

THE  
RISE AND PROGRESS  
OF  
SPIRITUALISM IN ENGLAND.

BY  
BENJAMIN COLEMAN.

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REPRINTED FROM THE SPIRITUALIST.

JANUARY, 1871.

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LONDON: PRINTED BY BEVERIDGE & FRASER,  
HOLBORN PRINTING WORKS, HIGH HOLBORN, W.C.

# THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF SPIRITUALISM IN ENGLAND.

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LAST Monday night, at one of the ordinary weekly Spiritualistic meetings at the Beethoven Rooms, Harley-street, Cavendish-square, Mr. Benjamin Coleman, the President, read a paper on Spiritualism in England. The hall was filled with an overflowing audience, including many literary gentlemen of high standing, and a fair proportion of scientific men, belonging chiefly to the medical profession. The following is the paper read by the President :—

## THE LITERATURE OF SPIRITUALISM.

I am about to claim your attention to a succinct history of "The Rise and Progress of Spiritualism in England, with an Account of some of my Personal Experiences in the Investigation of the Subject."

First as to the literature—including the periodical publications and the books which have been written and published in England—and then as to the mediums who have come amongst us from time to time, with a truthful and unexaggerated account of some of the manifestations which I have witnessed. I shall not hesitate to give the names of every one known to me who took

part in any of the *séances* to which I shall refer, trusting that those who have dealt fairly with the facts demonstrated, will absolve me from further reticence, and not caring what those persons think who have not dealt honestly with the facts which have come under their notice.

As I am aware that I am addressing myself to an audience which includes men of high professional and scientific attainments, I may as well say that I lay no claim to either. I am a man who has been accustomed to commercial pursuits, and am therefore not the best qualified to stand here to enlighten men who are far my superiors in a literary and scientific point of view. But I hope I may justly lay claim to the possession of plain, practical, common sense, without fanatical bias of any kind, to a rigid love of truth, and a boldness to declare my convictions in the face of the world, however unpopular they may be; and as I have made many converts during the last fifteen years, to these qualities may be attributed whatever success may have attended my advocacy of the great truth of Spiritualism.

*The Yorkshire Spiritual Telegraph* was the first monthly, which shortly after changed its name to *The British Spiritual Telegraph*, edited by W. B. Morrell, of Keighley, Yorkshire, and was continued from 1857—for two years—to 1859.

*The Spiritual Herald* was the second monthly. This was ably edited by the late Mr. James Smith, brother to Dr. Angus Smith, the well-known chemist. *The Herald* was also commenced in 1857, and ended after an existence of six months only.

*The Spiritual Magazine* was started in 1860. It has been from the first under the able guidance of Mr. William M. Wilkinson and Mr. Thomas Shorter. *The Spiritual Magazine* proclaims its views in the following motto:—

"Spiritualism is based on the cardinal fact of spirit communion and influx; it is the effort to discover all truth relating to man's Spiritual nature, capacities, relations, duties, welfare, and destiny; and its application to a regenerate life. It recognises a continuous Divine inspiration in man; it aims through a careful reverent study of facts at a knowledge of the laws and principles which govern the occult forces of the universe; of the relations of spirit to matter, and of man to God and the Spiritual world. It is thus catholic and progressive, leading to true religion as at one with the highest philosophy."

*The Spiritual Times*, a weekly, was started in London in 1864, and ceased in 1866. It was edited by Mr. J. H. Powell. *Daybreak*, also a weekly, was first published in Manchester, in 1867, and was edited by the Rev. Page Hopps. It subsequently changed hands and title. It is now published and edited by Mr. James Burns, under the title of *The Medium and Daybreak*. *Human Nature*, a monthly, commenced in 1867, and is now entering upon its fifth year. This is also edited by Mr. James Burns. *The Spiritualist*, published on the 15th of each month, very carefully edited by Mr. W. H. Harrison, was started in 1869, and promises to be in every way worthy of the cause. Mr. Harrison has also commenced a smaller paper, published on the 1st of each month, called *The Spiritual News*; and lastly, the Rev. F. Rowland Young, an able Dissenting minister, has just published the first number of a monthly, entitled *The Christian Spiritualist*.

These, I believe, comprise the whole of the periodical journals which have been published in England to advocate the cause of Spiritualism.

*The works*, which have been written by English men and women, and published in London, are much more numerous.

The first—and I think before the advent of Spiritualism in America, twenty-two years ago—were *The Night Side of Nature*, and a translation of Dr. Kerner's *Seeress of Prevorst*, by Mrs. Catherine Crowe, both of

remarkable merit, and highly interesting; and in 1859 Mrs. Crowe, after full conviction of the reality and spiritual origin of the modern manifestations, wrote a clever little book, entitled *Spiritualism, and the Age we Live in*, in which she thus addresses the scientific world:—

“While I assert these things, I have no expectation of being believed; because if I were I should be the first person that ever received such a distinction as to be believed when he declared he had seen or heard a fact not recognised by science; science being an irresponsible power that absolutely rejects all evidence not according with her own views and experience. I am aware that science is generally right; but she is not infallible. She has made mistakes in her lifetime; and she may rely on it she never made one more signal, nor more fatal, to her pre-eminence, than that she has made in denying, instead of investigating, the phenomena called Spiritual manifestations. She knows it too; there are those I could name who earnestly wish they had not been so hasty in committing themselves, and who see, too late, that there was a great glory to be won by an early and courageous adoption, when they had nothing to retract. Now, it is not so easy; nevertheless, it must be done, sooner or later; and the glory be to him who has the courage and the honesty first to avow his conversion and conviction.”

In 1853 Mr. Andrew Leighton re-published an excellent little work, *The Modern Spirit Manifestations*, by the Rev. Adin Ballou, one of the earliest converts, and most intelligent of the American advocates of the truth of Spiritualism, to which Mr. Leighton wrote an elaborate and highly interesting preface, reciting his experiences with a member of his own family.

In 1855-6, Mr. Newton Crosland published *A New Theory of Apparitions*; and Mrs. Crosland (Camilla Toulmin) *The Light of the Valley*.

Mr. John Rymer, a great sceptic long after his family were convinced (at whose house Mr. Home staid for some months), published his experiences through the mediumship of Mr. Home, which were of a very marvellous character.

There was published about this time *Sights and Sounds*, a very interesting volume, by Mr. Henry Spicer, a friend, I believe, of Charles Dickens, and a contributor to *Household Words*.

*The Natural and Supernatural*, by Mr. John Jones, and *Christian Spiritualism*, by Mr. Wm. Bertolacci, were also amongst the earliest publications in England.

Then followed several most important contributions to the book-literature of Spiritualism; namely, *The History of the Supernatural*, by Mr. William Howitt, which clearly proves that phenomena similar to that which it is so difficult for the learned men of the present day to believe in, were witnessed and accepted by some of the most learned men of all past ages.

In his preface Mr. Howitt says—

“The author of this work intends by the supernatural the operation of those higher and more recondite laws of God, with which, being as yet but most imperfectly acquainted, we either denominate their effects miraculous, or shutting our eyes firmly, deny their existence altogether. So far from holding that what are called miracles are interruptions or violations of the course of nature, he regards them only as the results of Spiritual laws, which in their occasional action subdue, suspend, or neutralise the less powerful physical laws, just as a stronger chemical affinity subdues a weaker one, producing new combinations, but combinations strictly in accordance with the collective laws of the universe, whether understood or not yet understood by us. At a time when so many objections are raised to portions of the Scripture narrative, which unsettle men’s minds and haunt them with miserable forebodings, the author has thought it of the highest importance to bring into a comprehensive view the statements of the most eminent historians and philosophers of all ages and nations on the manifestations of those Spiritual agencies amongst them, which we, for want of further knowledge, term supernatural.

“So great is the assembled mass of evidence from every age and people, that we are reduced to this dilemma—either to reject this universal evidence, by which we inevitably reduce all history to a gigantic fiction, and destroy every appeal to its decision on any question whatever, or to accept it, in which case we find ourselves standing face to face with a

principle of the most authoritative character for the solution of Spiritual enigmas, and the stemming of the fatal progress of infidelity."

Mr. Wm. M. Wilkinson, who has a high professional standing in this metropolis as a lawyer, and who was amongst the earliest to proclaim his conviction of the truth of Spiritualism, published a work called *Spirit Drawings*, in which he gives the history of Mrs. Wilkinson's development as a drawing medium, when—under direct spirit guidance and control, and without the least knowledge of the art—she produced a large series of very beautiful symbolic drawings in water colours. Mr. Wilkinson is also the author of another book, entitled *The Revival, considered in its Physical, Psychical, and Religious Aspects*. Both books are pronounced by competent authority as ably and philosophically written.

Mr. Wilkinson says—

"Incredulity of a fact, I take it, is that wide-spread weakness of the human mind, which is observed in men who have perfected their opinions, and have no room for learning anything more. A new fact to them is just one above the number that is convenient or necessary for them, and had they the power of creating, or of preventing creation, the inconvenient fact should not have existed.

"Indeed, if admitted into their completed system, "the little stranger" would destroy it altogether, by acting as a chemical solvent of the fabric.

"But this is not the mode of the searcher after truth ; and in determining the important question, which it is intended to submit for consideration, I would rather forget much that I have been taught, or find it all unsound, than I would reject one single circumstance which I know and recognise as a truth."

Mr. Thomas Shorter, than whom there has been no more intelligent and active worker in the cause of Spiritualism, brought out first *The Confessions of a Truth Seeker*, and subsequently a larger volume entitled *The Two Worlds*, which in its advocacy of the truth of Spiritualism takes its stand upon the Bible ;

and containing as it does a mass of most useful information, covers the whole ground, and forms a most valuable book of reference. Its tone may be gathered from the following remarks in the author's preface :—

“Christians now-a-days are ashamed, or as they think, too enlightened, to appeal to the direct evidence of a future life which the facts of Spiritual manifestations supply ; although their Bible is the greatest storehouse of Spiritual facts, and the Christian and every other form of religion are cradled in them. But though this course is now respectable and fashionable, it should be borne in mind that it is only a fashion—that general scepticism on this point in the Christian world is of very recent date, and that it has advanced steadily, and in parallel line with it has been the advance of material philosophies, the denial of revelation and of a Spiritual world, and the gravitation of faith to a vanishing point ; until at length, in the bosom of the Established Church of this country, we find the attempt made by some of its recognised and eminent teachers to get rid (as divines and professors have been doing in Germany) of the supernatural element altogether. Were the effort successful, we might say with Law, ‘Behold ! the kingdom of God shut up, and only a kingdom of Scribes and Pharisees come instead of it.’ Nor need this state of things surprise us ; it is a consistent logical result of the denial of existent Spiritual agencies.”

Finally, in this category, there is a very clever book, *From Matter to Spirit*, by Mrs. De Morgan, with an admirable preface from the able pen of Professor De Morgan, the eminent mathematician. He says—

“I will not stand committed either *for* or *against* the conclusions of this book. I am satisfied by the evidence of *some* of the facts narrated ; of some others I have evidence as good as testimony can give. I am perfectly convinced that I have both seen and heard in a manner which should make unbelief impossible, things *called* Spiritual which cannot be taken by a rational being to be capable of explanation by imposture, coincidence, or mistake. So far I feel the ground firm under me. But when it comes to what is the cause of these phenomena, I find I cannot adopt any explanation which has yet been suggested. If I were bound to choose among things which I can conceive, I should say that there is some sort of action of some combination of will, intellect, and physical

power, which is not that of any of the human beings present.

"But thinking it very likely that the universe may contain a few agencies, say half-a-million, about which no man knows anything, I cannot but suspect that a small proportion of these agencies, say 5,000, may be severally competent to the production of all the phenomena, or may be quite up to the task among them.

"The physical explanations which I have seen are easy, but miserably insufficient; the Spiritual hypothesis is sufficient, but ponderously difficult."

Amongst the books of mark which have been written to uphold the truth of Spiritualism, and the reality of the manifestations, is that by Viscount Adare, *Experiences in Spiritualism with Mr. D. D. Home*, with introductory remarks by the Earl of Dunraven. This volume (which was printed for private circulation only), though proceeding from the pen of a literary nobleman, does not pretend to do more than to record a series of remarkable phenomena witnessed by himself and numerous friends during the last three or four years. From Lord Dunraven's preface to the book I make the following extracts:—

"The subject of Spiritualism was first brought under my notice fifteen years ago, by reading two or three accounts of the occurrences which were taking place in America. To some extent I was prepared for the fair consideration of very strange and startling phenomena, from having previously examined fully into the subject of mesmerism. . . At that time scientific men in general, and the medical profession in particular, were loud in condemnation of what they considered sheer imposture. . . Since then a great change has taken place in the opinion of the public on this subject. . . When table-turning became one of the amusements of the day, I witnessed various experiments which clearly demonstrated the inadequacy of Professor Faraday's explanation of the manifestations by involuntary muscular action."

In reference to the facts recorded in this volume by Lord Adare and himself, Lord Dunraven says—

"It is obvious that the chief value of such a record must depend upon the trustworthiness of the narrator. Fidelity of

description is very rare, even where honesty of purpose is undoubted. I believe that in the present case scrupulous accuracy, a retentive memory, and an unexcitable temperament are combined in an unusual degree, forming just such a combination of qualities as is indispensable for one who undertakes to record phenomena of this exceptional and startling character.

