

# SPIRITUALISM, THE MODERN MYSTERY;

AS A QUESTION OF THE DAY.

VIEWED FROM A NEUTRAL STAND-POINT.

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## TWO LECTURES

GIVEN BY H. VENMAN, AT THE PIMLICO ROOMS,  
WARWICK STREET, ECOLESTON SQUARE, S.W.

On the 2nd and 9th of December, 1873,

AND

AT THE GROSVENOR WORKING MEN'S CLUB,  
BUCKINGHAM PALACE ROAD,

On December 19th, 1873.

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# SPIRITUALISM.

## THE MODERN MYSTERY.

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It is my intention to deal with the subject of this evening's Lecture strictly as a QUESTION, and that an open one, viewing it from an entirely neutral stand-point, and giving a summary of the evidence for and against with judicial impartiality. I do not come forward to give my opinion up on its reality, or non-reality, its propriety or non-propriety. I place my audience in the position of Jurors, to come to what decision they may be able, or even perhaps to none.

This as it were judicial mode of dealing has I believe been but seldom if ever resorted to by speakers or writers on the subject. We have had believers and advocates on the one hand, zealously propagating their beliefs and opinions from the Platform and through the Press; and opponents uttering denial or condemnation from the same sources, from the Scientific Lecture-room, and on a few occasions from the Pulpit as well; but with the exception of the London Dialectical Society's Committee of Investigation, few persons have taken the trouble to acquire the most superficial knowledge of the alleged facts, previously to forming and proclaiming their convictions. One says, "it is contrary to scripture," but when asked how, confesses he is unable to explain. Another denies the existence of its alleged phenomena, but with the same breath mentions accounts of

them given by non-spiritualist eye-witnesses, of whose intelligence and discernment, as well as rectitude, he has the highest opinion, and whom he will on no account believe untruthful, or deluded as to facts, thus refuting his own assertion, if any evidence is worth acceptance. Another says, "I don't *understand* it, *therefore* it is Satanic," a sequence somewhat illogical. A fourth, "I don't know anything about it, and am therefore certain it must be Electricity, or the manifestations alleged do not occur at all, consequently they are jugglery." Another will say, "being in defiance of known natural laws they *cannot* occur; independent movement of inert matter is impossible, a table cannot move without visible means, and against the law of gravitation." But a Balloon is made to overcome gravitation by an *invisible* gas, and motion, without contact, is induced in the telegraph needle by the *invisible* magnetic fluid.

To all objectors as to reality of the alleged facts the Spiritualists persist in replying, like Galileo of old, "still it moves," Is their assertion, like his, to remain unrefuted? Are we really to seek for the living unto the dead?

It has been said that the ends of study are best served by announcing undiscovered regions of thought, and so communicating through hope new activity to the torpid spirit, and certainly few subjects tend to lead the mind into higher, deeper, or wider ranges of speculative study than those which concern our own nature and our future.

Placed at the head of the animal chain by his organization and mental attributes, Man is subject to laws which originate from various causes, over which he possesses limited power, the result of the exercise of his mental attributes. It is also said that to Man belongs a continuous existence, with consciousness of individuality and identity,

after everything by which we have been used to recognize him as an individual has clearly ceased ; and the substance of which he is a mode is either entirely incognisable, or is cognised under conditions (as for example, of decomposition into the inorganic, or entire or partial absorption into other animals), which preclude the possibility of any admission of continued existence on the part of the individual.

That is to say, any existence of a distinct immaterial entity, uninfluenced and uninfluencible by the conditions which affect the human body.

According to this belief, Man must be considered *both* as a Spiritual entity, possessing attributes and faculties peculiar to himself, and as an organised material Being, endowed with functions and bearing relations to surrounding matter in common with the lower animal creation. The associated action of these constituents ultimates in what is known as Man, and many philosophers incline to the belief that Man is *only* Man while these constituents are in that state of affinity or combination known as life ; in fact that death either temporarily or permanently destroys man's individuality—while others regard the Spiritual entity as the real Man, the material body being but an instrument or accessory to enable him to play a part in the visible world during his probation thereon. It must always be remembered, however, that there is such an essential *duality* of thought and matter, that mind cannot be a *result of organization* or an outcome of spontaneously generated matter according to the ideas of the Materialists.

In our utter ignorance of the "laws" of what we call Spirit, our ideas and descriptions of this intangible and impalpable part of ourselves are really only descriptions of the absence of all known properties of matter, with the



addition of capabilities and properties, as well as powers or forces, which we imagine it must possess, because we find them wanting in the material, or at least not perceptible therein, by our external senses.

It is to be regretted that those who carefully observe and truly report any fact of an extraordinary or supramundane character, generally receive denial, abuse, ridicule, and every kind of injustice, from lofty scorn to vulgar invective, and are treated with more or less civility in the expression as either knaves or fools, liars, or victims of imposture.

There have been certain extraordinary mental phenomena occurring at all periods, and in every stage of human culture and condition of society, in which we have all more or less believed, but about which there have been the most diverse opinions. Some have treated such phenomena as delusions, or a something bordering on insanity,—many have sneered at, or tried to laugh them down,—some have ascribed them to imposture, and refused to believe in them at all,—while others most devoutly believing in them, supposed them to be occasioned by visits from the spirit world. The witch has been supposed to have communication with the Devil, and to have obtained from him, in barter for her soul, some worthless power of doing evil for the sake of doing it. The Diviner has been supposed to be indebted for his knowledge to good or evil spirits according to the character of his divinations: but the disposition to believe in Spiritual Agencies as a means of escaping from the necessity of patient observation, and the labour of collecting facts and tracing them to their causes has very much diminished of late, though it is interesting always to discover that the further progress we make in philosophy, the less

reason have we to believe that the universal testimony of ages and nations to the appearance of seemingly supernatural beings is not a false testimony, but at worst a little exaggeration. It would seem not so very unreasonable to imagine, that although the Spirit is invisible in its natural state, the Soul may by will or other power be able to cause it to assume certain modifications, which may render it temporarily visible, and even tangible, as happens to vapour by condensation, and since it is by means of the intervention of sounds and movements, produced by action of the Spirit, determined by the soul (or will) on the inert matter of our physical organizations, that we communicate ideas to each other, while in the material body, it is not surely so very inconsistent to imagine that sounds should be employed by disembodied souls to indicate their presence and thoughts, when themselves invisible, by reason of certain laws of the immaterial, with which we are unacquainted, The Rev. John Wesley has well said, "What pretence can I have to deny well-attested facts, because I cannot comprehend them? if belief in the possibility of the intercourse of Spirits with men be denied, it is in fact giving up the Bible, and if admitted, the whole system of Deism, Atheism, and Materialism falls to the ground."

One of the strongest objections urged against accounts of these occurrences is,—Did you ever see them yourself? But it may be answered, No, nor did I ever see a murder, yet I believe there is such a thing, and I cannot, as a reasonable man, deny the fact, though I never saw it, and perhaps never may. It should also always be borne in mind that visible natural phenomena mostly proceed from an *invisible* cause, as attraction and repulsion from magnetism; growth from an inherent formative power, "Vitality,"

the result of we know not what; and the same may be said of nearly every function and phenomenon of nature, including thought, volition, etc.

Before referring any peculiar phenomena, either in the outer world or in the human mind, to the direct agency of super-natural good or evil powers, over riding or setting aside the ordinary laws of the Universe, and interposing with a *special* agency to effect some special object, we should be quite sure that we are not dealing with *natural* phenomena. For however strange, difficult, complex, or obscure these latter may be, we may yet hope, by patience and perseverance, to come at length to understand them, while we could not hope to contend with spirits, or to comprehend what are the motives which influence them, or what are the principles which may determine them to interfere or to remain inactive. For as the material, as I before stated, can but negatively apprehend the immaterial, the difficulty of ascertaining laws and conditions of the latter would seem almost insuperable.

The arguments of the Metaphysician have been accepted by many as having *amply proved* the existence of a spiritual entity in Man, distinct from the material organization in which it works, and by which it is brought into relation with the external world. By attempting to investigate these phenomena on the hypothesis that they are neither accidental nor supernatural, but simply manifestations of the human mind, acting in accordance with certain fixed laws, and so referable to some common law of human nature, we shall be moving in the direction of the truth. For the work of the pure physicist lies among material facts, and as long as he finds natural conditions sufficient for the explanation of such mental



phenomena, he may wisely abstain from seeking for other causes. But, if he cannot collect material facts sufficient to prove the existence of spirits, nor trace evidences of their continually traversing the order of this lower world, he cannot *disprove* their existence. Such facts there may be, though they elude his observation, or he may not yet understand how to search for them, or what kind of facts to look for.

