evil spirits when present, but, moreover, evoke those spirits when absent, using formulas and practices evidently intended for that purpose.

We have heard of "spiritualist meetings"

* We find in the "*Ordo Administrandi Sacramento*," p. 162, the following forms of exorcisms:—"I exorcise thee, creature of *salt*, by the Living God, by the True God, by the Holy God. . . . I exorcise thee, creature of *water*, in the name of God the Father Almighty, in the name of Jesus Christ His Son, our Lord, and by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Innumerable examples of exorcisms might be found in the history as well as in the liturgy of the primitive Church. But *salt* and *water* are sufficient to prove what we have advanced; *i. e.*, that the curse which fell upon Adam has also fallen upon the material world.

beginning with prayer, God being asked to stop or prevent the usual manifestations if they are not pleasing to Him. But what effect can be expected from those prayers, when the very fact of the meeting is an offence against God?"* What right have we to ask for "signs from heaven," when we refuse to believe the "law and the prophets"? Besides, if our theory is right, *i.e.*, that table-rapping and other spiritualist phenomena are the consequence of some natural law, brought in action by evil spirits when evoked under certain conditions, it follows that those conditions being fulfilled (and they are always scrupulously fulfilled) in spirit-circles, the phenomena must necessarily take place; and to expect that the prayer said at the opening of a spiritualist meeting, even when *bonâ fide*, should cause God to interfere, and suspend the universal laws of creation; is, on the part of human beings, if not a folly, at least an unpardonable presumption. We might as well expect that a man who had taken a large dose of deadly poison should not suffer from it because he did not know the danger of it; or because, when knowingly taking it, he prayed to God that

* It would be difficult to say what are the general views of the Church of England on the subject of "Spiritualism;" but I have been lately informed that spirit-circles, table-rapping, &c., &c., have been forbidden by the Pope, bishops, and priests of the Catholic Church, as being dangerous and sinful.

he should be saved from death or suffering! Let that man at first throw away, untasted, the poisonous cup; or, if the poison has been taken, let him have recourse to some other means, generally found in nature, by which the effects of poison will be counteracted and prevented.

Now, following the same comparison, and applying it to what we have done, I say that, having tasted of the poisonous cup of "spiritualism," thereby giving power to evil spirits over us, we have applied another law, revealed to us by God: that in the name of the Supreme "Lawgiver" and "Creator of all things," Satan shall leave the place he had taken possession of. This law, although one of a superior order, comes within the plan of our creation, and its fulfilment may reasonably be expected, provided the conditions of that law have been put in practice.

It may be supposed, of course, that departed spirits, who have passed from earth into *eternal punishment*, produce, sometimes, spiritualist phenomena, both *objective* and *subjective*. But this is a consequence of what we have said: as those spirits, by "falling unprepared into the hands of the living God," have become evil spirits, or demons—the angels or messengers of Satan—and, had I no other reason to believe that my child is now one of the elect of God, it would be to me a source of consolation to remember that "evil spirits, when *compelled, in the name of God*," to speak the truth, confessed that the spirit of my

departed child had never been in communication with me by means of Spiritualism.

I have heard (and that remark was made at the Spiritual Athenæum) that the name of God has been evoked, and spirits adjured, but to no effect. This only confirms another truth of our revelation, *i.e.*, that we must persevere in watching and prayer, lest we should fall a prey to our enemy—success and victory being in this, as well as in almost everything else, promised to faith and perseverance.*

Some people are considered as antagonistic to spiritual manifestations, and, as long as they are present, no phenomena can take place. Those are generally UNBELIEVERS in *Spiritualism*, either on account of a philosophical turn of mind, straightforward common-sense, or sincere and conscientious religious convictions. In those cases one of the conditions, *sine qua non*, is wanting, *i.e.*, the co-operation of the mind, as all spiritualists will readily admit, and therefore the spirits have no power.

Again, if the light is too strong, if there are

* A worthy Christian man, who had been by force of circumstances mixed up in Spiritualism, and attended a *séance* at one of the paid "media's," in London, says that during the night that followed the *séance* he had no rest, on account of violent knockings on the floor. . . . He prayed to God that those noises should cease, if it was His holy will. . . . The same disturbances still took place; but he persevered in prayer; and after a week all noises entirely ceased.

more than five or six persons in the room, the spirits can do nothing.