"It must be borne in mind that an actual record of facts, and not the adoption or refutation of any particular theory, is the main object in view.

"Spiritualism will, therefore, in the ensuing remarks be regarded chiefly in its scientific or phenomenal aspect. I have purposely avoided expressing any decided opinion on questions so complicated, and about which at present such conflicting opinions prevail, as upon the character of the phenomena, the source from which they proceed, and the tendency of teaching to be derived from them.

"The whole subject of Spiritualism is one which must soon command the attention of thoughtful men in this country, as it has very fully done in America, and to some extent in France and other countries of Europe."

Of the manifestations recorded by Lord Adare, it will perhaps be sufficient to say that they are among the most marvellous of those which have been witnessed by thousands, through Mr. Home's distinctive, peculiar, and high-class phase of mediumship; many of them being in advance of those recorded in Mr. Home's own book, *Incidents of my Life*, the preface to which is written by no less a man in the world of letters, than Dr. Robert Chambers, and from which preface I make the following extract:—

"It is often remarked as a marvel of a very suggestive kind in this our highly intellectual age, that men of knowledge and reflection, of whom so much better things might be expected, are found so weak as to be imposed upon by such transparent deception, and so foolish as to come forward and bear witness in its behalf. But of course this is not reasoning; it is only begging the question. The remark might be answered by another; it is a marvel of a highly suggestive nature that men of critical judgment should be so far imposed upon by their self-esteem, that they can calmly set down a number of men reputedly as judicious as themselves, and whose judgment they acknowledge—as capable of seeing and hearing that

which is not—and never appear to suspect that those persons have possibly some real grounds for the faith that is in them. A little modesty would evidently go a great way to solve the difficulty. If they would go a little further, and so far yield to the behests of their favourite philosophy as to enquire before pronouncing, it might so chance that the position of a believer in these phenomena would become more intelligible to them. So at least it has already appeared with a vast number of persons, equally positive at starting that the whole was a delusion ; and we are entitled to assume that what has been may be again.”

Several other books and pamphlets have been published which possess more or less interest for the reader of English Spiritualistic literature : *Animal Magnetism and Spiritualism*, by Dr. Ashburner ; *Outlines of Spiritualism*, by Mr. Barkas ; *The Life of the Davenports*, by Dr. Nichol, English correspondent to the *New York Times* ; *Spiritualism in America*, by Mr. B. Coleman ; and *The Scientific Aspect of Spiritualism*, by Mr. Alfred R. Wallace, the eminent naturalist, who closes his most useful essay in the following words :—

“In concluding these imperfect illustrations of a subject so generally tabooed by scientific men, I do not expect or wish to make a single convert. All I claim is to have shown cause for investigation ; to have proved that it is not a subject that can any longer be contemptuously sneered at as unworthy of a moment's enquiry. I feel myself so confident of the truth and objective reality of many of the facts here narrated, that I would stake the whole question on the opinion of any man of science desirous of arriving at the truth, if he would only devote two or three hours a week for a few months to an examination of the phenomena *before pronouncing an opinion* ; for, I again repeat, not a single individual that I have heard of, has done this without becoming convinced of the reality of these phenomena. I maintain, therefore, finally, that whether we consider the vast number and high character of its converts, the immense accumulation and authenticity of its facts, or the noble doctrine of a future state which is elaborated—the so-called supernatural as developed in the phenomena of animal magnetism, clairvoyance, and modern Spiritualism, is an experimental science, which must add greatly to our knowledge of man's true nature and highest interests, and, therefore, demands an honest and thorough examination.”

## SPIRITUAL MEDIUMS.

Mrs. Hayden, an American lady, was the first who came to England. This was in 1853, and amongst the first who visited her were Dr. John Ashburner, Dr. John Elliotson, and Professor De Morgan.

Dr. Elliotson and Dr. Ashburner, both prominent men in the medical world at that time, had bravely fought the battle for the truth of mesmerism, and Dr. Elliotson had established a journal to advocate its cause, called *The Zoist*. The impressions made upon the minds of these two honest earnest men, from what they witnessed of Spiritual manifestations in Mrs. Hayden's presence, were widely different. Dr. Ashburner saw the truth at once, and boldly proclaimed it; Dr. Elliotson treated the whole matter as a gross imposture: and here was exhibited a strange phenomenon, a man who had suffered martyrdom to establish one great truth, turning round to denounce and persecute those who were endeavouring to establish the claims of a still greater truth of kindred character! Dr. Elliotson refused even to discuss the subject with his old friend Dr. Ashburner, and they separated. He spoke of Mrs. Hayden as a charlatan—of his friends who believed in her powers, as fools—and of Spiritualism as a degrading delusion! The pages of *The Zoist* contained most severe articles against the whole subject, and one of them was illustrated by woodcuts, to show how the tapping sounds were made. As an example of Dr. Elliotson's state of mind at that period, I make the following extract from *The Zoist* of May, 1854:—“Anything approaching to this imposture in impious audacity we have never witnessed. We have felt it an imperative duty boldly to raise our voice in condemnation of this vile and unblushing imposture.”

Such was the vigorous outspoken language of a man, a materialist, accustomed to lay down the law to others.

Here was, indeed, a hopeless case to all appearances. Was it possible that a man of mature years, past the meridian of life, should ever be convicted of his error? should ever be brought to humble himself, and in sack-cloth and ashes, so to speak, proclaim openly to the world his conviction and conversion? Yet so it came about, and in this way. He was staying at Dieppe in 1863, and there at the house of Mrs. Milner Gibson he met Mr. Home, through whom Dr. Elliotson received such evidence of spirit-presence as to shake his long cherished philosophy to its very foundation. The change in his thoughts came about gradually. When I saw him soon after his return from Dieppe, he said, though he was satisfied of the reality of the phenomena, he was not prepared to admit they were produced by the agency of spirits. "But," he added, "I will say this much, what I have seen lately has made a deep impression upon my mind, and the recognition of the reality of these manifestations from whatever cause, is tending to revolutionise my thoughts and feelings upon almost every subject." When I called again some time in the year 1864, I found him in his library; we talked upon Spiritualism, and I asked him if he had read some book just then published. He raised his arm from a large Bible upon which it rested, and said, "No! I have no time to read any other book but *this*. I have lost too much time already. A proper understanding of this sacred volume will be more than I can accomplish in the few years yet remaining to me;" and he added, when we were parting, "You may tell the world that I deeply regret my folly in so long resisting the truth; when I leave this earth I shall die a Christian; and you may say that I owe my conversion to Spiritualism." I am not stating these facts for the first time, I published them, with Dr. Elliotson's permission, in the *Spiritual Magazine*, before his death.

Now, what do you, the sceptic and opponent of

Spiritualism, from the religious side, say to such a case as I have here presented? Where is the diabolism which you fear surrounds the practice of holding communion with the so-called dead? and what do you, the opponent from the other extreme—you who are wedded to the materialistic philosophy—say to such a conversion? Have either of you any reasonable answer to make to my enquiry, put in all kindliness and consideration, for your educated prejudices? This is not a solitary case, be it remembered; there are thousands of such conversions through the evidences of Spiritualism. If this be so, can you wonder at the rapid strides which Spiritualism is making throughout the civilised world? Can you be surprised that such an audience as this—the majority at least—can be assembled to uphold a belief which teaches nothing worse than that spirit-communion is both possible and lawful—that our heavenly Father is a loving and merciful God—that each of us must reap as we may sow—that the future is a state of eternal progression—and that therefore there is hope and salvation for all?

Mr. D. D. Home arrived in England in 1855, and was most kindly received by the late Mr. William Cox, of Jermyn-street, who had been for some twenty or thirty years acquainted with the subject, having had, as he informed me, ample evidence of Spiritual interference with mundane matters long before the American revival. Amongst the first to meet Mr. Home was Dr. John Garth Wilkinson, of Wimpole-street; he wrote out a full and very graphic account of several *séances* he had had with this well known medium—of which I shall have to speak presently—and he introduced Mr. Home to Mr. Rymer, of Ealing, then a close neighbour of mine, with whose family Mr. Home resided for some months, and it was then I first saw anything of Spiritualism. At this distance of time, now nearly sixteen years, when the wonders through Mr.

Home's mediumship have made him a European celebrity, it is hardly necessary that I should detain you by a recital of the evidences which made me a believer, but it belongs to the subject of this "paper" that I should mention some of the incidents which came under my notice at the earliest stage of my investigations. At the very first sitting several things occurred, which, as I could always trust the evidence of my senses, satisfied me that some force, accompanied by superior intelligence, independent of any human being, was then present and engaged in producing the extraordinary manifestations which I witnessed. At this *séance* I was frequently caressed upon my knee by what felt to be a small, well-formed hand, though I was seated at the opposite end, from the medium, of a long dinner table in a brilliantly lighted room, and when the hands of all present were visibly imposed upon the surface of the table. Among other things, a large accordion was brought, at my request, beneath the table from Mr. Home, and whilst held by me tightly, as it was necessary to do to retain it, the air I asked for—"Angels ever bright and fair"—was played by some invisible power in the most perfect manner possible. The conclusion to my mind was irresistible; and from that day to the present moment I have never been afraid to uphold, on all suitable occasions, the reality of the phenomena, though like others I could not at once accept the Spiritual claims. On a subsequent evening with Mr. Howard Jackson, a solicitor of Lincoln's Inn-fields, Mr. Rogers, son of the well-known dentist of Hanover-square, Mrs. Rymer, her son, and eldest daughter (who was herself a most interesting medium), and Mr. Home, we sat round three-parts of a large circular drawing-room table in the twilight of a fine summer evening, when a beautifully-formed hand and arm rose slowly from the unoccupied side of the table which we all saw distinctly. The arm was draped in a sleeve of gauzy

substance, through which we could see the rounded flesh-like arm, the drapery terminating with a neat frill at the wrist; extending itself over the table, the hand lifted a small bell, rung it, and carried it away. In a moment or so I felt the hand on my knee, and the bell was given to me. At my request the hand was placed in mine, by which I could feel its form and texture. It was a small hand of velvety softness, neither warm nor cold; and then to complete my astonishment, the table rose gradually from the floor and continued to rise until it touched the ceiling, out of the reach of most of those present. I could touch it! then it gradually descended until it again settled upon the carpet with no more jar or noise than a snow-flake. At another sitting those who wore rings had them suddenly slipped off, and presently a hand appeared at the vacant side of the table with all the rings, five in number, on its fingers. The hand was then gently inverted, and, scattering the rings upon the table, disappeared. Now I hope I may say it without offence, that it does not require a philosopher to be a witness of such facts, and that my testimony is as good, for the reality of such occurrences, as the most able professor of physics living. And let me add I entirely demur to the claim made by too many, that it requires a long investigation, and many experiments, to arrive at a safe and solid conclusion; and that therefore, when at length the facts are admitted by them, the testimony of *savans* is more reliable than that of such men as myself, who, having no prejudices to overcome, decide at once upon the evidence of our ordinary senses. That it is possible to find a different solution for the cause of such phenomena than that of Spirit, I am not here to deny. Give us a more rational explanation, and I for one, only anxious to arrive at truth, will most readily accept it. I need not recount further the manifestations I witnessed at that time. They were then all, to me, most wonderful,

but having seen, with many other mediums, phenomena quite as marvellous, they are not now so. I have indeed arrived at that state of feeling and confidence in Spirit-power that nothing surprises me; I only require the testimony of two or three intelligent, truthful men and women, to give in my belief to anything, however impossible it may appear, and I am sure I stand at this moment in the presence of many who are proud to acknowledge that they share in my credulity.

Among those who visited Mr. Rymer's house at the period I am speaking of was the late Mrs. Trollope, who came from Florence by the recommendation of her friend, Mr. Hiram Powers, the well-known sculptor, who is a Spiritualist. She staid at Mr. Rymer's—under the same roof with Mr. Home—for two or three weeks, during which time she had such ample evidences that her materialistic views vanished; and after leaving Ealing she wrote a letter to Mrs. Rymer, which I saw, thanking her for her hospitality, and in which Mrs. Trollope said, "My visit has given a pillow to my old age, which I little dreamt of." Her son, Mr. Thomas Trollope, frequently joined their *séances*, and both were present, when the late Sir David Brewster (after he and Lord Brougham had met Mr. Home at Mr. Cox's in Jermyn-street) came to a *séance* at Mr. Rymer's. Of Sir David Brewster's conduct in these matters, I should hesitate to speak now that he has passed to a higher life, but that it conveys a moral, which may serve as a warning to those who may still rely upon his publicly recorded statements in opposition to Spiritualism, and who might be disposed to follow in his footsteps. The day after Sir David had been to the *séance* at Mr. Rymer's, I called upon him, accompanied by Mr. Rymer, and in the Athenæum Club I had a long conversation with him. I told him, that having read an article attributed to him in *The North British Review*, dead against Spiritualism and its phe-

nomena, I was anxious to know whether his recent experiences had changed his opinions. He said they certainly had, inasmuch as he could not attribute the phenomena either to trickery or to a delusion of the senses, but, he added, "Spirit, sir, is the last thing I will give in to."