The great difficulty in the way of a scientific investigation of such questions is that we are dependent for facts on the observations of individuals, we cannot cause them to be repeated at will, so as to experimentalise upon them, and the observer being generally at the time of observation in a super-excited state of mind, and becoming more excited by what he has witnessed, relates to us the fact, and with it his own interpretation, generally delivered in a dogmatic form, and abundantly coloured by the imagination. The strong tendency of the human mind to pry into the unseen, and to discover the actual relations of the present to the future, is far indeed from being a thing of to-day, but it would certainly seem that some of the most vital questions involved in this great theme were never so anxiously considered by large numbers of people as now. Spiritualism, whatever may be our opinions of its truth or fallacy, is certainly worthy of serious attention as one of the features of modern civilization. Originating under its existing phase less than a quarter of a century ago, in America, it has since that period been diffused through Britain, and the Continent, and is now extending to the East, where, however, under some form it has never ceased to be cultivated. During the process of diffusion, more rapid in regard to geographical extension than any similar

movement on record, except Mahomedanism, it has attracted the attention, not alone of the vulgar and the ignorant, or even the morbidly curious, but of persons in all classes, from the monarch to the peasant. The agency of departed spirits, both good and evil, has been claimed by this mysterious intelligence in all its numerous forms of manifestation, for itself, steadily, against all opposition, from its first appearance over twenty years ago, until this day. Wherever this intelligence has been interrogated under conditions which itself prescribes, its great leading and persistent response to the question, "What are you?" has been, "We are Spirits." Judging by what has been reported by the witnesses of these "manifestations," it would seem that whatever may be the character of the intelligence in the back ground, the communications are so modified by the qualities of the "medium," and the accessories of the "circle," that the phenomena are a compound result of manifold influences, demanding the most careful discrimination in any attempted estimate of their value, whether as psychological facts or spiritual tests. One of the chief questions in essaying to estimate the value of the evidence of the phenomena, by proving if the "intelligence" be that of those present, (in the body,) or of disembodied spirits, and which seems as it were to stand on the threshold of enquiry is,—Do the communications ever surpass the united knowledge of the circle?

From these introductory remarks we will proceed to consider the rise and history of Modern Spiritualism, with its phenomena, rules, and conditions, as set forth by its professors in Lectures, Literature, &c., keeping as closely as possible to their own words, in many cases quoting literally, that the case they submit may as it were speak



for itself. This done, we will go on to examine the various solutions offered in explanation or refutation of its phenomena, and the theories advanced for its subversion, with the view to estimating their efficiency—first, then, as to the rise and history of Spiritualism.

It is believed to have commenced in America, in the house of a family named Fox, in Hydesville, U.S. Rappings having no visible cause were heard in and about the house in which they lived. On interrogation, intelligent responses were found to proceed from these sounds. By the means of a code of signals, one rap to mean No, and three Yes, the agent producing the sounds stated that he was the Spirit of a Man, who had been killed in that house many years ago, and that his bones would be found under a certain spot in the cellar. This on examination proved to be a fact. The account of these phenomena given by Mrs. Fox, under date of March 1st, 1848, is as follows:—

“My husband had not gone to bed when we first heard the noise this evening. I knew it as distinct from all other noises I had ever heard in the house. My daughter, who is fifteen years of age, said in sport, ‘Now, just do as I do, count, One—Two—Three—Four,’ at the same time, striking one of her hands upon the other. The exact number of blows which she made were repeated, she became startled, I said, count ten, when it made ten strokes or noises, I then asked if it was a spirit, and if it was, to give two sounds? I heard two sounds as soon as the words were spoken.”

When it became known that the Fox family were said to be holding communications with disembodied spirits, many persons began to enquire into it, and to question the strange noises they heard, in many cases receiving intelligent answers. This strange matter soon spread, circles of enquirers were formed, numerous so-called Media of these spirit communications were developed, and numbers of

intelligent and scientific men announced their convictions that no known law could account for these phenomena.

Spiritualism was introduced into England in the year 1855, by Daniel Douglass Home, and for 18 years has been spreading over this country, most rapidly however, both in London, and the Provinces, during the past five years, public opinion being very divided as to its nature.

The extent to which it has attained is by many persons not even imagined. On the authority of Judge Edmunds, of New York, it is stated that in the year 1867, there were in America eleven millions of spiritists, in other words, every fourth person in that country; and in 1864, according to Wm. Howitt, there were twenty millions of spiritists in the whole world. Since these dates the growth of the system has been rapid and extensive. In London, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, and numerous other towns and cities, regular weekly, and fortnightly sèances are held, and its supporters have their newspapers and magazines, while hundreds of volumes, and myriads of tracts, have been published in advocacy of their cause.

A complete system of philosophy has been established in France, by Allan Kardec, in America, by Andrew Jackson Davis, and Anna Blackwell as the "Great Harmonia," and the "Re-incarnation Theory," while a form of Religion has also resulted, which has organised itself into a Church, amongst the Priests and Priestesses, of which we find in the foremost ranks, Mr. Peebles, Mrs. Hardinge Britten, and Mrs. Cora Tappan, who has been conducting the services of the so-called Spiritual Church, every Sunday evening, in the Metropolis. The ethics of spiritual philosophy and the tenets of the Spiritual Church, based as they are said to be on the direct "teachings of the spirits," I

must leave to be dealt with on another occasion, as it is now time we took a glance at some of the alleged, "Manifestations." These are said to be, 1st those known as "*physical*," (being of the grosser or lowest grade,) such as the moving of material substances, without material contact, and in opposition to known forces; the production of sounds without the use of material substances or visible contact, as the rappings upon furniture, walls, etc., and the playing upon musical instruments, Levitations, or the floating or carrying of the human body in the air, in defiance of the law of gravitation, without visible support, and the conveying of persons from one place to another at a great distance without the ordinary means of locomotion or transit, as witness, the reputed aerial journey of the Rev. Mr. Monck, who has recently stated, that having retired to rest, at Bristol, one night, he awoke in early morning at Swindon, on the lawn of a clerical friend, none of the usual means of transit having been available to him during the intervening hours; also, the carrying of Mrs. Guppy, and the depositing of that lady in a room, with closed doors and windows, within which a dark séance was at the time being held, no solution of continuity of the ceiling, doors, walls, or windows, being observable after the event. The following account of this occurrence was given by a well-known Manchester merchant in a letter which appeared in the "Echo" newspaper on the 8th of June, 1871, the editor in a foot-note testifying to the high respectability of the writer:—

"At a Circle held at the house of Herne and Williams, in London, there were present three ladies and eight gentlemen, many of them strangers to Spiritualism, the room was darkened and the doors locked, but neither door nor window could have been opened without the admission of light from the outside being perceptible to the company



present. After various phenomena, some one asked the Spirit (Katie King) to bring something; another observing in a joking way, 'I wish she would bring us Mrs. Guppy,' upon which some one else remarked, 'good gracious, I hope not, she is one of the biggest women in London.' The Spirit Katie's voice said 'I will.' The Spirit John King shouting 'you can't do it;' we were all laughing at the absurdity of the idea, when in an instant somebody called out 'there is something on my head,' simultaneously with a heavy bump on the table, and a scream. A match was instantly struck, and there was Mrs. Guppy standing on the centre of the table, with the whole of us seated around it, closely packed together as we sat at the commencement. Both doors were still locked, Mrs. Guppy appeared to be in a trance, and completely motionless, she had one arm accross her eyes with a pen in her hand, and an account book in the other, which was hanging at her side. When she came to herself she seemed very much affected, and began to cry, she said, the last thing she could remember was, that she was sitting at home, three miles away, making up her week's accounts of household expenditure, and that a friend (Miss Neyland,) was in the room with her, reading a paper. The ink in the pen was wet, and the last word she had begun to write was smeared and scarcely dry. From the joking remark about bringing Mrs. Guppy, to the time she was on the table, *three minutes did not elapse*. After the séance was over, three of us offered to escort her home, so that enquiries might be made at her house, before she would have time to say what had been done, though the idea of collusion seemed preposterous. We found Miss Neyland in great wonderment as to what had become of Mrs. Guppy. She stated that at the precise time of the occurrence, Mrs. Guppy having taken off her shoes, was warming her feet by the fire, and she (Miss Neyland) was reminding her of items of expenditure to enter in her account book, when, suddenly looking up, she was astonished to find Mrs. Guppy gone. She searched the house, but could not find her."

The Spiritist's theory of such phenomena as these is, that through the magnetic emanations from the bodies of media and sympathetic persons, certain spirits seem to have acquired such perfect control over solid matter that they can instantly, at will, not only destroy the power of cohesion of particles, but by reversing the polarity,



change it to repulsive force, by which the particles are made to separate. In this way the substance of a door, or a portion of the wall of a room will expand and become so plastic, that any solid matter or person may be made to pass through without the least sense of resistance. A similar occurrence took place with another medium, Miss Lottie Fowler, who is alleged to have been transported from an omnibus going up Oxford Street, to a house in Green Street, Grosvenor Square, into the midst of a séance being held there at the time, to which she was then on her way. We are also told of the floating of the body of Mr. Home, in presence of a number of gentlemen, out of one window in a room in Ashley Place, Westminster, and at another, without visible support, as testified to by Lord Adare, the Master of Lindsay, and other reliable witnesses. Mr. Home made the following statements relative to these and similar phenomena in form of an affidavit as follows—

“These phenomena occurring in my presence have been witnessed by thousands of intelligent and respectable persons, including men of business, science, and literature, which have rendered (even if I had desired it) trickery impossible. They have been witnessed repeatedly, and in their own private apartments, by their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of the French, the Emperor, Empress, and late Empress-Dowager of Russia, and other members of their family, the late King of Bavaria, the present and late Kings of Wirtemberg, and the Queen of Holland. These august personages had ample opportunities, which they used, of investigating these phenomena, and were quite competent to discover and expose anything like contrivance on my part, to produce them.”