In these and all similar cases, we may assume that the "powers of the air," or "electricity" (even when known, and used in its full development by Satan), can only be applied under certain conditions or restrictive laws of nature; and that total or partial darkness is one of those conditions; the presence of no more than five or six persons, another condition. . . . We may also infer that, if, at any time, we arrive at the discovery of the means of producing the phenomena which are now the exclusive privilege of evil spirits, it will be under the same conditions of light, number of persons present, &c., &c. . . . The apparently inexplicable disappointments that are daily met with in "spiritual circles" are, therefore, too obvious a confirmation of our theory to require any further argument. Let me only add that, in presence of these universal and unchangeable laws of nature, I cannot, as a Christian, help admiring and bowing down, with feelings of grateful and humble adoration, before the Everlasting Providence of the Almighty who created all things with "order and harmony," and who, looking at His work, could, indeed, say with all truth that, "*He saw that it was good.*"

No real good has yet come to society from "Spiritualism;" and many private individuals and unhappy families are now mourning over its pernicious influence. *This* is not the work of God.

Evil spirits have lately been permitted (perhaps for the *trial* or *punishment* * of a few) to use one of the laws of nature hitherto imperfectly known to us ; but the law itself "*is good.*" . . . Let, therefore, every man of science and deep study take this as a warning—that further and more complete investigation of *that* law remains to be made ; and, no doubt, when their researches have brought the discovery, it will be for the greater welfare of mankind—not only for the purpose of obtaining, through tables and chairs, childish and deceiving answers, † or playing tricks, which, if they are not *primâ facie* obviously dangerous, are, to say the least of them, totally useless, and mere loss of time.

* *Punishment*, in the case of those who, in spite of warnings, still persevere in their sinful practices. *Trial*, in the case of those who are unconsciously deceived, and specially of children—and there are many—who have been made to become "*media.*" Again, in some few exceptional cases, when no culpable means have been used to procure the phenomena ; for we may suppose such trials or *temptations* to be permitted by God. . . . Was not Christ carried by the *devil* to the pinnacle of the temple?—a feat which has not yet, as far as we know, been performed on the greatest *media* of the age.—It would be interesting to know whether those *media* received their *first* manifestation ; or, properly speaking, temptation of the same kind, in the same way as our model, Christ Himself, received it ; *i. e.*, by using the Scriptures and the name of God. They *may* have done so, but I do not see, in that case, why they should be *so sorry* when they have to inform their adepts that they are "*out of power ;*" meaning that they cannot be carried up in the air, and *so happy*, when their power has returned !

† All spiritualists agree upon this point, that the answers given by spirits are sometimes right and sometimes entirely wrong, and cannot therefore be depended upon.

Our views on Spiritualism being all grounded upon Revelation, infidels, materialists, or deists may reject them "*in toto*" and "*a priori*;" but one fact remains evident, even to the most sceptical mind—*i. e.*, my thoughts and mental questions, and those of other people present, were unmistakably known and answered: *Ergo*, we have been put in communication with a spirit or an immaterial agency.

This I consider to be the most striking, and may be to many the *only* proof of spiritual interference in spirit-rapping; and it is, no doubt, from this conclusion drawn from facts of daily experience in Spiritualism, that materialists have sometimes been brought to believe in the existence of spirits, when, by their own avowal, the Bible had failed to do so!

As for the other phenomena, which are merely *objective*, such as tables being raised in the air, musical instruments being played without any apparent cause or hidden machinery; they are *not*, certainly, to be taken as conclusive in themselves; as they may be the mere consequence of natural laws. But we admit them, in the present state of Spiritualism, as corroborative evidence of the presence of spirits in "spiritual circles," when assembled for the purpose of evoking the souls of departed friends or relations, thereby addicting themselves to *necromancy*. For, even in the eyes of those who take for granted that all is natural in table-rapping and other such phenomena, Spirit-

ualists cannot be exonerated of the odious crime of necromancy, as long as they fully believe that, through their own practices and formulas, they are evoking the dead, and that the phenomena are entirely due to the presence and agency of their "familiar spirits."

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THE END.