Sir David Brewster, however, when it became known that he had been looking into Spiritualism, and it was suspected that he was a believer, wrote a letter to *The Morning Advertiser*, addressed to me by name, in which he strongly denied my version of his admissions, and the facts which had occurred at Mr. Cox's and Mr. Rymer's. One of his distinct denials was made in the following words—"It is not true, as stated by you, that a large dinner table moved about at Mr. Cox's;" and in explanation of what did occur, he says—"Besides the experiment with the accordion, a small hand-bell to be rung by the spirits was placed on the ground near my feet; I placed my feet round it in the form of an angle, to catch any intrusive apparatus. The bell did not ring; but when taken to a place near Mr. Home's feet, it speedily came across and placed its handle in my hand. This was amusing." And he added, "I conjecture the effects were produced by machinery attached to the lower extremities of Mr. Home." This letter was written in the month of *October*, 1855, and was replied to by Mr. Cox, Mr. Thomas Trollope, and myself; the whole correspondence is reproduced in the appendix to Mr. Home's book. Last year Mrs. Gordon, Sir David's daughter, published his biography, and in making extracts from his diary, she innocently allows Sir David to refute himself. Thus, under the date of *June*, 1855, that is, four months before the date of his letter to me, he had made a long entry entirely at variance with his public statements of the same facts. He says—"The most unaccountable rappings were produced in various parts of the table, and the table.

actually rose from the ground when no hand was upon it. *A larger table* was produced, and exhibited similar movements. . . . A small hand-bell was then laid down with its mouth upon the carpet, and after lying for some time, it actually rang *when nothing could have touched it*. . . . These were the principal experiments. *We could give no explanation of them, and could not conjecture how they could be produced by any kind of mechanism.*"

This, I think, settles the merits of that controversy, and vindicates Mr. Home's integrity of conduct and my veracity of statement. Sir David's daughter says that her father had "*a dual nature.*" It is to be regretted that I and many others were only permitted to see the worst side of it. A curious fact remains to be said of Sir David Brewster. He was himself a medium; he saw spectres. "*His own quaint confession,*" says his daughter, "*that he was afraid of ghosts, though he did not believe in them, was as near the truth as possible.*"

A few words about Lord Brougham will complete this part of my history. Contrary to statements made in the press, I have reason to believe that Lord Brougham never spoke or wrote a word against Spiritualism; on the contrary, all that is known of his opinions upon this subject gives evidence that he was strongly impressed that it was an important truth. I had a short conversation with him, when the few words that he said, showed me that he was greatly impressed with what he saw at the *séances* he had with Mr. Home at Mr. Cox's; and in a work entitled *Nature*, by Mr. Charles Groom Napier, published early in the last year, the preface to which was written by Lord Brougham, closes with these remarkable words—"There is but one question I would ask the author, Is the Spiritualism of this work foreign to our materialistic manufacturing age? No; for amidst the varieties of mind which

divers circumstances produce, are found those which cultivate man's highest faculties; to these the author addresses himself. But even in the most cloudless skies of scepticism I see a rain-cloud; if it be no bigger than a man's hand, IT IS MODERN SPIRITUALISM."

And, doubtless, in his forthcoming biography, we shall hear more of Lord Brougham's thoughts and feelings upon a subject which it is evident greatly interested him, and which he never discredited.

In the article written by Dr. Garth Wilkinson, to which I have alluded, after describing his experiences, he says:—

"I differ, therefore, with Sir David Brewster in his mode of exploration, and also in his valuation of presumptive honesty and human testimony, which always hitherto has been the most substantial word in the world, and a pillar which Divine Providence has not disdained to use in supporting the canopy of His revelations. . . . It seems probable, from experience, as well as reason, that, granting the phenomena to be spiritual, the presence of determined scoffers at, and disbelievers in them, should in case the said persons be preponderant in their influence in the circle, render the manifestations imperfect or perhaps null. The known laws of human sympathy, and the operations of our own spirits when antipathetic persons are near us, may be also cited in proof of this. I conclude, then, that to the scoffer and the strongly prejudiced, who want no evidence, and to whom evidence has no appeal, evidence is, for the most part, not forthcoming. This simplifies the position; but what still remains is the peculiar Christian *politesse* of this century, viz. the necessity of good manners, and the agreeing to differ. On the part of those who believe, this may be best secured by letting the other party be. Providence can convince *them*, too, as easily as ourselves, when the time and their function comes, but by snatching at them prematurely, before they are ripe, we may evoke, on a great scale, two of the most formidable spirits of this world—WRATH and FEAR.

"As a final remark, let me caution the public against being led by Sir David Brewster, Professor Faraday, and other men of great names in their own departments, in this matter, which is not obviously within their field. . . . They are so alien to the subject, that they do not know the first condition of prosecuting

it, viz. a gift of sympathy, and openness to conviction. Their very speciality of excellence in physical explorations, is against them in this new walk, which is combined spiritual and physical. The common observer, with little in his mind, with no repute to support, and no case to uphold, may perchance be equipped by nature for those revolutionary sciences where the *savans* are stupid upon them. Twelve fishermen, and not the high priests, are the everlasting resources of Providence, I therefore invite the unattached laity, of all descriptions, the willing fishermen, to remember that they have no overmen in this department; that it is an untrodden field; and that by the Grace of God there is at least a freedom for us all from the pressure of big names, 'because the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.' "

About the same period, *i.e.* 1855, Mrs. A. E. Newton visited England. She is the wife of a gentleman who now holds an important post in the Government Educational Department at Washington; they were among the earliest converts to Spiritualism, and suffered martyrdom. They were members of the Congregational Church in Boston, from which body they seceded, and published their reasons for so doing, in which they said:—

"A truth so novel and startling could not be at once received, however demonstrative and convincing the evidence might be upon which it rested. Nor was it until evidence had accumulated upon evidence, and proof became piled upon proof—not until manifestations of the most marvellous character had been repeatedly witnessed under a great variety of circumstances; and notwithstanding the application of every conceivable test—that we could consent to acknowledge, even to ourselves, a belief in the agency of spiritual beings. That belief, however, in spite of prejudice and scepticism—in spite of the general cry of "Delusion and Imposture"—in spite of all attempts of scientific men to explain the marvels on the basis of materialism (which explanations we found to be in every case wholly inadequate to account for what we witnessed), that belief became at length forced upon our minds by irresistible evidence."

It was an important epoch in my life in view of the results which have followed, when I had the good fortune to

make the acquaintance of Mrs. Newton, whose religious tone of mind, and most eloquent reasoning, smoothed down the difficulties which naturally arose in my own mind, even after I had seen and acknowledged the reality of the phenomena. But this is not the time to dwell and enlarge upon that point.

Mrs. Newton was at this time a medium, or a seer, which I take to be a superior development. The following is a remarkable instance of her mediumistic powers:—

On one occasion, in my presence, a Mr. Holmes engaged her in conversation. He was confessedly a materialist. He started several propositions, which Mrs. Newton combated in language so eloquent and manner so simple and earnest, with reasoning so logical, that Mr. Holmes was speedily driven into a corner, and at length he said, "Well, well, all that you have urged may be true, but it does not convince me, and indeed nothing will, until I have direct evidence from some one whose memory I revere. If, for instance, I could obtain a manifestation from my mother, it would go far to satisfy my doubts." "Why," exclaimed Mrs. Newton, "it is your mother's spirit who has impressed me to speak these truths to you! I see her now, standing by your side, she tells me that her name is *Betsy*, and the child standing by her side is *Ellen*, your child; they implore you to believe that there is a spirit-world and a life immortal." Mr. Holmes' countenance changed, and he remained for some moments silent. I asked him if he recognised the names? He admitted that his mother's name was *Betsy*, and that he had lost a child whose name was *Ellen*. The seed, however, in this instance was scattered on "stony ground," for on meeting Mr. Holmes some two or three years after, I found that he was still an unbeliever.

One of the most remarkable and gifted mediums who have come from America to England is the Rev. Thomas L. Harris. He is an inspired poet and preacher. Two of his poems—*The Lyric of the Golden Age*, and *The Lyric of the Morning Land*, published in 1856—were dictated whilst he was lying in a state of profound trance, the words coming from his lips without a falter or correction as rapidly as they could be written down

by an amanuensis. Of *The Golden Age*, a competent authority, Mr. S. B. Brittain, one of the attesting witnesses, says—

“This lyric has scarcely less than Miltonic grandeur, while in parts, at least, it has more than Miltonic splendour. The descriptive portions are wonderful as illustrations of the compass of our language.”

Mr. Harris preached a series of sermons in London in 1859, and among his constant attendants were Lady Oliphant, widow of Sir Anthony Oliphant, and her son Laurence Oliphant, late M.P. for Stirling, a well known *littérateur*, and at this moment, I am told, engaged in France as correspondent to the *Times*. He accompanied Lord Elgin in his special mission to China, and was Secretary of Legation in Japan. He has written many works of travel, and he is a contributor to *Blackwood's Magazine*. In his last work, *Piccadilly*, which is a strong satire on the follies of fashionable life, one of his characters of most excellence is the Rev. T. L. Harris. Shortly after Mr. Harris left England he founded a religious community of Spiritualists at a place called Wassaick, in the State of New York, where Miss Ina Fawcett, now Mrs. Cuthbertson, a friend of mine, a lady of high culture and ample fortune, and Lady Oliphant joined him. This community, I have been told, live in perfect peace and contentment; their habits and mode of life are of the most primitive character, they carry on various industrial employments, working at trades according to their choice, having no servants, and, indeed, living somewhat after the manner in which the first followers of Christ are said to have done. They regard Mr. Harris as a chosen servant, a great light and high priest of the New Christian Church. During the parliamentary vacations, Mr. Laurence Oliphant was accustomed to make an annual visit to Wassaick, and about two years ago he resigned his seat in Parliament, and joined this community. How it is that Mr. Oli-

phant has now returned again to the world and to literary pursuits, I am not informed. He is a man of brilliant talents, of great social influence, and a Spiritualist. But, as a disciple of Mr. Harris's, I do not think he would now join a *séance*, as he would eagerly have done when I first knew him.

His conversion to Spiritualism, as he described it to me, came about in this way. He was walking through the streets of New York, when seeing on a door plate the name and calling of a spirit medium, he entered, and asked the medium for some proof of his power. After a short time the man went into a dreamy abnormal state, and, springing up, caught hold of the hand of his visitor, and shaking it heartily, he exclaimed,—"Laurence, my friend, I am happy to meet you again." "Who are you?" was the inquiry. "Why, I am Tom So-and-So, who died in your arms in the Crimea." Satisfied that the medium could know nothing of himself or his history, Mr. Oliphant became deeply interested, pursued his inquiries, which ultimately, as I have said, in his becoming a disciple of Mr. Harris, who claims to be controlled and guided by Spiritual influx.

#### SPIRITUALISM AND THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.

When staying at an hotel some years ago in Edinburgh, I made the acquaintance there of a well-known physician, Dr. W. A. Browne, a Commissioner in Lunacy, who was engaged on official business in that city. At breakfast one morning, where we were joined by his son, a medical student, I received, with my letters, a copy of the *Spiritual Magazine*, which I handed to Dr. Browne, and asked him if he knew anything of that subject. "No," he said, "I look upon it as a great delusion! I received a letter the other day, though, from a former pupil of mine, telling me of some strange antics of tables being lifted and

broken by invisible agency, of which he had just heard, and he asked me if I thought 'such things could be.' I told him I did not think they could, and that such matters were not worthy of a serious thought." "You are mistaken, Doctor," I said, "such things can be, and are well worthy, in my opinion, of a medical man's most serious consideration. I know who your pupil is, and I know that the incidents mentioned by him happened in his own presence, and at his own house." This led to further conversation upon the subject, and, in compliance with the Doctor's request, I related some of my own experiences, during the recital of which, by his gestures and expression, I gathered that he thought it would be but a waste of time to talk further with a man so lamentably weak as to insist that these things were true. I however pressed Dr. Browne before we parted to answer me a question,—“Supposing,” I said, “that my friends, like the great mass of mankind, ignorant of the facts of which I have just spoken, were led to suspect my sanity, and you had been called in to give your professional opinion upon the state of my mind, and I had repeated seriously, and emphatically, the statements which I have just made to you; would you not have thought me mad, and have sent me to a lunatic asylum?” “Well,” said the Doctor, with great gravity and candour, “I think I should.”

“Then,” I retorted, “see what an awful responsibility rests upon men like you, and how necessary it is that you should know as much as I know, before you can discharge your duties faithfully. You know that I am *not* mad; and yet I insist that these things are not delusions, but that they are realities, and your pupil now knows they are, and the evidence lies broadcast throughout society.”

The Doctor smiled, but made no reply, and our conversation ended. I do not know if he profited by it; but I have reason to believe that his son did, for he

wrote to me some time after, telling me how much interested he had been in the conversation I had had with his father, and as he was about to read "a paper" to the medical students before he left Edinburgh, in which he would like to introduce the subject of Spiritualism, he begged me to lend him any books of reference upon the subject, which I did. This gentleman, Dr. Crichton Browne, is now, I am told, a very rising and able man, and has charge of the County Asylum at Wakefield. How much of his acknowledged ability he may owe to his study of the questions raised in my conversation with his father, I know not. But I do not suppose he will forget the lesson in psychology, which he did *not* learn at college.