In addition to the carrying of human beings, flowers, fruit, bushes, turf, snow, and numerous other articles, are said to have been brought into closed rooms, at the expressed or un-expressed request of the sitters, being conveyed there by invisible agency from the outside during the

respective séances. Recently, live lobsters and eels have been said to be so brought; an eel being found twined round the neck of Mrs. Guppy, to her horror and alarm. Mr. Jencken, a well-known and talented barrister, gives evidence of similar occurrences as follows,—“Of the lifting of heavy objects, I can testify to these myself. I have seen the semi-grand piano at my house raised horizontally 18 inches off the ground, and kept suspended in space two or three minutes. I have witnessed a square table being lifted one foot off the ground, and an accordeon suspended in space for ten or twenty minutes, and played by an invisible agency. I hold that the moving and carrying of bodies without visible contact, must be conceded as an established fact.”

Mr. T. Grant, in a Paper read before the Maidstone Philosophical Association, states

“That all kinds of animals, birds, fruit, plants and other objects have been fetched at request from long distances, and brought almost instantaneously into the midst of a circle sitting in a room; with the doors and all outlets carefully secured, and placed upon the table, having been passed through the walls or roof of the house, as if no impediment existed.” He further says, “one occasion when it was snowing in the street, one of a circle sitting in a well-warmed room asked the spirits to bring in some snow, when immediately it was found that snow was falling in flakes upon the table, and when after a time they were told to light the gas, a depth of several inches of snow covered the table, leaving the even crystalline surface peculiar to newly-fallen snow, and what is most remarkable, although the table was perfectly covered to the very edge, none fell upon the carpet or beyond the table. When the snow was removed, large lumps of ice weighing over half a pound each were found under the snow.”

Spirits are also said to have shewn control over fire to the extent of placing hot or glowing coals from the grate in the hands of persons, or upon their heads, without burning

them or even singeing a hair, and to have produced lights of varied magnitude and intensity from a faint phosphoric appearance, the size of a pea, to a brilliancy almost rivaling that of the sun and as large as a man's head. So much for what are called more particularly physical manifestations, which however are said to require the presence of a "Medium" for their production under the title "*Mediumistic phenomena*" are further included, Trance Speaking, Trance Writing, and Trance Drawing and Painting. Mr. Morse, being an example of the first, a lad named Charles Swan of Aylesbury, and a Mr. Duguid of Glasgow, of the last named phenomena, which are said to have been achieved in total darkness, and in so marvellously short a space of time as it would be impossible for any human being to accomplish them in by ordinary means. It is said in these cases that the work is done by "spirits" who having partially as it were displaced the spirit of the medium and occupied his body, use it automatically as an instrument whereby to project their acts and thoughts, into the plane of the material to become thus cognisable to our ordinary senses and faculties.

Of the mediumship of Charles Swan his Nephew, Mr. Thos. Wilson, Ironmonger, of Market Square, Aylesbury, writes as follows :—

"The mediumship of my nephew commenced about six years ago in an accidental manner. He was suffering from tooth-ache, and having read something of healing mediumship, I said in sport to my wife that I would try my healing powers on the boy. I placed one hand on his head, and with the other commenced stroking down his face on the side where the aching tooth was located. In a few minutes he dropped off to sleep and I laid him on a sofa. I perceived his hand moving about, and having heard something of writing

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mediumship I put a pencil into the boy's hands and immediately there was rapidly written "Let the Boy alone, he is all right," "Mary," I asked what he meant? when he wrote, "It is not the boy who is writing, but I, your sister Mary, dead now 22 years." Having laid still for about two hours his hand wrote again giving me instructions how to awaken him. I did so, and the first question the boy asked was, "where is that lady who has been laying hold of my hand?" I asked what he meant? and he described the form, features, and every particular of outline, height, etc., of my deceased sister. His tooth-ache had gone. Since that time, writing, painting, drawing, rapping, seeing spirits in the trance, and nearly every shade of mediumship has been produced. I asked my spirit sister once if the painters who influenced the boy would sign their names? when a list of autographs was written with a sketch said to be by Vandyck opposite to each name indicating the class of subjects treated by each artist. The boy is aged fourteen and never received an hour's instruction in painting."

The following is an account of the painting mediumship of Mr. Duguid of Glasgow, as reported by a gentleman present:—

"On arrival we found several gentlemen before us, and ere long there was a company of six or seven to watch the proceedings, several of them for the first time, and somewhat sceptical. Seven of the paintings were laid out for our inspection. Mr. Duguid now entered the room, placed himself on a chair and sat quietly for a few minutes when his eyes closed and he appeared like a person in a mesmeric trance, presently he rises from the chair, advances a step, (his eyes still firmly closed) seems to shake hands with three invisible persons and bow politely. All were surprised at the rapidity with which he worked. To show that the light was of little consequence except to enable us to see, the gas was turned out, except one jet, which was obscured by holding a hand between it and the canvass so that it was impossible to see what he was painting. We had carefully noted the appearance of the work before lowering the gas, and on turning it up suddenly, in three minutes found he had introduced several boats on the Loch in the foreground. He continued to paint in this manner for



upwards of an hour, when he took a common card from his pocket and made a rough sketch of a landscape. He now carefully put the paints in order, wiped his brushes and palette, closed his box and turned round in his chair as though done with painting. We were told the spirit influenced him is that of Jan Stein, the Painter. In less than five minutes he awoke and rubbed his eyes. On questioning him he said he had but a very faint impression of anything that transpired while he was entranced. Mr. Duguid is about 35 years of age, a working cabinet maker by trade. He has no education further than is common among the working classes. He is in good health and has none of the affections which are thought by many to be the origin of such peculiar powers. He never studied or attempted drawing or painting before he became "*influenced*" while investigating Spiritualism at the beginning of 1866. He was quite sceptical as to the agency of spirits. At one of the sittings he began to experience curious sensations, such as a shaking of the arms, accompanied by a cold current running down his spine, his left hand began to move, when a pencil and paper being given him various figures were drawn. The guiding influence gave the name of Marcus Baker and promised to return. At further sittings he drew with colored pencils, water, and oil colours, and they were told it was the spirit of a Dutch painter born in 1636 and died in 1681, and that Marcus Baker was not his real name, which he declined to give. It was ultimately found that this spirit purported to be Jacob Ruysdael."

The following account of the production of DIRECT spirit paintings in Mr. Duguid's presence in which the *Medium's hand is not called into exercise at all*, is given in the Edinburgh Courant Newspaper, as follows, by an eye witness:—

"The production of these paintings took place in total darkness. The medium took his seat at one end of a table, and the color box was placed at the opposite end. Several gentlemen sat between him and the colours so that he could not reach them without the company being aware of it. A card, marked on the back so that it could be checked, was laid on the top of the colour box opposite to the brushes. The lights were then put out when in a few minutes there was a sharp

sound as if wire were being drawn across a piece of paper and a noise as of a brush thrown on the table. The gas was lighted, when the company saw the card lying where it had been placed, on turning it over it was found that a picture had been painted on the under side and was still wet. Some present requested the experiment might be repeated: the light was again extinguished, and in a short time the pencil was dashed on the table. On the cards being examined two subjects were found to be very cleverly drawn on them, a sketch of a girl and a faithful portrait of Hugh Miller, Mr. Duguid remained in the trance about three hours and when he awoke appeared to take an interest in the pictures, which could not have been well simulated. We wish to impress upon our readers that the gentlemen present are no more to be indentified with spiritualism than we are ourselves, and that no pains have been spared to put every statement recorded to the severest test as to its truth."

We next come to SPIRIT WRITING which is said to exist under three modes or forms, viz: *direct*, or that in which a blank piece of paper marked so as to be again identified, having been placed with a pencil on or beneath the table at which the séance is taking place, becomes in the dark rapidly written upon, while all present sit with linked hands. This, coupled with the rapidity of execution and the darkness, is considered to negative the possibility of such writing being done by those present. Next we have the kind called AUTOMATIC-WRITING, in which the hand of the medium holding the pen or pencil is mechanically moved by some unseen influence, and independently of the action of the writer's mind. Besides these, writing is also produced through an instrument known as Planchette, consisting of a thin heart-shaped piece of wood on two light wheels moveable in any direction, and carrying a common lead pencil. It is used by resting the tips of the fingers of one or more persons on its upper surface without impart-

ing any motion to the instrument, which, however, with certain persons will commence after about 10 to 20 minutes' *independent* movement, generally at first in form of gyrations of irregular or mathematical figure, and going on to writing, at first large, straggling and indistinct, and in a further stage more or less legible. These writings are also said to be at times in different languages from that of the sitters, and frequently not understood by any present. Some signatures thus written are said to have proved to be *autographs* of deceased persons. Next in order, as it were, to these are the Apparitions of deceased persons, or as they are termed MATERIALISED SPIRIT-FORMS, represented to be visible human forms constructed by spirits out of a certain magnetic emanation or "aura" similar to odic force, given off by human beings, of which the spirits make use as it were by concentration and condensation, with the addition of some emanation of their own, to build up forms visible and even tangible to our senses. This process is said to be performed under laws known only to the Spirits and not even universally among them; and only capable of being conducted under certain favorable conditions, and in presence of one or more mediumistic persons. Such as these are are the "appearances" known as John and Katey King, Jack Todd, Peter, Nippie, and others bearing like familiar appellatives, and purporting to have once existed as human beings on this earth. These spirits are said to have thus "*manifested*" themselves in the presence of the mediums, Messrs. Herne and Williams, Miss Florence Cook, Miss Jennie Holmes, and others. One of the apparitions "Katie" is even said to have been *photographed* during such a manifestation by means of the magnesium light. I may here remark that with regard to spirit photo-



graphy it is assumed by the spiritists that although the spirit form be so etherial as to be *optically* invisible, it does not follow that it is *chemically* so. It is known that the most active part of the spectrum is the least luminous, and that photographs can be taken by the agency of the invisible rays at the blue end of the spectrum, this being so, it only remains to suppose that the covering of the spirit is able to impart those vibrations to the light-medium or ether on which actinic action depends; although not to the grosser ones which render it visible: and thus cause its image to be impressed on the photographic plate. These "materialisations" of spirit forms requiring absolute darkness as a condition of success, cabinets or portable cupboards or screens have been constructed wherein or behind which, these operations could be perfected, while the sitters at the "circle" remained outside in the light, resulting in the "Appearances" becoming visible at the openings left for that purpose in the doors or panels of the cabinets, as detailed in an article in the Daily Telegraph by a special correspondent, an eye-witness. These figures are also said to walk sometimes out into the séance room at full length, as described in a report of a séance held so recently as October 7th, of the present year (Miss Florence Cook being the medium) in the Spiritualist Magazine of November 1st, in these words:—