Let me now claim your attention to an important history relating to Dr. Browne's former pupil, who now holds an eminent position in the medical world. This doctor edited a scientific journal at the time when he first heard of Spiritualism, from reading Mr. Rymer's pamphlet (to which I have alluded), and straightway without, as he will now confess, knowing much about it, he proceeded to slay the monster; to destroy the "delusion" by which, as he thought, so many weak men and women were being enthralled; and in the columns of his journal, after repeating some of Mr. Rymer's statements respecting the phenomena, the worthy Doctor says:—

"These are strong facts, and it is allowing a great deal to say that we think Mr. Rymer to be in earnest in stating his belief in them. *For ourselves, we entirely disbelieve them*, and shall gladly give any one the opportunity of convincing us. In the meanwhile we venture to recommend to Mr. Rymer's attentive study, an old-fashioned college text-book, which we suspect he has never opened—Pratt's *Mechanical Philosophy*. He will there learn of those immutable laws which the unchanging God has impressed once and forever on Creation; and reading of the wondrous harmony and order which reign by their operation throughout the whole bounds of Creation, he may, perhaps, come to share our doubts and disbelief of

those imaginings which tell us of their violation, in moving tables and shaking lamps, and dancing chairs; and he may, perchance, should his study prosper, catch also a sense of the pitying scorn with which those nurtured on the strong meat of the inductive philosophy, within the very courts and halls that Newton trod, view these sickly spiritualistic dreamers, thus drunk with the new wine of folly and credulity."

I can imagine with what an air of proud satisfaction the Doctor rose from his editorial chair after hurling from his facile pen such an eloquent denunciation against these stupid mummeries, and, probably, saying to himself: "There! *that* will settle the question; no intelligent man, I think, will ever dare to stand up in future in defence of the so-called spiritual phenomena." But there is an end to all delusions, and the day was at hand when this doctor was to be relieved of *his* hallucinations; when the tables were to be turned in a double sense, one of them being literally smashed in his presence, and "the immutable laws of creation" rudely violated. When this came about "the old college text-book" was lost sight of in the bewilderment which overcame this worthy Doctor, now himself "drunk with the new wine of folly and credulity."

It so happened that some time after the doctor's essay had been published, I accidentally made his acquaintance, when we talked of Spiritualism, in which he seemed to take a lively interest; I did not know why, nor that he had been a public opponent of "the delusion." In the conversation I mentioned Mr. William Wilkinson's name as a friend of mine, and a full believer in the subject. "Is it possible? I know him," said the Doctor; "he is a very able man; I shall call upon him and talk the matter over." We exchanged cards and parted, and the next that I heard of him was, that having called upon Mr. Wilkinson, that gentleman had arranged to take Mr. Rollin Squire, a young American and a very powerful medium, to the Doctor's house in the country, where, during their stay, a series of

*séances* were held, when, among other striking incidents, a strong iron-bound table was, at the Doctor's request, smashed in half a minute by some invisible power, and the fragments thrown across the room; and this was one of the facts of which Dr. Browne spoke to me in Edinburgh.

The Doctor was so strongly impressed with all he had seen, that he at once wrote another article; *not*, however, for the *Scientific Journal*, but for the *Spiritual Magazine*, and to which, to his honour be it said, he would have appended his name, but Mr. Wilkinson dissuaded him from doing so lest he should ovoke "the pitying scorn" of those less enlightened, who were "nurtured on the strong meat of the inductive philosophy," and he accordingly withheld it. In that paper, which was published in the first volume of the *Spiritual Magazine*, he gave a full account of what he had witnessed, and subsequently he wrote a second article for the *Spiritual Magazine*, published in August 1860, in which he says:

"I have been very much laughed at for my former record of facts. My own brother has informed me that he does not believe one word of them. A valued friend refused to reprint them in his medical journal solely from regard to my reputation. Well! I must remember the old adage, 'Magna est veritas,' and trust to its final victory. In the meantime I feel it due to science and to truth, without troubling myself about the consequences, to place the following FURTHER FACTS on record.

"I again pledge my word of honour to their strict accuracy. I have only recorded what I have myself verified and seen."

A *séance* with Mr. Home is then described, and the writer concludes with the following propositions:

"1. In the presence of a medium, raps on and about the table, on the floor, on the walls of the room, do occur without the intervention of any physical agent, &c. 2. These raps and knocks are, moreover, intelligent. 3. The table at such circles is frequently moved and tilted, and suspended in the air without any visible agency, and other articles of furniture are

similarly moved. 4. A shadow hand, not that of any one present, is sometimes formed, which places a bell on the table, or lifts a pencil laid on a piece of paper and writes with it. 5. Most wonderful music is played on an accordion without any human agency, &c. &c."

And now, Ladies and Gentlemen, you will expect me, in fulfilment of my promise, to divulge the name of this gentleman, and I shall do so for the purpose of holding him up to the admiration of all right thinking men and women, for the candour and rare moral courage he has evinced in retracting an error of judgment as soon as he was satisfied that it was no longer tenable. His name is Lockhart Robertson, a member of the Royal College of Physicians, and recently promoted by the Lord Chancellor to fill one of the highest offices in his profession, and I have to add that he has done me the honour of being here present, and he will, no doubt, have something to say to me by-and-bye, as he did not know that I was about to give his name, and his most admirable conduct, so much prominence in my address. But I trust, seeing the desperate fight which we Spiritualists have, in overcoming the prejudices of his compeers, that Dr. Robertson will not think I have made an unfair use of the facts with which his name is so honourably associated.

#### EXTRAORDINARY SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS.

Amongst my early experiences a very remarkable incident occurred at Malvern, where I was well known, and had a close intimacy with the two leading Hydro-paths, Dr. Gully and Dr. Wilson. Both were materialists, and both were converted through my instrumentality to Spiritualism. The following are the circumstances:—

I occupied, with my wife and step-daughter, at the time I am about to speak of, apartments at the house of a man named Wilmore, who, with his wife and daughter, conducted the house. They had staying with them a Miss Lee, of Worcester,

and a Mr. Moore, of Halifax. I was a frequent visitor at Dr. Wilson's establishment, and on intimate terms with most of the patients, and I excited considerable interest among them, by talking unreservedly of Spiritualism and its phenomena. One day, Mr. Howard Kennard, a member of the well-known firm of Iron Merchants, in Thames-street, London, asked me if I would use my influence to induce the Marshalls to come to Malvern, and he would guarantee that they should receive a fee of not less than £10.

I wrote accordingly, and the Marshalls came to Malvern, where I took rooms for them. Mr. Kennard invited whom he pleased to the various *séances* which followed, and the usual differences of opinion arose amongst the sitters. One person, whom I did not know at the time, Mr. Novra, a professional conjuror, of Regent-street, was looked up to by Mr. Kennard and his friends as a clever fellow, and a great authority; and to Mr. Novra was assigned the duty of quietly watching the movements of the mediums, and explaining the method by which they accomplished "their dexterous tricks." And by the way this conjuror afterwards tried to make professional capital out of his experiences at Malvern, by getting up lectures at St. James' Hall, illustrated by large transparencies to expose Spiritualism, which were a gross travestie and a signal failure, but which, nevertheless, were greatly praised by two or three of the London journals.

We retired after the second *séance* to Mr. Kennard's rooms, and there Mr. Novra explained to Mr. Kennard's entire satisfaction, that the Marshalls effected their manifestations by the aid of a little boy, or a well-trained monkey, concealed under the petticoats of the elder female!

On the following day the Marshalls told me, when I called upon them, that Mr. Novra, whom I found sitting in their room, was keeping guard over them to prevent their leaving the town, and that Mr. Kennard had gone to the magistrates for a warrant to arrest them as rogues and vagabonds.

I went immediately to the court, and there I found Mr. Kennard with the Clerk of the Peace, who had made out an order awaiting the magistrate's signature. Col. Wilmott, the presiding magistrate, having arrived, he was handed the document for his signature, when I interposed, and demanded to know upon what ground such an outrage was about to be perpetrated. The Clerk read the section of the act affecting the conduct of rogues and vagabonds, "That if any money should be received under false pretences," &c. I asked Mr. Kennard if any money had been demanded of him, or if he or any one had paid any money to Mrs. Marshall. He was

obliged to admit that he had not ; and his shameful attempt to punish these innocent women, who had come to Malvern to oblige him, failed. This very unlooked-for episode, however, had a result which fully compensated me for the annoyance. The Marshalls could not leave as they had intended to do on that day, which was Saturday, and at my request they consented to remain until the following Tuesday. On returning to my apartments that evening, my landlord, Mr. Wilmore, asked me, as a special favour, to let him see something of these mediums' powers. He had, he said, been bath-man at Dr. Gully's for some years, and knew something of Mesmerism, but he had never seen anything of Spiritualism, and he did not believe in it.

I gave him a note to the Marshalls, and they arranged to come to his house on the following afternoon, when he invited several of his neighbours and their wives, who, with the inmates of his own household, formed a party of about ten or twelve persons. I and my family were to spend the day out, but before leaving I was accosted whilst walking round the garden by Wilmore's visitor, his daughter's suitor, Mr. Moore, who said in a strong Yorkshire accent—"I beg your pardon, sir, but I understand you say that a table can be lifted without human hands or machinery." "Yes," I said, "it can, by spirits." "And you say music can be played in the same way?" "Yes," I said, "it can." "Whoy I would as soon believe that this house could be pitched over yon hill ; I'm surprised at a gentleman like you talking in *that* way." I could not help smiling at the little man's earnestness and incredulity, and I asked him if he were to be of the party who were to meet that afternoon ? He said he was stopping on purpose ; then I said, "You had better save your indignation until you have had an opportunity of seeing what may happen."

I left home and returned about 10 o'clock, letting myself in, when my wife and daughter went to bed and left me alone in our sitting room, which was shortly after entered by Wilmore in a state of great excitement, and looking very pale. "Oh, sir," he said, "I am glad you have come in ; do come downstairs ; there's my wife and daughter in hysterics, and I don't know what to do." I accompanied him at once, and entered upon a scene which I shall never forget. On a chair near the door Miss Wilmore was seated, rocking herself about with her handkerchief pressed close to her eyes, screaming as hard as she could ; a small round table on three legs, whose antics it appeared was the cause of all the confusion, ambled up to me, *no one touching it*, and made me a profound bow, as if to say, "How do you do?" Mrs. Wilmore was pale and

trembling, and Miss Lee was lying on the sofa kicking and screaming in concert with her friend at the other end of the room. I went to her and tried to pacify her; the table accompanied me ambling like a dog in a frisky humour, and stood by my side. She recovered herself after a time, and in sobbing accents was about to explain, when the table, upon which her eyes were fixed, made a sudden jump at her and set her off again into violent hysterics. I then seized the table, and putting it down in the middle of the room, I said sternly, "Now, spirits, you have done quite enough; leave this family in quiet. Go! I insist upon it in God's name, go!" Whereupon the table remained quiet, and as soon as these good people had recovered themselves sufficiently, they commenced to explain what they had been doing, and how the excitement I witnessed had come about. At this moment I discovered that my Yorkshire friend of the morning was seated with his arms folded, doubled up, in a dark corner of the room, as much frightened apparently as the women, but quite silent. They then told me that during the *séance* of the early part of the evening, when the Marshalls were present, among other things it was said by the invisibles, that both Wilmore and his daughter were mediums, and after their family supper Mr. Moore suggested that they should try what they could do with the table on their own account. They accordingly sat round it, and soon obtained responses to their questions. Mr. Moore said, "I assure you, sir, it has been talking to us like 'a human.' It told me where my father lived, and where he died; and when we wanted to give up, the table actually refused, and it has been going about as you saw it, like mad, for nearly an hour. It's most extraordinary! It's most extraordinary! I shall deliver a lecture upon it in our town. Do you think I might?" "Well," I said, "I think you had better not; no one would believe a word of your statement. You would find them much in the same condition of mind that Mr. Moore was in this morning."

I went on the following morning to see Dr. Gully; I told him of the strange events of the previous evening, and this I believe was the first incident that stimulated him to a serious inquiry. He requested me to arrange a *séance* that evening with Wilmore and his daughter, which I did, and they proved to be the strongest mediums I have ever met, without having had any previous experience. The "rapping" sounds were loud, and the intelligence was even more than usually clear and coherent. Dr. Gully got a message purporting to be from his father, who gave the name of "Daniel." From that moment Dr. Gully's interest was awakened to the

importance of the subject, and having many opportunities of investigating since then, chiefly through Mr. Home, who has frequently been his guest, Dr. Gully is now, and has been for some years, a full and firm believer.

Dr. Wilson, too, became a convert and an enthusiastic advocate for the truth of Spiritualism, and in one of the last letters he wrote to me before his sudden death, he said he had determined to go to America to obtain all the information he could upon the subject.

The following is another incident of interest, which came within the range of my personal experience :—

Mr. John J. Schenk, a merchant in the City, who is a German by birth, but long resident in England, was introduced to me by Mr. Hy. Gibson, also a merchant in the City, who had himself been convinced of the truth of Spiritualism. Mr. Schenk was deeply imbued with the German philosophy, and as a matter of course totally opposed to Spiritualism. We talked over the subject for some time, when he exhibited the strongest, most contemptuous feelings for my reasoning and facts. He, however, consented to accompany me at once to the Marshalls, where among other startling evidences for which he was so little prepared, a small table, upon which the medium's fingers were lightly imposed, rose about a foot from the floor and remained suspended, when at my request Mr. Schenk stood up, and placing one hand on each side of the table, he tried in vain with all his strength to press it down.