"The Spirit came out of the cabinet with bare feet, robed from head to foot in white as usual in a good light. She talked for about an hour, entering and leaving the cabinet occasionally. Once she walked about a yard from the cabinet towards the centre of the room. While this was going on the medium is stated to have remained securely tied by the hands with tape, the knots of which were sealed with signet rings, and the ends of the tapes used to fasten her to the



floor. The tapes had been stretched before use, and the tapes, knots, and seals were found intact at the close of the séance. A later issue of this paper gives an account of some hardy visitor having grasped this appearance round the waist, the result being the suffering of the medium from "burning pains." It is said "the Spirit having extricated herself from him regained the cabinet, *assisted by Mr. Luxmoore*, and after a while the medium rallied and became restored to her natural condition."

The mention in the above report of this Spirit having *spoken* for an hour leads us as it were to the phenomenon of the SPIRIT-VOICE, another phase of these manifestations. This voice is said to be of two kinds, viz: a voice, proceeding from the throat of the medium while insensible in a trance, totally different from his or her natural voice, and said to resemble the voice which the spirit manifesting possessed when in the earthly body, so plainly indeed that surviving relatives and friends have recognised the tones sufficiently to have identified the spirits of their deceased friends as the speakers. When these utterances, (as is sometimes the case) have been given in the light, it has been asserted that the lips and tongue of the medium did not move, the voice seeming to proceed through the mouth without the effort of articulation.

The other mode or variety of SPIRIT-VOICE, known as the DIRECT-voice, is described as of a still more unaccountable character, inasmuch as it is heard independently of any of the persons visibly present and varies in tone from the gruff and powerful voice of John King to the softer modulations of Katey, the chirruping squeak of Peter, or the childish treble of Little Rosie, one of the attendant spirits of Mrs. Jennie Holmes. This *direct-voice* seems to need or at least to be very much improved by, a Speaking tube of

paper or card, rolled up and placed before the séance on the table for use by the spirits, to form a material articulatory speaking apparatus, but which is also frequently used as a *bâton* by the invisibles to rap the heads of sceptics, (perhaps to knock the unbelief out of them,) as well as to bestow playful touches upon favorite believers.

The spirits are said to join in, with this voice, with the singing of those present, so as to be distinguished from the voices of the latter, and to have been heard *simultaneously* with the voice of the medium, and seemingly localised far from him, and in inaccessible parts of the room, close to the ceiling, etc. During the occurrence of most of these phenomena, the medium is found to have sunk into a deep sleep or trance, resembling the mesmeric or cataleptic condition, and on awaking at the conclusion of the manifestations, to be in a very debilitated and exhausted condition. This is said to be induced by the withdrawal of the vital force of the medium by the spirit manifesting as a means wherewith to produce the phenomena. There are numerous other manifestations of a miscellaneous kind, as spirit-lights or luminous stars appearing in various parts of the séance room, or resting on the heads or hands of the sitters, or carried by the spirits themselves as a self-illuminating medium, these lights have been admitted to be of a phosphoric nature. Also elongations and contractions of the hands and bodies of media, the placing of a solid ring upon the arms of persons while holding each other's hands, the appearance of the names of deceased persons written on the arm of the medium in red as in the case of the medium Foster, etc.; but those we have briefly glanced at are the chief, and we will now proceed to consider the

nature of the CONDITIONS, said to be essential or favorable to their production and success, which may be arranged under the following heads, viz: Atmospheric, Local, Physiological, Mental and Physical.

Of *Atmospheric* conditions, extreme warmth or cold, magnetic disturbances, as during storms, and a moist atmosphere are adverse, while a warm, dry atmosphere on the contrary, is said to be the most favorable. A subdued light or darkness is also said to increase the power and facilitate control.

Of *Local* conditions we are told that the room in which the séance is held should be one kept apart for the purpose. It should be comfortably ventilated, but all draughts or currents of air be avoided. The sitters should meet in the room an hour before the experiments commence, and the same sitters should attend each time and occupy the same places.

The chief PHYSIOLOGICAL CONDITION is the presence of persons of a certain temperant giving off a power or force inherent in living human beings, which is said to be used by the spirits as a connecting link between themselves and objects. The presence of others who are said to emit an opposite influence retards or negatives the results, unless counterbalanced by the presence of the former under an arrangement of both kinds of temperaments, effected by changes of their relative positions of the sitters. Among detrimental mental conditions are ranked, all forms of mental excitement, the presence of persons with strong and opposite opinions, or between whom there are feelings of

envy, hate, contempt, or other inharmonious sentiment. The vicious and crude should be excluded and the minds of the sitters be in a passive rather than an active state.

As to PHYSICAL CONDITIONS, the "Circle" should consist of from three to ten persons only, of both sexes, arranged sitting round an oval, oblong or square table: male and female, fair and dark, active and quiet, ruddy and pale, should be seated alternately. If a medium be present he or she should occupy the end of the table with the back to the north. No person should be placed *behind* the medium. The "Circle" should represent a horse-shoe magnet with the medium placed between the poles.

For the conduct of the circle and the various means adopted to establish and maintain intercourse with the unseen agency, I must refer you to the Spiritualists themselves.

The before-mentioned "*Conditions*" are stated to have been arrived at, partly as the result of experiment and observation, and partly communicated by the spirits for the furtherance of inter-communication. Before dealing with the numerous opposing theories affecting the question of the occurrence or non-occurrence of these unaccountable phenomena, as distinct from the question of their *source*, I will narrate briefly the action of a committee consisting of thirty-six leading representative men of various shades of religious and scientific opinion, appointed specially to investigate and report upon Spiritualism by the London Dialectical Society on the 26th of January, 1869.

The committee in question held sixteen meetings, at which they received evidence from thirty-one persons.



Six sub-committees sent in reports, the result of their observation and experiment strictly conducted under every conceivable test, and nearly all in full gas-light, and at the private residences of members of the committee, many of the phenomena having been witnessed by them without the aid or presence of any professional medium. The chief deductions given by them as the result of their experiments are as follows:—1st. “That sounds of a very varied character, distinctive, and distinguishable from all other sounds, apparently proceeding from articles of furniture, and the floors and walls of the room, and seeming to be *in* rather than *on* the substances from whence they proceeded, sometimes sounding like detonations in the air, and often accompanied by vibrations distinctly perceptible to the touch, occur without being produced by muscular action or mechanical contrivance. Also that movements of heavy bodies take place under like conditions, and frequently without contact or connection with any person.” “2nd.—“That these sounds and movements often occur at the times and in the manner asked for by persons present, and by a code of signals answer questions and spell out coherent communications, thus appearing to have a basis of intelligence: the replies to audible questions being more or less pertinent, and in their character sometimes most unexpected, as also is the nature of the original communications made by them.” 3rd.—“By these processes were presumably established communications with spirits announced to be so by themselves, many of them stating that they were connected in various degrees of relationship to members of our party, for whom they also professed a friendly regard. These presumed spirits displayed distinct individualities, each having a manner peculiar to itself, and rapping delicately,

emphatically or deliberately, as the case might be, expressing as it were, character, mood and temper. Their answers and communications were of a common place character, but, facts which were only known to one of the persons present were sometimes correctly given." 4th.—"Intelligence was further manifested in the following manner, viz: when it was attempted to shorten the progress of communication by anticipating words or phrases which it was surmised were intended, the suggestions were frequently emphatically negatived in favor of more appropriate expressions, or of words of an entirely different signification. Again, *special* conditions were occasionally dictated for observation, such as a change in the order of the sitters, the withdrawal of one or more of them, an increase or diminution of light, the appointment of some particular person to put the questions, directing the sitters to link or un-link their hands, to be more quiet in conversation, to avoid disputation, etc. On compliance with such directions the manifestations were invariably intensified." 5th.—"Persons sceptical as to the existence of the occurrences invariably confirmed the experiences of the sitters when suddenly introduced during the progress of the séance." 6th.—"The meetings were held at the private residences of members of the committee purposely to preclude the possibility of pre-arranged mechanism or contrivance. The furniture in the room in which the experiments were conducted was in every instance its accustomed furniture, the tables were on all occasions heavy dining tables requiring a strong effort to move them, and the rooms, tables, and furniture generally were invariably and repeatedly subjected to careful examination, before, during, and after the experiments, to ascer-

tain that no concealed machinery, instrument, or any other contrivance existed by which the sounds or movements could be caused."