The table resisted his efforts, just as if it had been supported by a powerful spring. This was enough; he threw up his hands and exclaimed in a state of great excitement, "Good God! is this true?" On the following morning he called upon me to tell me of his interview with his wife, who had been for some years a delicate invalid and unable to go into society. On arriving at home he immediately sat down and gave Mrs. Schenk a full account of his evening's adventures, which, wonderful as they were to him, seemed to excite no interest in her. She shook her head, and smiled at his earnestness. "You don't seem," he said, "to be in the least surprised at what I am telling you. Ah! I suppose you think I have been deluded, and you don't believe a word of it." "Yes," she replied, "I do believe it all. I have no doubt of the power of spirits; I know they can make themselves seen and felt. I have had experience of the fact for years past! My mother's spirit frequently comes to me, and only this very morning she laid her hand upon my shoulder as I was coming downstairs." Such a

statement made to him for the first time quite overwhelmed my friend.

He asked her "How it was that she had never told him of these things before?" and her reply conveys a lesson which I hope will not be lost upon some of my auditors. "Look," she said, "at the state of my health. Knowing your condition of mind, I dare not speak to you of these things. You would have thought them proofs of an infirmity of intellect, and as our doctor would probably have agreed with you, I might have spent the rest of my days in a lunatic asylum."

Mr. Schenk is now a confirmed Spiritualist; but he told me the other day he had ceased to talk about it, for he was sick of meeting with people who were so obstinate and incredulous.

#### AN INTERESTING INCIDENT.

To show how much wisdom there was in Mrs. Schenk's caution, I will relate a story as a case in point. I may not, in this instance, mention names. It would not be fair to the members of an excellent family who reside in the neighbourhood of London:—

I made a visit to a lunatic asylum in Yorkshire, some few years ago, and I asked the matron who was conducting me through it, whether any of the patients imagined they saw spirits. There was one lady, she said, that did, and at my request I was introduced to her. After a few words of ordinary conversation, I said to this lady, "I understand that you know something of a subject in which I am much interested. You see spirits, I am told, and have intercourse with them. Have you any objection to speak to me, and tell me of your experiences?" "Do you think," she replied, with a significant glance at the matron, "that this is the time and place to talk upon such a subject?" I felt at once the force of her remark, and turned the conversation to other topics. Before I left, she asked me if I knew A. B. "Yes," I said, "I know him intimately." "I am so pleased to hear that; he is my brother, and though I was placed here, where I have been detained for seven years by his consent, I know his loving and generous heart would not allow him to do an unkind or unjust act. He has provided amply for my comforts, and he has corresponded regularly with me until within the last two or three months, and now I cannot get a reply to my letters; will you, on your return, call upon him and ask him why he does not write, and why I am still detained here." I, of course, promised to do so, but before

leaving, I sought an interview with the doctor in charge of the establishment, and I asked him why Miss Blank was detained there. He said, "Because she is mad." "Do you think, I asked, she is mad because she says she sees and talks with spirits?" "Well," he replied, "I think that would be pretty strong proof." This was enough to satisfy me of *his* delusion, and I left the place with a sad heart. On my return to London, on the following day, I sought her brother, who is one of the most worthy men I know. He explained the case, which seemed to justify him in giving his consent to his sister being placed there in the first instance, and he showed me her letters. They were splendid specimens of a highly educated and superior woman. But in one corner of every letter there were two words written in large characters, which were not comprehensible, the meaning of which she refused to explain, and this was the doctor's proof that she was not sane. Her brother listened with great respect to what I had to say upon the subject. I suggested that those enigmatical words might be her spirit-name, which many mediums adopted, and which, if she had so explained it, would have been taken as additional proof of her lunacy. I entreated her brother to go and see her, and to judge for himself, not heeding what the doctor might think or say. He did so, and brought his sister away with him at once. This occurred about eight years ago, and they have lived, I am told in perfect harmony together under the same roof ever since. For the reasons I have stated, I do not mention the name of this family, but if any of the medical men present feel sufficient interest in this case, I will in confidence give the name to them that they may make enquiry and satisfy themselves that this is a truthful statement of facts.

#### THE DAVENPORT BROTHERS.

Of all the Spiritualistic exhibitions in England, that of the Davenport Brothers created most excitement. The conduct of the English press was very unjust towards these young Americans, and the brutality exhibited by the mob at Liverpool, and afterwards at Huddersfield, where, in both places, their cabinet was smashed, without discovering any concealed apparatus, is a disgrace to the police and magistracy of those towns. I have no hesitation in saying that the phenomena witnessed in the presence of the brothers and

Mr. William Fay, who accompanied them, were genuine from first to last.

The phenomena, for the most part, never were, and could not be, successfully imitated by any conjuror. These young men, on their arrival in London, came first to me with letters of introduction from friends of mine in America. I was the first person in England who witnessed some of the manifestations in a private room, and being quite satisfied of their reality, I got up the first two *séances* at the Hanover-square Rooms for a party of twenty city gentlemen, the majority of whom agreed at once that it was no delusion of the senses, nor were the manifestations explainable as a clever piece of legerdemain; indeed, if the Davenports were such accomplished conjurors, they must have been so from their birth, for the same phenomena were witnessed through their mediumship seventeen years ago when they were children. I will only speak of two among many marvellous facts witnessed by me :—

One was at the residence of Lord Borthwick. On that occasion Ira Davenport and William Fay were each bound to a chair within two yards of the company present. It was intended to show the wonderful feat of Mr. Fay's coat being twitched off in the dark interval of a few seconds, while his arms were fast bound behind him. But instead of that Ira Davenport's waistcoat came off, and was thrown at my feet, his coat remaining on, and on examining the waistcoat it was found to be fully buttoned, with his watch in the pocket, and the chain suspended and fastened through the buttonhole, just as he was seen to have worn it ten or fifteen seconds before.

The other instance was at the Hanover-square Rooms, when Professor Taylor, as he was called (who lectured at the Coliseum against Spiritualism, as long as it paid, but who since then has become a convert, and is now a proclaimed Spiritualist), tied Mr. Fay up in a most intricate way, with a long piece of rope, making many knots, and fastening the final knot at the back of the chair. It was then sealed by Colonel Drayson (I think it was he, who is an astronomer of high repute, in her Majesty's service at Woolwich, and an

avowed Spiritualist), and in two or three minutes, when the light was restored, we found Mr. Fay liberated with every knot removed *except the final knot*, which, of course, under ordinary circumstances, must have been the *first* to be loosened before the other intermediate knots could be untied. *This*, however, the *final* knot, with the seal intact, remained, and this is the identical piece which I cut off and carried away, and which I have had in my possession ever since.

#### MISS NICHOLL THE MEDIUM.

Miss Nicholl (now Mrs. Guppy) has from the first period of her Spiritual development, now about four years ago, exhibited a peculiar phase of mediumship which is as rare as it is extraordinary.

Flowers and fruits in great profusion, and many other substances, are invariably brought and presented to the persons composing the circle, which with her is always a dark circle; that is, the sitters, after making all necessary examination of the room—*any* room—and the surrounding conditions, are required to remain in total darkness, with the light restored at intervals to examine the results.

Those, therefore, who are not content to trust four out of their five senses, need not seek to know anything of the great marvels which undoubtedly occur at Mrs. Guppy's *séances*.

As I desire to speak only of such evidence as I have obtained by personal experience, I refrain from repeating statements which have been made to me by witnesses who are as competent and as reliable as I am, of what they have witnessed recently at various *séances* with Mrs. Guppy and Miss Neyland, a young medium who generally sits with Mrs. Guppy, and who is rapidly developing, I am told, as a seer and a very powerful medium for that phase called physical manifestations, which is the most useful, as it is the most convincing to the uninitiated; and as Miss Neyland has, I am happy to say, decided to make it her pro-

fession, all can avail themselves of her services by making an appointment with her; she resides with Mrs. Guppy. I had many *séances* with Miss Nicholl before she was married, at the houses of different friends, never at her own house, where, I believe, the most remarkable phenomena occurred.

I will describe the occurrences at one *séance* only, which convinced me of the marvellous power and intelligence which the spirits who manifest through Mrs. Guppy display:—

I was invited to the late Mrs. Houghton's residence, with whom her daughter, Miss Houghton (who is here present), lived; they, with Mrs. Pearson, Mr. John Tawse, a retired East Indian merchant, Mrs. Tawse, Miss Nicholl, and myself, composed the circle. The Houghtons always commenced their *séances* with prayer, and then sat quietly awaiting whatever the spirits chose to do. I had not been accustomed to sit quietly, but rather to ask questions of the invisibles to induce them to do what I required, instead of what they chose.

On that occasion we sat for a quarter of an hour in darkness, without obtaining a sound, and growing impatient, I begged Mrs. Houghton to let me conduct the *séance* in my way; but she objected, and I was obliged to submit. We sat another quarter of an hour without obtaining a manifestation of any kind.

I then appealed again to Mrs. Houghton, telling her that the only interest I now had in coming to a *séance* was that I might obtain something out of the ordinary routine, which I could carry away, and tell to others. She at length consented, and I at once asked if there were any spirits present? to which three raps were made in response, meaning yes! I then said I suppose that you are prepared to bring us fresh flowers as usual? to which the response was again yes! Then I said I don't want any flowers, and I will thank you not to bring us any; but bring us fruit instead, will you? Answer, yes! Then bring me, if you please, French plums. In less than a minute two French plums, remarkably fresh, and of fine quality, were placed in my hand. Mr. Tawse asked for almonds, and got them; Mrs. Tawse for raisins; Mrs. Pearson for a lemon; and each obtained what each had asked for. I was assured that no French plums, nor almonds and raisins, were in the house, and if there had been, it would have made no difference to me in the test I was making, for up to the

moment of making my request I had not thought of French plums, and therefore I need hardly say the medium could not have known my object. This is the fruit I obtained on that evening, somewhat shrivelled by time, having been in my possession more than three years.

We then, each of us, were sprinkled profusely with a perfume which we each had asked for. Essence of bouquet, lavender, and verberna, were three of the scents.

I was satisfied, and nothing can disturb my conviction of the complete intelligence and power, independent of any human being, which the spirits exercised at that *séance*.

Since then, the fruit manifestations have been, I understand, quite as common as flowers; and the recent manifestations of this character, both as to the size and the variety of fruits which have been brought to those composing the circle, far transcend in wonder anything in my experience. It must be understood that when these material substances are brought by the invisibles, the doors and windows are fast-closed, and no ordinary means left of entering the room.

This brief sketch of Miss Nicholl and her mediumship would be incomplete without introducing an episode, which carries with it a moral; and you will, perhaps, bear with me, whilst I tell the story in my own way:—

An independent gentleman of large experience, thoroughly materialistic in his views, wrote a book, the title of which was to have been, *Light, Instinct, and Intellect*. He has an intimate friend, Mr. James Wason, an eminent solicitor, residing in Liverpool, with whom in early life, say forty years ago, our author spent much of his time, and who joined with him in his war against the Bible and a belief in a life hereafter.

Mr. Wason is also a friend of mine of twenty-five years standing, and about ten or twelve years ago I had the happiness of making him a convert to Spiritualism, under circumstances peculiarly interesting, of which, however, it is not my purpose now to speak.

Meeting with his friend Wason, after a long absence in India, our author was told by him of his changed views and of his experiences in Spiritualism, and he replied, "I think the best thing you can do is to go to some highly respectable lunatic asylum and state your belief, which will entitle you to immediate admission," but Mr. Wason would not be satisfied until he had brought his old friend to witness some of the marvels of which he had spoken, and after some difficulty he accomplished it. "Whatever subject was talked of," says our author,

"seemed secondary to him : in short, there was no peace till I went with him to see those mediums." Our author, however, was not at all impressed by what he saw ; he was convinced they were cheats, and he ridiculed the whole affair, lamenting to think that this was the man who, before they had parted years ago, was, as he expressed it, always what might be termed a very materialistic character, such as might be expressed in the words, "I believe what I see, and I am not to be gammoned by any nonsense."

Our author, notwithstanding his regrets, gained something, as he thought, by contemplating the strange condition of his friend Wason's mind, and he sat down at once to add another chapter to his book with the heading, "What is Belief," in which he says :—"Belief is of all sorts, and shades, and quantities, dependent on a thousand circumstances.

"General belief we use every hour in the day. When we read the newspapers, we admit the evidence at once, as we do also in most of the minor affairs of life. But it is when something weighty affecting our happiness, or well-being, is presented to us that the question of belief becomes more intricate. Perhaps we believe because Dr. Johnson tells us it is so. Then it is not really we who believe, but Dr. Johnson who believes, and we are only looking-glasses who reflect the image Doctor Johnson holds up before us ; and if next day Doctor Jamieson holds up a stronger image before our minds, our belief in Dr. Johnson fades away, and we reflect Dr. Jamieson's belief. Or perhaps Dr. Johnson changes his opinion, and then we poor looking-glasses are very indignant with him, and feel ourselves at sea without a compass.

"Belief is not certainty, even although a person may say, 'I have not the slightest doubt on the subject.' That expression only means, 'The evidence is so strong that I admit the fact.' But it does not amount to *bonâ-fide* positive certainty."

"The action of the mind, if influenced only by the facts presented to it, is easy, and may be termed agreeable ; but it becomes disagreeable when extraneous authority is pressed into the service to induce and compel a belief repugnant to reason, and contrary to the known laws of nature.