"About four-fifths of this committee entered upon the investigation wholly sceptical as to the reality of the alleged phenomena, firmly believing them to be the result of imposture, delusion, or involuntary muscular action. It was only by irresistible evidence that precluded the possibility of either of these solutions, and after trial and test many times repeated that the most sceptical of the sub-committee were slowly and reluctantly convinced that the phenomena exhibited in the course of their protracted enquiry were veritable facts, delusion being out of the question. The motions of the tables were in various directions witnessed simultaneously by all present, and matters of measurement not of opinion or fancy. The following is a detailed report of a conclusive experiment performed by one of the sub-committees as given by themselves":—

"When eleven members of your sub-committee had been sitting round one of the dining tables for forty minutes, and various motions and sounds had occurred, they, by way of test, turned the backs of their chairs towards the table at about nine inches from it. They all then knelt upon their chairs placing their arms upon the backs thereof. In this position their feet were of course turned away from the table, and by no possibility could be placed under it or touch the floor. The hands of each person were extended over the table at about four inches from the surface. Contact therefore with any part of the table could not take place without detection. In less than a minute, the table *untouched*, moved four times, at first about five inches to one side, then about twelve inches to the opposite side, and then in like manner four inches and 6 inches respectively. The hands of all present were next placed on the backs of their chairs, and about a foot from the



table which again moved as before, five times over spaces varying from four to six inches. Then we removed the chairs 12 inches from the table, and each person knelt on his chair as before, this time however folding his hands behind his back, his body being thus about eighteen inches from the table, and having the back of the chair between himself and the table. The table again moved four times in various directions. In the course of this conclusive experiment (less than half an hour) the table thus moved without contact or possibility of contact with any person 13 times in different directions, some of them according to the request of your sub-committee."

I have quoted thus largely from the report of this investigation committee, because I consider it the only really impartially conducted examination into the phenomena of spiritualism which has ever been undertaken. The Dialectical Society's report on spiritualism contains a vast amount of written and "*viva voce*" evidences and accounts of phenomena well worthy of consideration by investigators.

It will not be amiss here to summarise the propositions upon which the Spiritists base their claim to the belief that the foregoing phenomena are within the capacity of disembodied or deceased human beings, which propositions are I believe pretty accurately expressed thus:—

"When the spirit leaves the body, in order to retain its identity or distinct individuality, it must take with it its senses, ideas, and memory, and if it takes all these with it the presumption is that it also takes its powers of willing, thinking and reasoning, and consequently the spirit retaining all these, though out of the material body, must still be a man, the only loss it has suffered by death, if indeed it be a loss at all, being that of the material body. The death of the body would not in this case be the death of the man, the body being simply the instrument of the unseen but living, thinking, and immortal being within, and we are men by virtue of our spirits, and not by virtue of our bodies. Man loses nothing by death. He takes with



him his real nature and self, and lives out to a fuller perfection the life he had began here. Thus the next life is a continuation of the present, and death is but a passage from one to another. The body cannot die for the simple reason that it never lives. It only *appears* to live just as it appears to think and reason, but the real fact is that the soul or spirit has all the real life the body appears to possess, and which afterwards it appears to lose."

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## SECOND LECTURE.

Having glanced at the rise, progress, phenomena, and conditions of so-called spirit intercourse, I will proceed to examine the various "Solutions" which have been adduced to refute, or explain it to be due to other than disembodied human spirit influence. Amongst the foremost of the theories advanced for the solution of the spiritist problem we find that of

1. UNCONSCIOUS MUSCULAR ACTION, as propounded by the late Professor Faraday.

2. UNCONSCIOUS CEREBRATION, or Unconscious Mental Action, (sometimes called Automatic thought), and the DELUSION or MENTAL HALLUCINATION Theory, both advanced by Dr. Carpenter.

3. PSYCHIC, or MIND-FORCE, espoused by Professor Crookes, and Mr. Serjt. Cox.

4. ODIC FORCE, or NERVE-ATMOSPHERE influence, based upon the researches of Professor Reichenbach, Mr. Rutter, and those of Dr. Richardson of recent date.

5. INDUCED MENTAL CONDITIONS of a super-sensuous character as the Mesmeric and Electro-biological, the subjects being either *unconscious* while under the influence, as in Mesmerism, or *conscious* as in Electro-Biology, as well

as modifications of these conditions, the results of Expectant Attention, Abstraction, Reverie or utter mental passivity, and the same conditions occurring spontaneously, with their phases of Clairvoyance, Prevision, Introvision, and other super-sensuous preception, Exaltation, Ecstasy, etc., peculiar to "*Sensitives*."

6. The ELECTRIC or ELECTRO-MAGNETIC theory, which, apart from its association with *Animal* magnetism, I consider to be so much beside the question as affording no explanation whatever of any *intelligent directive action*, as to be scarcely worth mentioning to well informed scientific persons, who also are well aware that the laws of both tension and thermal electricity utterly negative this hastily and ignorantly assumed solution even when applied to the grossest of the physical manifestations alone.

Beyond these opinions of the scientific "*soi disant*" solvers of the spiritist riddle we have those of the religious world, the most prominent being that known as the SATANIC THEORY, by which the whole of the occurrences are admitted to be real, and attributed to the immediate action of the Prince of the powers of the air, and accounted works of darkness and delusion. The whole system is said by them to have been originated by the Devil, the great enemy of mankind, to betray and lead astray, by signs and apparent miracles, the souls of men from the proper worship of the Divine Being.

Another of the religious theories held alike by the Protestant and the Roman Catholic Church is that of OBSESSION, or the temporary partial occupation of the human

organism by *unclean spirits* such as we find recorded in the Bible as having been cast out of men and even sent into swine, or by *demons*, viz., the spirits of deceased evil men who are believed still to seek to carry out their innate evil desires, thro' the agency and to the injury of persons living on the Earth.

There is another class of objectors who deny altogether the existence of such of the alleged phenomena as cannot be attributed to trickery, and set down such as they think admit of that explanation as acts of fraud and imposture, accounting those who testify to their occurrence as either deluded dupes, or interested abettors of a gross and wilful deception.

In short, the various objections may be summarised as follows:—

1st. That the alleged phenomena are the result of delusion or imposture, or both, in varying degree.

2nd. That they have a basis of reality but are intensified by delusion or imposture.

3rd. That such phenomena occur but are explainable by known natural causes.

4th. That they occur and are attributable to natural causes not yet ascertained.

5th. That the manifestations only occur in the presence of believers in the same.

6th. That Mediumship so called is in all cases professed and practised for the mere sake of money-getting.

7th. That in any case the phenomena are utterly frivolous and unworthy of investigation.

8th. That no such phenomena, as alleged, occur at all.

9th. That Spiritualists, as a body, shrink from any examination of their claims, and place every obstacle in the way of fair investigation.

10th. That the partisans of Spiritualism are for the most part, uncultured, illiterate, and consequently credulous and superstitious.

11th. That the phenomena are really intercourse between Spirits and Men, but wicked and dangerous to practice, and prosecuting and encouraging them is committing the sin of necromancy and seeking unto familiar spirits forbidden in the Bible.

The assertion of the Spiritists that intercourse between living and deceased persons is not only possible but, an actual fact of frequent and unmistakeable occurrence I take to be the keystone of their position, and it will now be my task to proceed to the analysis of the chief theories brought forward to impeach or controvert this assertion, or, if admitting its possibility, to deny its utility or propriety. This I shall essay to do as impartially as I sought to lay before you their own version of the case they submit. Before however commencing to do so, it will perhaps be well to recapitulate the chief of the proofs they adduce in support of their assertion, in order to start with an accurate and clear understanding of what it is the objectors seek to solve or refute.

A belief in the possibility and the occurrence of spirit-intercourse involves the following admissions:—

1st. Not only the existence, but the conscious and



*active existence* of human beings after the death of their material bodies, such existence commencing independently immediately thereon.

2nd. Their capacity in that condition of existence to act upon matter, and upon human spirits yet occupying their material bodies.

3rd. The existence of an invisible "FORCE" or "FORCES" by which such action can be induced and sustained, the nature and laws of such force being at present unknown to us.

4th. An intelligent power, (presumably a disembodied human spirit) capable of using, directing, and regulating this force, and having a knowledge of its laws and control.

5th. As a necessary consequence of the two former, a Medium or instrument whereby to project the action of this force and its consequent results into our external world in such a manner that they may be apprehended by our senses.

Now, the whole of these propositions are, at least to non-spiritualists, wholly speculative, that is to say, incapable of demonstrative proof. The first involves not only a belief in the immortality of the soul, but also in its unbroken consciousness and activity subsequently to death, and is purely a *matter of faith*, based solely upon the records of revealed religion. But, it is to demonstrate Men's future existence by *actual proofs*, that spiritualism professes and aspires.