"When my friend W—— puts the weight of his truthfulness in the scale, and insists that he feels affronted because I do not believe these strange things, I say he is wrong, and that he ought to carry a moving and talking table always about with him, as organ boys carry monkeys—otherwise it is the positive duty of every person, in the interests of society at large, to disbelieve every portion of such statements as are not capable of proof anywhere and everywhere ; because, when

once the mind is induced to open its doors and admit one absurdity, the door remains open to a hundred others. Respectable people say they have seen spirits; . . . the worst of such nonsense is that numbers of very respectable well-educated people believe it, and numbers of others, influenced by their respectability, are frightened, and know not what to believe."

With this celebrated chapter our author closed his now celebrated book, and after writing a very amusing preface in the same tone and temper, it was sent to the press, in the full confidence no doubt that it was a book above the common order of literary productions, containing impregnable scientific truths for all times.

But strange to say, before it was out of the printer's hands, 'a change came o'er the spirit of his dreams,' and he forthwith stopped the press, until he should consider how best to relieve himself from the dilemma in which he had suddenly been involved by that unfortunate chapter—"What is belief?" Strange things were positively taking place at his own house, and through a medium whom he could not doubt. Chairs and tables moved about, and material objects were carried out of the room and hidden in a very mysterious way. What was to be done? The case, as put by himself, of Dr. Johnson changing his opinion, came home with a point. Our author, however was equal to the occasion. He is an earnest, honest man, as you have seen, and a thinker; and after he was now satisfied that there was neither trickery nor delusion in the physical manifestations which he repeatedly witnessed at his own house, he set to work to find a solution—spirit, of course, was out of the question—some one of the half-million laws of nature, as Professor De Morgan suggests, "about which no one knows anything," must be the cause.

First he thought it would be only fair to read what the Spiritualists had to say in support of their "nonsense," and he accordingly, with some impatience, read through eight works. "Thank God!" he writes to a friend—"thank God, as people say, I have done reading about spirits. I have read the following works," which he enumerates, "2,894 pages, which, I think, is pretty well; and I have seen as much, or more, about it at home, as all these books put together contain. I have seen a table move totally alone, and a chair move totally alone—move just as you see a leaf carried along by the wind on a turnpike road, and I have had reasonable conversations with Mary Jane whenever I please; but I have neither seen nor heard anything to convince me, in the slightest degree, that

Mary Jane is the spirit of a deceased person. It is only a hitherto unexplained phenomenon of nature, which, until chemists and scientific men analyse it, will be made use of to get money from the many."

Now came the question: what is this power which issues from the human body, which, among other things, gives motive power to inert substances? I cannot follow the author in his very strange and possibly reasonable philosophy from a materialist's point of view; but he is an amateur chemist, and he makes it out that "Man is a condensation of gases and vapours," and "that these vapours (which Reichenbach calls *odylic*) emanate from certain persons, who appear to have phosphorus in excess in the system, and they form a *positively living, thinking, acting body of material vapour, able to move a heavy table, and to carry on a conversation, etc.*" When he had completed his ingenious and curious speculations, he published the whole in an appendix to his book, the title of which he changed, instead of *Light, Instinct and Intellect*, he adopted a less dignified title, and called it *Mary Jane; or, Spiritualism Chemically Explained*. And those who are in search of a solution against the spirit theory might be inclined to accept him as an authority, but for a very important fact, which (in giving the author's name to you in strict confidence) I am about to reveal. After the book was published, and fairly in the hands of the public, he had other evidences which overturned his philosophy for the second time.

The Davenports went to Paris, and resided with him for some months, and with the opportunities thus afforded through their marvellous exhibition of spirit power, our author's education was completed, and he became a Spiritualist. On his return to England, he made the acquaintance of Miss Nicholl, and ultimately made her his wife; and now, through her mediumship, which increases in wonder, Mr. Samuel Guppy, the author of *Mary Jane*, is no doubt prepared to meet all comers, and to do battle in defence of Spiritualism, and consequently he is now in his turn "entitled to immediate admission to a respectable lunatic asylum."

#### MRS. EMMA HARDINGE.

I will close this part of my subject by giving a few more particulars about remarkable mediums:—

Mrs. Emma Hardinge's arrival in England, in 1865, introduced a new phase of Spiritualism.

That lady, who is an inspirational speaker, made her first address from this platform, the subject being selected by the audience, and for an hour and a-half, without break or falter, this untrained woman, in the ordinary sense, poured forth and expounded the subject of her discourse in the most eloquent manner possible.

Mrs. Hardinge claims to be influenced by spirits, some of whom she recognises, and I believe in the claim; for in no other way can I reasonably account for the readiness and ease with which she takes up and dilates without a moment's preparation upon any and every subject presented to her. I know that some of my scientific friends deny the soundness of her expositions; but that is not her fault, and does not detract from the marvel that is presented in her person. If she be influenced by the spirits of departed men, they may not have belonged to the modern schools of science, which have thrown aside, as in chemistry, for instance, many of the teachings received as truths at the commencement of the present century; but who, nevertheless, may have been the great lights—the Faradays and Tyndalls—of *their* day, with a great deal more to learn not “dreamt of in their philosophy.” Mrs. Hardinge, who is an Englishwoman, has again returned to London, and during the last few weeks she has delivered several orations of remarkable eloquence in this hall; she is now engaged in holding Sunday evening services (with which I am not identified) at the Cleveland Assembly Rooms, near Fitzroy-square, where those who go to hear her discourses will, I am sure, be enlightened in many ways, whether they agree with all her teachings or not.

#### MRS. EVERITT, THE MEDIUM.

Mrs. Everitt, the wife of Mr. Thomas Everitt, a highly respectable tradesman, residing in London, is well-known as a spirit-medium. It is two or three years since I had the privilege of attending one of their private circles, when I witnessed some manifestations sufficiently marked, but much of the same character as I have already described with other mediums. Since that time, however, Mrs. Everitt's power has, I am told, greatly developed. Moving of ponderable bodies, chairs, tables, and other heavy pieces of furniture without human contact, and in a well-lighted room, are of very common occurrence. But the most striking manifestations which occur in this lady's presence, are those of flashing lights of various colours and sizes, and direct writing. Sheets of paper, previously marked for identification, are frequently

filled with philosophical remarks in the space of a few *seconds*. Some of these sheets have contained upwards of one hundred words, which were written in less than one minute.

The sitters, who are for this manifestation always in the dark during the process of writing, hear the pencil moving over the paper with lightning rapidity.

The facts on the whole, connected with Mrs. Everitt's mediumship, are extremely interesting, and would, if necessary, be attested by the signatures of more than a hundred respectable witnesses resident in London.

#### DR. J. R. NEWTON, THE HEALER.

Of Dr. J. R. Newton, the eminent healer, by whose recent visit to this country another phase of mediumship was brought to our notice, I need only say, that I, and many others, had ample evidence that he possessed the great gift of healing. Numerous well attested cases are to be found in London where the blind have been restored to sight; tumours have been instantly removed; and the lame have been made to walk. The cases in all instances, according to the testimony of the sufferers, had been of long standing, and had baffled the ordinary treatment of medical science. But whatever may be thought of his gift, of Dr. Newton himself it may be truly said, that he is an unworldly, simple-minded, kind hearted philanthropist, who has done a great work, and has made many sacrifices in the cause of suffering humanity.

Now I have presented to you, as briefly as it is possible in justice to this most important subject, a number of facts, together with the reasoning and testimony of many intelligent Englishmen, all more or less known to fame, who, after diligent and serious investigation, proclaim their conviction of the truth of Spiritualism and the reality of the phenomena. Is it possible to push aside such a mass of evidence, and treat such men as dreamers and fanatics? Can you have stronger cases than those of Dr. Elliotson and Dr. Robertson of the folly of condemning and denouncing *before* enquiry? It cannot be that you do not wish to believe; or that you can remain indifferent to the

subject, whether it be a truth or not? For my part, though I have long made up my own mind that spirit is the only solution that covers the manifold phases which are being developed hourly, I do not, and never have insisted, that others should accept that belief. All that I am concerned in is, to establish, beyond cavil, that marvellous manifestations, apparently in violation of natural laws, *do* occur, and that we, who believe in them, are under no delusion.

That being once acknowledged by the master minds, whose dictum rules society, I shall be content to wait the issue, and ready at any moment to change my convictions if it can be shown that I have been hugging an untenable belief. So far, and I have been a diligent student, no explanation that has been offered, no theory that has been put forward, covers the facts which have been witnessed by tens of thousands in this country, and I believe by millions in America, where I myself went ten years ago for the express purpose of fortifying my judgment. I put aside at once, and treat with profound contempt, all the childish nonsense which has been written about the tricks of conjurors, as explaining the manifestations of which we speak, and I warn those who have been misled by pretended exposures practised upon their credulity by another class of men, to put no faith in them. They are mediums; but, from very base and worldly motives, choose to deny it.

There have been, however, various theories put forward in opposition to the spirit-theory, which are entitled to the most respectful consideration. That of Dr. Rogers, which he propounded several years ago, is one. He embodied his ideas in an elaborate work entitled *The Philosophy of Mysterious Agents*, in which he refers the whole body of phenomena, physical and mental, to a cerebral action through the medium of "a physical force associated with the human organism,"

which agent, it is suggested, may be the *od* or *odic* force of Reichenbach. Professor Mahan, Dr. Samson, Mr. Bray, and others of the No-Spirit theory, have merely amplified Dr. Rogers' theory. None of these opponents, however, descend to the feeble position of denying the facts. "We admit the facts," says Professor Mahan, "for the all-adequate reason that, after careful enquiry, we have been led to the conclusion that they are real;" and he adds: "We think that no candid enquirer, who carefully investigates, can come to any other conclusion." And I may add that had these intelligent and candid men but waited awhile, they never would have published their theories, for the "all-adequate reason" that they do not meet the facts which have been since developed; and Reichenbach himself disclaims for the force which he discovered all such power as these writers attribute to it.

I will conclude by repeating a few words from an article written by myself four years ago, which, in the main, are applicable to the present time. I said:—

I have been recently assured by one of our leading journalists that Spiritualism finds favour at length with many literary and scientific men in this country; but, unfortunately, we do not see them; we have not yet heard their voices; they are silent when most needed. It is known that almost every journal published in the Metropolis has one or more members of its staff who are thoroughgoing believers in Spiritualism; and yet if any public emergency arises, they are dumb, and stand by whilst their associates are permitted to wield the pen, to misrepresent the truth, to mislead the public, and to encourage every charlatan in his pretended exposure of Spiritual phenomena.

"How long is this state of things to last?" I have asked of one who views with sorrow the position taken by certain members of his craft. "Ah," he replied, "if you knew as much of the press as I do, you would know that its tone may be changed in a day; and I think the day is not far distant when Spiritualism will find open advocates in the leading journals of this country."

We must, therefore, I suppose, stretch our patience, watch and wait, taking consolation, in the meantime, in the assurance that no *honest* man, whatever his condition of mind may be, saint or sceptic, religion or scientific, who will take the pains to investigate, can withstand the evidence, and will not at last feel abashed at his previous ignorance, and at his folly in so long standing out against a truth so cheering and enlightening. It is thus satisfactory to know, that despite all opposition, Spiritualism is marching on. I know it is, by the number of enquirers who personally seek information from me, and others who communicate their experiences to me. Much that we hear of, however, does not exhibit the best side of Spiritualism, and there is still much that is extremely puzzling even to the initiated; but all is instructive, and most of the facts deserve to be recorded so that they may be readily classified by the WISE MEN of the future. I say *future*, for it is evident that nothing in elucidation of these mysteries is to be expected from the leading authorities of the present day (recollect I was speaking four years ago), who are too deeply committed to the erroneous theories and dogmatic assumptions they have already permitted themselves to promulgate upon this subject. To the new generation, therefore, of thinking men, some of whom we know are now at work, we may hopefully look forward for a fair and candid examination of the claims of Spiritualism so soon as the rule of the *savans*, who have led the public astray, shall be a thing of the past.

At the close of this address—which, though occupying one hour and three-quarters in its delivery, was listened to with great interest and attention—the following discussion took place:—

## IS SPIRITUALISM WITCHCRAFT?

DR. LOCKHART-ROBERTSON said—I am sure I am only expressing the feelings of this meeting when I say that I think nothing could have been more admirable than the discourse which you have given us this evening, and you need have made no apology on the score of its literary merits. You were kind enough to allude to a few words I had published ten years ago in *The Spiritual Magazine*, and you gave the meeting very fairly an honest history of the event. I think, however, you did me a little injustice in not referring to the conclusion of my paper, where I distinctly said I admitted those physical phenomena to have occurred,—and phenomena which have been subsequently admitted by many other scientific men, for example, by Mr. Crookes, the great chemist in *The Quarterly Journal of Science* for last July,—but I distinctly stated that I felt sure that they were not Spiritual manifestations. I said, if I had any theory on the subject at all, that it partook more of the old spirit of divination which we read of, and that I was still disposed to connect these things with the old witchcraft, the Sibyls and the soothsaying which we read of in Scripture, traces of which run through all history, and which is, I think, to some extent, perhaps, revived under the auspices of your friends and others. If I have a theory, that is my theory, and I would quote to this meeting the name of Dr. Maitland. He is known to be one of the most learned men who have written in our generation, and in a very curious pamphlet of his *Some Enquiries into Mesmerism*—as the subject was then called—he very much dwells upon this idea. His pamphlet is rather a rare one now, and I think it might very fairly be the subject of a reprint in one of those numerous periodicals to which you refer, and as to the contents and quality of which I must say I very much differ with you. However, referring to Dr. Maitland's essay, he points out, in a very learned argument, the possibility of the phenomena of clairvoyance being very similar to the soothsaying of the damsel who followed Paul, and he also refers to the exorcists that the Apostle speaks of. One might almost apply the terms to certain mediums whom I have seen. I must say I think the whole subject has been exceedingly unfortunate in its advocates. I think the literature of Spiritualism, and I have read a good deal of it, is a poor mixture of very weak philosophy and of very secondary evangelical sentiment. And to think that the mighty dead come from their rest, and come from Hades in order to perform such physical phenomena, which I admit I saw, and yet I am unable to explain, is a theory I entirely reject. So much I think it due to myself to say as I have been quoted on this point. I certainly have seen other phenomena which it is due to science, and to truth, to say I am totally unable to explain. I have seen writing mediums obtaining intelligent communications, which I certainly cannot put down either to fraud or imposture. I have also seen things which are more doubtful, and I have also seen clairvoyance, and other very extraordinary manifestations. I think that the whole phenomena and the subject are, as you say, extremely well deserving of the further investigation of scientific men. Some of my friends are present to-night, men of scientific standing, and we have been promised a *séance* during this present week with Mrs. Guppy. I can only

say for myself, and I think I can fairly say for them, that we shall be prepared honestly to record the truth or falsehood of what we see. At this late hour in the evening, and with so very wide a subject, I do not wish further to intrude upon the meeting, but would just conclude with reading a few words I came across last night in Dr. Tyndall's address at Liverpool, which I think very truthfully and fairly represent the spirit in which scientific men are prepared to approach the subject.—“You never hear really philosophical defenders of the doctrine of uniformity speaking of impossibilities in nature; they never say what they are constantly charged with saying, that it is impossible for the Builder of the Universe to alter His work. Their business is not with the possible, but with the actual; not with the nature which might be, but with the world that is. This they explore with a courage not unmixed with reverence, and according to methods which, like the quality of a tree, are tested by their fruits. They have but one desire—to know the truth. They have but one fear—to believe a lie. And if they know the strength of science, and rely upon it, with an unswerving trust, they also know the limits beyond which science ceases to be strong. They best know that questions offer themselves to thought which science, as now prosecuted, has not even the tendency to solve. They keep such questions open, and will not tolerate any unlawful limitation of the horizon of their souls. They have as little fellowship with the Atheist, who says there is no God, as with the Theist, who professes to know the mind of God. ‘Two things,’ said Immanuel Kant, ‘fill me with awe—the starry heavens and the sense of responsibility in man.’ And in his hours of health and strength, and sanity, when the stroke of action has ceased, and the pause of reflection has set in, the scientific investigator finds himself overshadowed by the self-same awe. Breaking contact with the hampering details of earth, it associates him with a power which gives fulness and tone to his existence, but which he can neither analyse nor comprehend.”

#### ARE THE MANIFESTATIONS PRODUCED BY THE SPIRITS OF LIVING PERSONS?

DR. WYLD said—As you are aware, Mr. Coleman, I have been a believer of the phenomena of Spiritualism ever since the mediums first came to this country. I was one of the very earliest in this room to witness the manifestations which accompanied Mr. Home, and from that time up to the present, I have never had any reason to alter my impressions as to the cause of these phenomena. I believe in the physical facts; I have seen them over and over again, and I must believe in them; but my interpretation has always been the same. It is a very simple one. I believe that the phenomena are produced by spiritual power; the only difference betwixt myself and the usual Spiritualists is—that the ordinary Spiritualist believes that these phenomena are produced by the power of the spirits of departed individuals; I believe they are produced by the spirits of the living individuals present. Man is a spirit. It is common to say that man has a spirit, but I say man *is* a spirit, and *has* a body, and if departed spirits can produce these phenomena, I cannot see why the spirits of men not departed cannot equally produce them. The argument against that is this:—those who believe in these phenomena, believe that they have

evidence that they are produced by the spirits of departed relatives, and they say, "How is it, if our spirits produce these phenomena, that we are unconscious of it?" At first sight that is rather a difficulty; but if you think over it a little, the difficulty, to a very great extent, disappears. The nature of man is totally unknown to himself. For instance, every night we go to bed, and we fall asleep; we sleep for six or eight hours, and we are totally lost to ourselves. During that period of sleep we have no knowledge of ourselves; when we awake, we have no knowledge of what has passed during our sleep; when we are asleep, we have no knowledge of what has passed whilst we were awake. Therefore, I say, man is unknown to himself; that there is in the construction of his spiritual being a condition of things which he cannot explain; that he has two sides, the day side and the night. I believe it is this night side, if I may use the expression, which, unknown to ourselves, produces these phenomena. The same effect is often produced in fever; a man in fever says and does many things which he is totally unconscious of when he recovers. If a man takes too much alcohol or narcotics, he also says and does things of which, after the influence of the alcohol and narcotics has worn off, he is totally oblivious. That shows that a man may do things and yet not be aware that he does them. Indeed, there is a continually recurring, and very familiar illustration of this in the mere absence of mind. You wish to turn off the gas at the wall in your dining room; you turn it off at the lamp, and you again turn it off behind the shutter. The moment after you have left the room, you may say to yourself, "Have I turned off the gas at the shutter; I have no recollection of it?" You go back and find that you have. There you have done a thing only a minute before, which you are totally oblivious to a minute afterwards; you have done it automatically; you have done it rationally. There has been some kind of reasoning going on in your mind which has compelled you to turn off the gas, and yet you have no knowledge or recollection of it. I think that is a familiar illustration of the fact that the phenomena may be produced by one side of our minds, totally unknown to the other side. My doctrine is this, that these phenomena are produced by spiritual agency, but the agency is the spirits of the living, and not the spirits of the dead. I do not deny that the spirits of the dead may appear upon the earth, but all I say is this, that we know that we are spirits, and that if we know that we are spirits, why should we go to the spirits of the dead to account for these phenomena, when we know that there are actual spirits present?

The CHAIRMAN—They all say that they are spirits of the dead.

DR. WYLD—I am aware most of them say so.

The CHAIRMAN—They all say so in my experience.

DR. WYLD—Not all; I have often put the question. I have said, "Are these doctrines which I hold true?" and these individuals have replied "Yes." I have frequently met with that response from mediums. The difficulty in believing that they are the spirits of the dead arises partly from the contradictions that these spirits bring before us. A spirit will say; "I am the spirit of your grandfather." Three minutes afterwards the spirit will say, "No, I am merely joking; I am not the spirit of your grandfather." That is an experience which is continually recurring, and shakes our belief in the identification of the spirits. On the other hand, I

must say this, that there is a universal belief among mankind as to the influence of the spirits of the departed. The greatest sceptic, the strongest-minded man, if he is reading a book, we will say, in a remote room in some dreary country house, as twelve o'clock approaches feels an indescribable sensation of discomfort. Although he may be an entire sceptic, although he may deny in broad daylight that there is any such thing as spiritual power in the world, apart from the spirits of the living, yet all men, I may say nearly, have an indescribable conviction in their own minds, as the hour of twelve draws near, and passes, that there are such things as the spirits of departed individuals haunting this world. I admit that, and I think that that is the strongest argument we can have that these phenomena may be produced by departed spirits. I think universal belief held by people on any subject one of the strongest proofs we can have of the truthfulness of that belief. At the same time I recur to my first proposition, that I myself have never seen any phenomena which I could not explain on the theory of their being produced by the spirits of living individuals present.\*

#### CLAIRVOYANCE AND THE IDENTITY OF SPIRITS.

Mr. C. F. VARLEY, C.E., said—Ladies and Gentlemen, I should like before we close to tender the thanks of this meeting to our friend, Mr. Coleman—not only for bringing us together to-night, and for the concise, but rapid statement of events which he himself has witnessed, or of which he has had evidence through other channels equally as good as his own observation; but we are also indebted to him for his long career, fighting that battle against superstition which all scientific men have to fight to introduce new discoveries. Although he declares himself not a scientific man, still he has been carrying on that fight which must always secure to him the respect of all men whose respect is worth having, and therefore I wish, before the evening advances too far, that we should give an expression of our thanks to him, for what he has done to advance truth not only this evening, but prior thereto. I take this opportunity to join Dr. Robertson in the remark he made: that unfortunately Spiritualism is unlucky in its advocates. All he has said upon this point I certainly agree with. There are a few sections of society, however, which stand out, free from the charge which he very properly brought against the great majority of Spiritualists. Let us see of what the world at large is constituted. Last year, when going to one of Dr. Tyndall's lectures, I drove through some of London's principal thoroughfares, and saw crowds of people going to theatres, to Mr. and Mrs. German Reed's, and other similar places of mere amusement, which were open by the dozen, but there was but one place open that night for the exposition of the truths of science.

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\* At Mr. Everitt's circle, the invisible power has sometimes seized a pencil without the intervention of human hands, and written long messages in Latin, whilst none of those present understood Latin. How does Dr. Wyld explain this? Again, the sooner we cut our connection with our unconscious halves the better, if they show such a shocking want of veracity, and persist in calling themselves the spirits of departed mortals.—ED.

Now Spiritualism is a phenomenon which has in nearly all ages broken out chiefly amongst those whose heads have not been driven into a groove by hard erroneous study; they are people who are particularly natural, who, as it were, have not yet been perverted by the teaching of the day; and, therefore, at first sight, it is not to be expected that we should find amongst Spiritualists a larger percentage of intelligent people than we find elsewhere in society. A great deal has been said about the hypothesis, that these phenomena are not due to spirits but to clairvoyance, or some other action of one living brain upon another. Now if people will admit that the phenomena called Spiritual are due to clairvoyant action, they will at once admit the greatest part of the difficulty. To me, who am well acquainted with the phenomena of mesmerism and Spiritualism, there is nothing so incomprehensible as clairvoyance. They may say, "Oh, it is clairvoyance!" but they have still to explain what clairvoyance is. Will these gentlemen explain how it is that a clairvoyant, sitting in a room, can read the mind of another person. Ordinary people in their normal state possess no such thought-reading power. One striking case of clairvoyance which arrested my attention was brought to my knowledge by Dr. Dixon. A friend of mine was unwell; he was a great sceptic as to mesmeric power, but having been strongly advised to go to Dr. Dixon and consult his clairvoyant, he asked me to accompany him, and I went. On arriving at the house the clairvoyant was brought in and was entranced by the Doctor. She then described my friend's ailment, and prescribed for him. After he had been prescribed for, I said, "I am not very well; I should like to see whether the clairvoyant can tell me what I am suffering from, and the nature of my ailment." I accordingly sat down. Mark this—the doctor and the clairvoyant did not know I was going to consult them, and I had no idea beforehand of so doing. She was evidently a person in a very humble position of life. I sat down, and took her hand; she described where and why I was feeling pain. She then said, "Oh, there is something in his brain which is doing all this, and until he gets that out of it he will never be well." I could not for the life of me think what she was alluding to. She then described a machine which I had not then actually constructed, but which I had invented; it was not then even on paper. It existed only in my brain. She described that machine so clearly that I recognised it. The machine has been constructed, and is daily doing good work. You may say, "Oh, it is clairvoyance," but I should like to know what was the power by which that person was able to know what was in my brain. Those who content themselves by saying it is simply clairvoyance have really explained nothing. I have seen much of Spiritualism and mesmerism, and I can see no difference whatsoever between the trance produced by a man in the body, and a trance produced by a man out of the body; they are so exactly alike that to me there is no difference; and the moment you admit clairvoyance you at once admit nine-tenths of Spiritualism. The question comes, are we or are we not deluded, we who believe that our "*departed ancestors do come out of their graves to speak to us?*" as the doctor puts it in accents such as to indicate that it is so dreadful an idea as to be an impossibility. Spiritualists know that our ancestors are not in their graves, and never were. Now, I should like to put this question to any person who has a family: Suppose a father or