The second proposition, viz: the existence of a power possessed by disembodied Spirits to act upon matter is equally undemonstrable unless we not only admit the

existence of the alleged spiritist phenomena, but allow also that they are beyond known natural laws to account for, and are solely attributable to invisible intelligences which represent themselves to be the Spirits of deceased persons. The third proposition demanding the existence of a force capable of operating between mind (or spirit) and matter organised and un-organised, does not appear so difficult of acceptance when we reflect upon the extraordinary influences which it is well known can be exerted by our will or mind over certain susceptible persons, known as Mesmerism and Electro-biology, and the *sympathy* established between a mesmeriser and this subject, when they are what is termed "*en rapport*." Now we do not know the exact nature of the force which is brought into action by the Mesmeriser. We call it Animal Magnetism from its resemblance to magnetic or rather Magneto-Electric action, in its apparent developments of attraction, repulsion, accumulative power, polarity, etc., but we cannot see it, we can only see its effects, often produced by thought or Will-Action alone on the part of the operator, independently of contact, and sometimes without proximity. Prick or pinch the Mesmeriser and the same is simultaneously felt by his entranced subject and accurately localised by him or her. Let the mesmeriser eat or taste any substance presented to him without the knowledge of his "*subject*," the latter immediately and unhesitatingly announces its nature or flavour though so placed that any direct test by his own senses is impossible. Thus we have a connecting link of an unaccountable kind, apparently quite beyond known laws established between two living beings, such link being invisible, intangible, imponderable, and acting without bodily contact. We can neither see, weigh, nor measure it, and become aware of

its existence only by its effects. This, or a similar invisible force connecting visible realities with invisible existences *may* therefore exist for anything we know to the contrary.

That condition of the Mesmeric trance-subject, known as LUCID SONNAMBULISM, is sometimes *spontaneous* as well as *induced*, and this would be an important element for consideration in any attempt to prove identity of nature between the Spiritualistic trance and the Mesmeric one. I believe the latter frequently occurs as the outcome of certain morbid, or unhealthy conditions known as hysteria, catalepsy, etc., and may, therefore, occur independently of human volition, indeed, instances are on record of persons (Col. Townsend notably) possessing the power of simulating death at will, perceptibly reducing the breathing and circulation; their self-induced condition resembling the deepest stage of the Mesmeric sleep.

This is important to be remembered, because the Spritists say that the trances of their mediums are induced by the mesmerisation or magnetisation of spirits, arguing, that as the Mesmeric trance is evidently brought about by action of the will or mind of man and not by his body, it matters not whether the mind so operating be incarnated or dis-incarnated.

The fourth proposition, demanding the active existence of an intelligent directive agent using this force, is said to be demonstrated by the consistence, regularity, and uniform production or maintenance of the phenomena on a spontaneously systematic basis, and in compliance with the desires expressed or even unexpressed by the sitters, and subsequent proof of the statements to have been in accordance with facts unknown to those present at the time of the occurrence.



The fifth proposition, that the whole of the phenomena are dependent for their development upon the presence of living incarnated human beings, naturally suggests the question, if any or all of the manifestations emanate *from* or *through*, any or all of such present, and if *through* certain of them, (as the term medium implies) how far they are either merely tinged by his individual thoughts and capacities, or perverted, or changed by their transmission through him. That is to say, are the thoughts of another individual conveyed into the utterer's mind, rendered by him to those present, clothed in such language as wholly alters the impression they were originally intended to convey? Even should we arrive so far as to have accepted an outside invisible intelligence, the existence of an invisible "force" capable of being used as a means for the invisible to act upon the visible; and the existence and capacity of an unseen intelligence to use and direct it, we find ourselves facing two momentous questions.—First, is this intelligence REALLY HUMAN as it asserts, and if not, WHO or WHAT is it? For it is quite possible for anything we know to the contrary, that it may be some other description of immaterial being, possibly evil, *personating our deceased friends*, and that as accurately as consummate actors have been known to embody a character until the impersonation and the original seemed almost identical. I would ask by what test are we to obtain a conclusive and satisfactory reply to this very important question?

The next question which confronts us is, supposing the whole position proved, that spirits of deceased human beings can, and do communicate with us yet on earth, is it fit and proper on our part to invite, encourage, or facilitate the intercourse?



I think these are questions which should be seriously and carefully weighed by every one, before instituting investigations to OPEN the door to these "*manifestations*," together with another very important one as concerning our safety or protection from annoyance or possible injury, and an answer to which the Spiritualists have not as yet fully placed before us, that is, how we can at will *close the door*, if circumstances should arise necessitating such action, for they do not conceal that manifestations occur of a kind, certain unsought and undesirable if not dangerous, but which they cannot prescribe any infallible rule for extinguishing. Even breaking up the sitting not always relieve the company, or the medium of their unpleasant and ill-conducted "*familiar*."

Mr. T. Grant (a Spiritualist) in a paper read before the Maidstone Philosophical Society, December 31st, 1872, remarks, "Although the dangers attending experimental investigation into Spiritualism may have been much exaggerated it cannot be said that our knowledge of the subject is sufficient to permit us to cast away all doubts as to whether we are not bringing upon ourselves, or upon those in whom we develop the mediumistic faculty influences that may in a temporary or even permanent way do injury to the material or the spiritual body. For this end a vast amount of experience, knowledge and judgement is needed, and to my mind there is a responsibility attached to those who develop the mediumistic faculty in any person, which no one should lightly take upon himself unless satisfied that his moral status and that of his associates is such as to afford ample protection against the insidious workings of spiritual enemies."

The VALUE AND VALIDITY of the Evidences of Spiritism

as shewn by its alleged phenomena, as well as their reality is the phase of the subject we now have to deal with, and amongst them we find,—

1st. Independent movement of inert matter, and sounds produced thereon by invisible agency, such as table moving and so-called spirit rapping, the transit of bodies from place to place without visible means of support or locomotion and in defiance of the known laws of matter.

2nd. The performance of *Human* acts, such as playing tunes upon musical instruments, speaking in the human voice, walking about, grasping and touching persons as with hands, painting, writing, drawing, etc., all without the intervention of human organs.

3rd.—*Superhuman* acts, such as floating in the air unsupported, being tangible though at the same time invisible and “*vice versa*,” the conveying matter through matter without visible displacement, passing the human body through solid substances, etc., some of the most popular instances of which as recorded by Spiritists I have already enumerated.

Beyond these we have also the alleged display by the communicating agents of intelligence and distinct individualities, each with a manner or temperament peculiar to itself by which its identity may be plainly distinguished.

The following account, given by a Manchester Merchant, of a séance held at his house in presence of the Mediums Herne and Williams, may serve to further illustrate the nature of these phenomena. He writes:—

“The Mediums not only voluntarily offered to submit to any tests we might adopt, but insisted that satisfactory ones should be instituted. We therefore, in addition to keeping a strict hold of their hands, bound

with string the ankles and legs of the Mediums in such a manner that we had to cut the string when we desired to release them. We had scarcely sat down, when the voice of "*John King*" (a Spirit who states that on earth he was a nobleman named Morgan, and was anything but a good man), addressing me in my christian name, told me to put sticking-plaster over the mouths of the Mediums, which was at once done by placing three long strips perpendicularly and firmly across the lips of both Mediums, and a fourth strip at right-angles across the first three strips, completely covering the lips in such a way that it was impossible for them to breathe, except through the nose. On putting out the light, the Spirit shewed an immense power of voice, with an almost deafening effect, and afterwards carried on a conversation in a lower tone. He told us he would give us any test required, and at my request spoke in the corners of the room, on the top of a cupboard, at the ceiling, in the ears of several members of the circle, and from the inside of a small musical box that was on the table. I then asked if he could take off the Medium Williams' coat, and instantly it was taken off and thrown on the table, although two of my friends assured us they had never released Williams' hands for a second. A large musical box weighing at least thirty or forty pounds, and requiring great effort to carry it in both hands, was wound up by invisible agency, floated over our heads and put on the table. An instrument called "*Fairy Bells*," constructed something on the principle of the dulcimer, belonging to my little boy, was carried about all over the room, the wires being struck all the time of its flight, and the instrument being carried to any part of the room or ceiling, as requested. A concertina was also floated about and played, and a large drum standing in one corner of the room was also floated in the air, the drumsticks beating it vigorously all the time. An easy chair was carried from a corner of the room, and after being deposited on my head was placed upon the table. Mr. Williams was floated in his chair on to the table, my friends holding his hands the whole time. We had a display of spirit lights visible to all, floating about the room, several most beautiful flowers brought, a plant in a flower pot, out of my greenhouse, while I had the key in my pocket, and one that I know was outside the room when I locked the door."

After narrating several other extraordinary phenomena at this séance, the gentleman closes his letter by saying:—



“My friends are quite prepared to endorse the statements contained in this letter, and enclosing my card,—I am, yours obediently, H.—Manchester, June 24th, 1872.”

Professor Faraday is believed to have been the first of our Men of Science to break silence with reference to the table-moving mystery. His report first appeared in the columns of the “Athenæum.” He says, “the mode followed in the inquiry was precisely of the same nature as I should adopt in any other physical investigation. It is with me a clear point that the table moves when persons though they strongly wish it, do not intend and do not believe that they move it by ordinary mechanical power. They say “the table draws their hands, that it moves first and they have to follow it,” “that sometimes it even moves from under their hands and right or left according as they wish or will it,” but all agree that the table moves the hands and not the hands the table.”