mother to have left this life when the children were young, and the mother to retain her individuality, can that mother be happy while those children are not progressing satisfactorily? can she be happy without a knowledge of what they are about? Do you think a mother can give up all her love for her children the moment she passes out of her body? If she does, she loses her individuality, and in fact ceases to be the *mother* of those children. If she remain a mother still, with all her motherly instincts (quickenened, it may be, by passing away), she will naturally be anxious for her children, and should she find the means and opportunity of guiding them aright would she not do so? The fact—*for fact it is*—that departed parents and friends are among us, and endeavour to help us as they did in life, seems to me exactly what we ought to expect. Now that I have gone through a training of Spiritualism and close thought on the subject for the last fourteen years, so far from it appearing to me to be unreasonable, I now see that it could not possibly be otherwise. I will mention one case which was a very remarkable one, and which has served as a sort of mile post whenever doubt has arisen in my mind upon this question. As there were three people concerned, and none expecting a communication, it is difficult to conceive a better test. In 1864, while occupied with the first Atlantic Cable—I ought to tell you I was working very hard, and did all I could to get the most rest out of the few hours left me—one night I was aroused by Mrs. Varley, who said, "There are such strange noises in this room that I am very nervous. I am really sorry to disturb you." I asked, "What was the matter, and what she desired." She said, "I wish you would let me have a little light." I lighted the gas, and put the flame up about half an inch, as desired, and then went to sleep. I had not long been asleep before she aroused me again and said, "These noises terrify me so I really must ask you to let me have a little more light." I put the gas full on and said, "Will that do? are you nervous now?" She said she was no longer nervous, and I went to sleep again, but was aroused for the third time by rappings at the window and the door, which I heard even while asleep. I sat up in bed and said, "Let us see what this all means," when, for the first time in my life (since I have been of age at least), I had the intense satisfaction of seeing distinctly before me a *spirit*. I saw him for thirty seconds, and could see the pattern of the paper on the wall through him. He gradually vanished, and when I turned to Mrs. Varley and said, "Did you see that?" I saw that her eyes were dilated, and knew from that that she was being entranced. She quickly became clairvoyant, when the spirit spoke to me through her, and told me this—"I have just appeared to my brother in Birmingham, and have been able to make him understand that I have appeared to you; I could not make him understand any more. I wish to send a message to him; will you send it?" I assented, and he gave me the message, which I sent to the brother the next day by post. The spirit not only did that, but he told me that he met with his death when at school in France, and that his death was occasioned by being stabbed by a Frenchman; that his mother and brother went to Paris, and as the father was very ill at the time, they took council together, and fearing the shock would disturb the father to a dangerous degree, did not let him know that the death was not a natural one. The spirit added, they

concealed the blood by placing oiled silk and blotting paper over the wound. The only people who knew it were his mother and eldest brother. The eldest brother came up on a visit the Saturday following, and began talking the matter over with me. When I gave him the above statement of his departed brother, he turned deadly pale, and said it was a thing which nobody knew of except himself and his mother. This is a case which I think that it is impossible to explain away by clairvoyance. I never saw that man in his earthly body; I have frequently communicated with him since. I never saw him before his "death," and his career was wholly unknown to me. Mrs. Varley had known him slightly when a young child. This is a very clear case: there were three of us engaged in it, one at a distance of 120 miles, and none of us expecting any communication—things wholly unknown to Mrs. Varley and me were correctly revealed, and the identity of the communicator clearly identified by vision in the first place, and the exposition of the nature of his death in France and other details. I cannot conceive how you can explain this, excepting that you admit that this individual did retain his identity after death, and did appear to both of us—to myself at Beckenham, and to the brother at Birmingham, and communicated these facts to me, which were unknown to anyone except the brother in Birmingham. If these phenomena are capable of being explained—as two speakers have insisted—by our own brains acting by clairvoyance upon the entranced person, how will the speakers account for the fact that the *communicators declare they are the spirits of others?* I will not detain you longer, but ask you to return our most cordial thanks to Mr. Coleman.

#### WHAT HYPOTHESIS MOST RATIONALLY ACCOUNTS FOR THE PHENOMENA?

Mr. LEIGHTON, of Liverpool, said—There is certainly no possibility of accounting for the facts of Spiritualism on the assumption that it is simply the embodied spirits around us who do the work. Statements are made which are absolutely opposed to our own convictions, and are thrust upon us by an intelligent agency, which is distinct from ourselves. How will Dr. Wyld's hypothesis account for that? Circumstances are stated to us of which we not only have no recollection, but of which we absolutely know nothing, and in many cases we have entire disbelief in what is affirmed. Dr. Wyld did not attempt to apply his theory to the facts mentioned by Mr. Varley, which are certainly duplicated by many others. I had a mesmeric patient who has told me not only things that I had forgotten, but things that I never knew, just as Mr. Varley was told things that he never knew. How is Dr. Wyld's hypothesis to account for this? One who has given attention to all branches of the subject knows very well that there is no hypothesis whatsoever that has ever been broached, short of the Spiritual hypothesis, that accounts for all the phenomena. The Spiritual hypothesis is adequate to account for the facts, and until a rival hypothesis is started which equally clearly and fairly meets every part of the case, it is absolutely unphilosophical and unscientific for any man to stand up and oppose it. To me it is the greatest wonder that men of scientific reputation can put up with the inferior hypothesis that they

profess to accept, and they are so distinctly capable of being riddled for their inadequacy, and set aside. I must confess I was a little amazed at Dr. Robertson's apology. I did expect something better from a gentleman capable of writing the articles I have read, than the apology that he has given for evading the Spiritual conclusion. The indefinite undetermined frame of mind in which Dr. Robertson is now, with regard to the Spiritual hypothesis, is very notable. But if he will do the same justice to the general phenomena of Spiritualism that he has done to the physical phenomena, whereby he was compelled to the conclusion that they were not the work of the embodied human beings present at their occurrence, I feel assured he will find himself landed just as positively and as certainly in the conclusion that the only possible explanation of the phenomena is the interaction of Spiritual agents with individualities as distinct as our own. That will be his first and most general conclusion. But, inasmuch as neither he nor anyone else has experience of any other class of spirits than the human (except, indeed, those of the lower—the animal—creation, which will scarcely be imported into the present discussion), he will find himself driven, at the next move, to admit that they are, what they themselves claim to be, disembodied human spirits. Of course, it is possible to explain the whole of the Spiritualistic phenomena upon the assumption that there is in the universe another order of beings, spirits not human, who are capable of producing the manifestations. We are obliged to acknowledge that that is a possibility. But then, as I have said, we have no *knowledge* of these beings, we have no experience of them; we only know the human being; and if the hypothesis of disembodied human spirits is sufficient to cover the ground, the other is gratuitous and unphilosophical. Professors of science and logic will discover, when they do Spiritualists the justice of knowing who and what they are, that there are amongst them, as Mr. Varley says, as large a proportion of clear, capable, scientific, cautious thinkers as there are amongst themselves. I know of many Spiritualists in my own walk who have been *compelled* to their conclusions against previous bias; in fact, there are very few of us that have not been so. It is not that we are led into it by natural proclivity to the spiritual; the mass of those that acknowledge themselves to be Spiritualists from an examination of the ordinary phenomena, will be found to be relatively deficient in the quality which makes people by nature believers in Spiritualism. Spiritualism is absolutely a scientific induction, and not at all—as it is supposed by popular writers, and those that have not really examined the facts—the easy and credulous acceptance of phenomena as Spiritual that they, forsooth, with their keen sight and infallible logic would never think of accepting as such. We know very well that, if they will just take the trouble to examine the phenomena as we have done, they will find themselves compelled to the same conclusion. Mr. Alfred Wallace, we have heard say he has never known any competent thinker or investigator to have thoroughly examined the subject without coming out a Spiritualist. That is a very strong statement from a man who must be acknowledged to be the peer of any of the scientific and philosophical men who doubt our conclusion. Dr. Robertson cannot conceive how the grand spirits of the past could leave their Hades to come and do the ridiculous things that are done. That is a very common statement amongst critics and opponents

of the Spiritualistic philosophy. My friend Dr. W. B. Hodgson wrote me a very strong letter upon that very subject, averring that the spirits of the dead must have lost their wits, and so forth, and that it was a sad thing to go into another life, and to have to come back and do such frivolous and trumpery things. Men who use that argument only illustrate their want of acquaintance with the subject. They know a certain part, and they do entire injustice to Spiritualism in representing the whole by the part. Everyone will confess that there are frivolities in the phenomena of Spiritualism. But, on the hypothesis that these are done by disembodied human beings, I should like to ask any gentlemen what they would expect. Every tick of the clock sends a human spirit out of the world. In what condition do these human spirits leave this earth? Are many of them in a condition to do other than just the things you see, especially when those at the *séance* ask for them to be done? Dr. Robertson, I believe, himself asked the agency to break the table. That might be called a ridiculous thing, but it was requested by Dr. Robertson. I say it was done rightly; and, if judged rightly, it will be seen to be one of the most important facts that could have been stated; it bears consequences which demonstrate our case. Those phenomena which are called "low" are in mercy given to our scepticism. If the Master of us all could say to the sceptic Thomas, "Reach forth thy hand and feel the wound, and be not faithless, but believing," there was condescension there to do as low an act—simply feeling a physical substance. But what was the object of it? That is the thing to look to. I say nothing short of the moving of a physical substance, which we know to be inert matter, will demonstrate to a man of the scientific quality of Dr. Robertson,—aye, and of myself too, for that matter,—the independent, intelligent agency. That is what we want,—a demonstration of intelligence without brain. I ask, is it a vulgar, a small thing, a poor thing, that you should have a demonstration of intelligence without brain? A pencil started up in my presence, and wrote this interrogative sentence upon a slate, "And is this world of strife to end in dust at last?"—a sentence that was not in any of our physical brains. There was an intelligence there that had prehensile power over that pencil, and which wrote that sentence out on the slate in my presence. There was in this a demonstration of intelligence without brain; and that intelligence claimed to be the disembodied spirit of a human being. Does Dr. Wyld, or anyone taking his view of the case, believe that any of our unconscious undiscovered powers were competent to do this act? But the intelligent agent which did it claimed, as I have said, to be a disembodied human spirit. I want to know on what hypothesis Dr. Robertson, or Dr. Wyld, or anyone, will dispute the validity of that claim? I say it is unphilosophical for them to think of any other intelligences, because they have no knowledge whatever of them. The scientific ground is that of the Spiritualist; the disembodied human being is the most natural hypothesis. It is one—I might say, it is the only one—that you are justified by the ordinary rules of logic in assuming, since it is the simplest that is competent to cover the whole ground, and to take up any other would be unphilosophical. Divination has been alluded to. What is divination? It is simply a proof that in the olden time they had the same faith we have ourselves. Divination is similar to the phenomena spoken of by Mr. Varley—clairvoyance. Divi-

nation has a great variety of characters. We believe, as scientific people, in the possibility of the witch of Endor and of her recorded action, because we see similar phenomena around us. The miracles of the New Testament are rendered credible to those who could not believe them before, because they see similar things done to-day. Human nature is the same this century as eighteen centuries ago. We are entitled to suppose that the human being, given the wants, will have those wants supplied. The tendency of man to the inductive philosophy, to the observation of sensuous facts, and the correlation of physical forces, led him to suppose that there was nothing else but matter and the functions of matter; and when that doctrine began to prevail, these manifestations came to show that the scientific men were all astray. I was told not long ago, by the father of one of the first wranglers in Oxford, that almost every professor in Oxford was a materialist. Think of that, the chief seat of learning of our country, given up so much to the narrow scientific philosophy of the day, as to suppose that the mind of the human being was simply a function of the brain, and when the brain was out, the man was done. I believe that is a just representation of the mass of our philosophical teachings; and these despised physical phenomena were the very things that were wanted to counteract that belief. But the theology of Christendom needed correction no less than its philosophy: it needs it still, for still the horrific doctrine is popular that human beings, when they die, pass, on the one hand, by a species of spiritual thaumaturgy into unearned eternal bliss, or, on the other, into aimless and unending misery. If the puerile and commonplace character of many of the communications, and the obviously undeveloped and tricky nature of many of the poor creatures who visit the spiritual *séances*, did nothing more than explode so gross a blasphemy against the loving Creator as this hideous belief, they would do a beneficent work. The one class of "low" facts explodes the physiological fallacy, that the mind is simply a function of the brain; the other explodes the theological blasphemy of eternal damnation.

The CHAIRMAN—I regret very much that we are unable to continue the discussion in consequence of the long time I unfortunately took up. The thought has occurred to me that this would be a very good place to have a meeting entirely devoted to the subject, if Dr. Robertson, Dr. Wyld, and half a dozen others, would undertake to conduct it on one side, we will find half-a-dozen to conduct it on the other. If we cannot maintain our own upon the spiritual basis, we must yield it; but nothing that Dr. Robertson or Dr. Wyld have said would in the least degree influence my mind. Dr. Robertson says I omitted a portion of his paper; I did it in common justice to himself, for the reason that it did not meet the facts at all. It would have been an injustice to him if I had quoted any more, because I must have also quoted the reply made to him at the time in the *Spiritual Magazine*, which was the most complete reply I ever read. It was so complete that I did not think Dr. Robertson would ever venture to express the same opinions again.

Mrs. HARDINGE—I would not intrude upon you at this late hour, did I not fear that the motion of our friend Mr. Varley to return Mr. Coleman the vote of thanks which he so amply merits, and which I am sure every one present, however they may differ with him in his conclusions, must

accord to him in virtue of his kindness, and in virtue of the forbearance with which he has borne, during many years, the scoffs and sneers which such industrious and persevering investigations have deserved at the hands of the sceptics. In virtue also of the instruction which he has bestowed this night upon us all, not in the form of a mere essay, but in that of a complete volume, I am sure you will all readily join with me, though I have the misfortune to be one of Spiritualism's "unfortunate advocates." Nevertheless, standing as I do in such most excellent company as Dr. Ashburner, William Howitt, William Wilkinson, Mrs. De Morgan, and a few others whom our excellent chairman has named to-night, I may venture to felicitate myself upon my misfortune, and therefore I ask all here present, whether you admit yourselves in the same category or not, to join with me most heartily in seconding Mr. Varley's vote of thanks to our respected chairman.

The vote of thanks was carried with acclamation. Mr. Coleman then announced that next Monday (January 16th), the Rev. Dr. Davies, a minister of the Church of England, would read a paper on Spiritualism in the Beethoven Rooms; and it would probably give rise to an animated discussion. He should be very pleased to see all the listeners present at the meeting on the following Monday evening.

The proceedings then closed.