Although Faraday's experiments relating solely as they do to movements where *contact* takes place, are quite set aside if we accept the finding of the Dialectical Society's Committee that the tables have moved *without contact* I refer to it as there are many persons who do not believe that independent movements occur at all. Professor Faraday goes on to state that having placed various substances under the hands of the table-movers as a test whether such substances interfered electrically or otherwise with the movements, and finding they did not, he proceeded to arrange layers of smooth card-board stuck to each other by pellets of soft cement, the lowest to a piece of sand paper resting on the table, with the edges of the sheets overlapping slightly, and on the under surface a pencil line over the laps to indicate position. The upper card was larger than



the rest, covering the whole from sight. The cement was strong enough to offer considerable resistance to mechanical motion and to retain the cards in any new position they might acquire, and yet weak enough to give way to a continued force. When tables, cards, and hands all moved to the left together, the pile of cards were examined, and it was seen by the displacement of the lines, that the hand had moved further than the table, and the latter had lagged behind the hand, in fact had pushed the upper card to the left and the under cards and the table had followed and been dragged by it. A cleverly arranged Index Apparatus was next used with the same result, only that as it indicated the slightest pressure in any given direction, so long as the eyes of the operators were upon the index, no movement occurred, but commenced when the index was *hidden from their sight*. An elaborately adjusted lever arrangement and another more delicate form of index gave the same results, when the Professor wrote in a letter to the "Times" as follows: "When the sitters *saw* the Index it remained very steady, when it was hidden from them or they looked away from it, it wavered about; though they believed they were only pressing lightly but directly downwards, and even when the table did not move there was a resultant of hand force in the direction in which it was wished the table should move, which impulse however was exercised quite unwittingly by the party operating. This test apparatus possesses such a corrective power over the minds of the table-movers by telling truly whether they are pressing downwards or only obliquely, that all movements cease even when the sitters persevere, earnestly desiring motion, until they become quite weary and worn out. The power is gone and thus only because the parties are

made conscious of what they are doing mechanically, and so are unable unwittingly to deceive themselves."

This supposed unconscious Muscular movement was also the subject of a Lecture by Dr. Carpenter at the Royal Institution on the 12th of March 1852, entitled "On the influence of suggestion in modifying and directing muscular movement independently of volition." More recently Dr. Carpenter has promulgated his Unconscious Cerebration or Automatic-thought theory which I shall allude to presently, when discussing Will-Power apart from muscular action as a means of movement and which seems intended to account for other phenomena of a purely mental character which have been more recently set forth as connected with table-moving.

These "Muscular Action Theories," even if admitted to adequately account for the mechanical movements of bodies incapable of motion in themselves, do not, as I said before, at all affect any movements occurring *without contact*, nor cases where the weight of the bodies moving was beyond the united strength of the operators to raise, and where there were no castors or similar appliances to facilitate movement, and certainly do not in any degree apply to numerous other phases of spiritualistic phenomena such as the alleged "Levitations" and carryings of human bodies and various articles and substances without visible agency.

Next to Professor Faraday we find Mr. William Crookes, F.R.S., who, in an article in the Quarterly Journal of Science, of July 1870, expressed most emphatically his belief in the occurrence under certain circumstances of phenomena inexplicable by any known natural laws, and suggested certain delicate mechanical tests to ascertain their

nature. In July, 1871, in another article in the same Journal, he stated that he had applied to these phenomena, careful scientific testing experiments which had conclusively established the existence of a NEW FORCE, connected in some unknown manner with the human organisation for which he suggested the title "PSYCHIC FORCE." Finding that Mr. Daniel Dunglass Home, was endowed with a powerful development of this Force, Mr. Crookes conducted his experiments chiefly in the presence of that gentleman upon the most remarkable of the phenomena occurring under his influence, viz: the alteration in the weight of bodies and the playing of tunes upon musical instruments (generally an accordion for convenience of portability) without direct human intervention, under conditions rendering contact or connection with the keys impossible.

These experiments were conducted in a large room fully lighted by gas. A kind of cage was constructed of wooden hoops, laths, and insulated copper wire, the height being such that it would just slip under the table, but too close to the top to allow of a hand being introduced into the interior, or to admit of a foot being pushed underneath it. The accordion used was a new one, bought for the purpose by Mr. Crookes, which Mr. Home had neither handled or seen before the commencement of the test experiments. In another part of the room, a very delicate apparatus was fitted up for experimenting on the alteration in the weight of a body. Before Mr. Home entered the room, the apparatus had been arranged, but the objects of it were not explained to him. Mr. Crookes likewise says positively—"that he is able to affirm that no machinery, apparatus, or contrivance of any sort was secreted about Mr. Home." The experiments with the accordion I have not



time to enter into in detail, suffice to say, that while Mr. Home held the accordion in the case by one hand, grasping the end opposite to the keys, tunes were played on the instrument, during which it was seen by those present that the hand with which Mr. Home held the instrument was perfectly still, his other hand resting on the table. The Balance-test as to increase of weight was equally satisfactory. Mr. Serjt. Cox, who was one of those present for the purpose of scrutiny at these experiments, corroborated them in a letter, of date June 8th, 1871, in these words—"I readily bear testimony to the perfect accuracy of your description of the experiments, and to the care and caution with which the various crucial tests were applied. The results appear to me conclusively to establish the important fact, that there is a force proceeding from the nerve-system, capable of imparting motion and weight to solid bodies within the sphere of its influence. I noticed that the force was exhibited in tremulous pulsations, and not in the form of steady continuous pressure. This fact seems to me of great significance as tending to confirm the opinion that assigns its source to the nerve organisation, and goes far to establish Dr. Richardson's important discovery of a Nerve-Atmosphere of varying intensity enveloping the human structure."

This was the origin, at least in England, of the Psychio Force theory, which is held to cover both the mechanical and mental phases of the spiritualistic phenomena, nor have Messrs. Crookes and Cox been alone in their assumed discovery of this hitherto unsuspected force in nature, for in 1854, Count Agenor de Gasparin published a work in Paris, giving details of an extensive series of experiments he had tried with some private friends, in whom he found

this force to be strongly developed. By his experiments, carried on under the strictest test conditions, the fact of motion of heavy bodies without mechanical contact was demonstrated over and over again, and he considered it a fact fully established by his experiments, that the *human will in certain states of the organism, can act at a distance on inert matter.*

Mons. Thury, a Professor in the Academy of Geneva, also published a work in 1855, reviewing Gasparin's researches and recounting similar ones made by himself with the same result. He proposed the term "ECSTENIC FORCE" (from the Greek for Extension) for the power exerted when the hand acts at a distance from inert matter, by means of an agent pervading all matter, which agent he termed "*pyschode*." The Nerve Aura, Ether, or Nerve-Atmosphere of Dr. Richardson is chiefly interesting, (though not especially brought forward to explain action at a distance or without contact as claimed for the Spiritist phenomena;) because it is analagous to the influence by which the spiritualists asserted *prior to the announcement of his discovery*, that the Spirits of the dead obtained power over the material, even to the construction out of such portions of this aura or gaseous fluid as they can collect from human beings sitting together, and so conducing to its emanation in adequate quantity or intensity; by condensation "Forms" in which to envelop their immaterialities and thus bring themselves within the range of the senses of living persons, or as they phrase it to "*materalise themselves*," and thus become projected as it were from the sphere of spirit to that of matter. The theory of Dr. Richardson seems founded on a very old one of a NERVOUS FLUID, which was believed by the early neuro-physiological

scientists to permeate the system of nerves, flowing through, or circulating in them, and which was, up to the time of Galvani's discovery of animal magnetism taught in every school of medicine throughout the world. It was considered that the nervous centres including the Brain were glands secreting a distinct fluid and pouring it into the nerves, through which it proceeded as through canals from the centre to the extremities. This fluid was supposed to transmit the influences originating in the outer world to the centres of the inner organism, and formed the means by which the will was enabled to act on the muscles. The nature of this agent is what Dr. Richardson endeavours to explain. He thinks that this, the visible fluid of nervous matter is not of itself sufficient to act as a subtle medium connecting the outer with the inner universe in men and animals, and suggests that there must be another form of matter during life which existing in the condition of vapour or gas, pervades the whole organism, surrounding as an enveloping atmosphere each molecule of structure, and which is the medium of all motion communicated to or from the nervous-centres. He looks upon the blood as the source from which this vapour is distilled, so long as it circulates at its normal temperature, and that the cavities of the skull and the spinal column are the storehouses of it. It is, he believes, a gas, the elements of which are carbon, hydrogen and possibly nitrogen, and that during exercise it is consumed or dissipated, a deficiency producing fatigue, or nervous exhaustion, and that during sleep it is again stored up in the nervous centres which act as accumulators. He does not consider that it is in itself active, nor an excitant of animal motion in the sense of a Force, but merely the



conductor of the vibrations of heat, light, sound, electrical action, and mechanical friction. It is influenced by variations of heat and cold, by atmospheric pressure, and electrical conditions. Other gases and vapours diffused through it, as chloroform, etc., by adulterating its purity produce benumbing or depressing effects, and so prevent the transmissions of impressions between the outer and inner organisms. If this Nerve-Ether is an agent *passive* in its action, that is to say, moved solely by influences apart from itself, obeying such influences but possessing no initiative power, no "*vis*" or "*energia naturæ*," but still playing a most important and prominent part in the production of the phenomena resulting from the action of the *Energia* upon visible matter, we may have the controlling power in animal magnetism with the nerve-ether and nervous fluid as handmaids, but where is the DIRECTING AGENCY? This Nerve-Ether reminds one of the "*To Daimonion*" "*Spiritus Mundi*," or "Spirit of the Universe," which formed so large an element in the cosmological theories of the ancient philosophers. This "*Living Essence*," supposed to surround and pervade the whole universe was presumed to connect the soul with the body, and seems analagous to the "*Per Esprit*" of the modern French Spiritists, and it is remarkable that it is nearly the exact theory first propounded by Mesmer, in explanation of the phenomena of Animal Magnetism.

We now come to Dr. Carpenter's more recent theories or Unconscious or Automatic thought (cerebration) and Impressional Hallucination or Delusion, the first the result of *reverie* or utter mental passivity, the latter of the abnormal excitation of brain functions induced by *expectant attention* or mental concentration. Before detailing the leading

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points of these it will be well to remind you that even if proved they can scarcely be said to at all explain or be applicable to such as are *obviously material* manifestations, but solely to those that may be traced to a mental origin. For instance if a table should at the conclusion of movements proved to have been made by it independently of mechanical contact, be found to have been *broken* by such movements, it seems rather too much to ask us to believe that the fracture was brought about by the thought or will-power of the operators acting unconsciously, or even consciously but independently and without the intervention of their organisms. That it was not hallucination would of course be self-evident from the fact of the actual existence of the fracture. I allude to this because it has been put forward on apparently reliable evidence that tables have been so broken.

Dr. Robertson thus vouches for the fact that the leg of a table was broken by unseen agency, and without contact in the presence of himself and a Medium Mr. Squire. He says :—

“ A heavy circular table, made of birch and strongly constructed, was lifted a somersault in the air and thrown on a bed, the left hand only of Mr. Squire being placed on its surface, his other hand being held and his legs tied to the chair on which he sat, and the table was twice lifted on to our heads. Only a strong force applied at the farther side of the circular top could have produced this result, and this force, Mr. Squire, as is evident from his position, standing close to the writer at one point of the circle, with his hands tied, could not have exerted. The efforts of the writer to prevent this lifting of the table had no influence on the strange unseen force applied to lift the table thus against his wish and force. At the writer's request this table was afterwards smashed to pieces, the fragments being thrown across the room. This occurred in half a minute. The writer has

since vainly endeavoured with all his strength to break one of the remaining legs. The one broken was rent across the grain of the wood. The noise of the table thrown and knocked about by unseen agency on the floor while Mr. Squire's hands were held by the writer was really awful and mysterious, and it was quite impossible for Mr. Squire to have taken any part in the operation."

"It is every-day experience that what is recognisable really exists, and the few who express unbelief in this matter are looked upon as insane, but it is asserted by the advocates of unconscious mental action that, as these phenomena are naturally of sensation they are developed more or less strongly according to the working value of the senses, and result from their action alone. The Ear hears sounds of which the mind does not apprehend the source, the Eye sees forms for which the mind fails to find a ready explanation, the tactile sense and the sensitive surface experience blows, touches, heat and cold, the cause of which is incomprehensible and the sense of smell is impressed with odours of which the mind forms no immediate idea of the whence or the wherefore. But the advocates of the delusion or mental hallucination theory contend that these impressions are not derived from the outside universe at all, but are the outcome of some aberration of function in one or other of the senses. They are not *received by* the individual, but *proceed from*, and have their *origin in him*. If the nervous system be not working in harmony, impressions may be made by or within the man that are unreal so far as the true reading of the universe is concerned, and as each part of the perceptive system may be disturbed or deranged in function, so in accordance with the amount of disturbance the aberration will vary from the merely physical to the intensely psychological. There are states of the nervous system in which impressions received through the senses are so perverted in their passage to the brain, that peculiar modifications of external impressions are not only induced but sustained, and their incongruity undetected. The nervous atmosphere through which impressions vibrate from the receiving surface to the receiving centres is so susceptible of change, that under certain circumstances there is an easy step to perverted appreciation of external things. Recent physiological research has also tended to shew that in certain conditions of the body, some organic products elaborated within the



body itself affect in a most potent manner the organs of the senses and interfere with their functions. Dr. Richardson has stated "that in a recent investigation on the action of the organic compounds of sulphur, he found that the most marked changes in the reception of impressions could be induced by certain of these bodies, together with symptoms of hysteria and muscular debility singularly resembling those states of the body in which weakness of the motor organs is attended with excessive nervous susceptibility and excitability." "When tension is unduly increased in the brain, as by pressure of blood, etc., the tendency is *not* to receive impressions, but to *project into the external world*, some of those previously received and retained."

I cannot help here observing that it seems equally reasonable to assume that the appearances may really exist though invisible to the ordinary senses as exerted through their respective organs (as are the animalculæ in water without the aid of a microscope) and that the brain tension may, instead of recalling and projecting before the mind's eye, so to speak, past impressions, or creating new phantasms induce a condition of super sensuous perception by means of which *existing forms* become visible, producing what has been asserted to be, the natural gift of the seer of old and the clairvoyant of modern times. This theory applied to spiritualism requires the very peculiar condition that all the witnesses of the manifestations are at the time of observation in an abnormal mental or bodily condition, (apparently a most unlikely circumstance,) and it must also be remembered that the physical manifestations were tested as to the reality of their existence, during the progress of the experiments of the Dialectical Society's Committee, by the introduction of persons who doubted their existence, but who being brought in suddenly from the outside world, immediately testified to the reality of the phenomena the sitters were at the moment experiencing. These persons of

course could not be supposed to be affected by any functional derangement, the result of mental strain, expectant attention, suggestion or any similar cause. Nor must it be forgotten when seeking to effect a solution of the Spiritist question by these or any of the "thought theories" that they cannot be applicable to any phenomena which may be solely attributable to an intelligence other than that of the persons present. Intelligence proved to be apart and outside of those present (visibly) even if conveyed through the mediumship of one of them could only be reasonably accounted for by the spiritualist theory of the presence of an intelligence (human or otherwise) as the directing agent. This therefore is a crucial test. The knowledge or information conveyed should be *provably* outside and beyond that of *all* the persons present, whether assisting or not, and if relating to future events, capable also of verification by future proof.

The theories of Mesmerism and Electro-Biology are so assimilated to those I have just dealt with, and their Phenomena as the result of will-power or mental action, upon certain persons known as Sensitives, are so generally known that it is unnecessary to dwell upon them, further than to remark, 1st. That the subjects of these conditions are limited in number, and only form a small per centage of any given assemblage of persons, while the alleged phenomena are said to be mostly witnessed by *all* present at a séance. 2nd. Persons in the Mesmeric trance are mostly indifferent to everything that is transpiring around them, unless their attention be called by the Mesmeriser to any circumstance or object, or they are placed by him purposely in connection, or, as it is called, "*rapport*" with the same; while the sitters in a séance seem to be independent and

spontaneous observers. 3rd. That the mesmerised subject is oblivious on awakening from the trance, or sleep, of all that has transpired in connection with him, or been brought under his observation during his mesmerised condition. This, (with the exception of the so called Trance-Mediums) it is well known is never the case with the spectators of the spiritualistic phenomena, as they invariably fully remember all they have experienced in its most minute details. Spiritualists do not deny that Animal Magnetism or Mesmerism may be the power by which the same is effected, but believe that as mesmerism is a force exerted not by the body but by the spirit, it is equally capable of being exercised by a human spirit *out* of the material body if a suitable means or medium of connection can be found to aid its purpose. In short, they say our Media *are* mesmerised, but by *disembodied*, not embodied spirits, hence the origin of their entranced condition during the manifestations, which state of the medium is indeed said to be essential both to their production and continuance. It is true that the subject of Electro-Biology is *not entranced*, and has all his faculties awake and capable of taking part in the events of the natural world by which he is surrounded, with the sole exception of that faculty, which is placed in obedience or perverted for the time being by the influence of the will of the Biologiser, but on the other hand it is well known that it is impossible to impress the same idea upon every one of any given number of persons promiscuously assembled, perhaps not even upon one in every fifty. Neither has it even been shewn that Mediums invariably possess Electro-biological powers or susceptibility. Again, Electro-biologised persons, though not insensible, but only under a false impressional influence of a temporary kind affecting



a particular idea or faculty selected to be operated upon by the Biologiser, do not, on being released from his influence, *remember* their delusion, but often laugh heartily, and doubt what the bystanders relate to them as having occurred or been done by them a moment since, absurdities which they have but just been perpetrating with all gravity or accepting as reasonable facts at the bidding or suggestion of their biologiser. It is curious that an experiment somewhat resembling the formation of the Spirit Circle was made by the Rev. Chauncy Hare Townsend and is thus recounted in his work "Facts in Mesmerism," he says:—

"I have sometimes formed, what may be called, a Mesmeric Pile, by seating five or six persons together in a line or half circle, holding each other's hands. I have then mesmerised the first in the rank, who has passed on the influence to the second, who has again transmitted it to the third, and so on; by each pressing the hand held by each at regular periods of time. Under this treatment I have invariably found that the mesmeric influence was most powerfully demonstrated in the person who was *farthest* from myself, that is the person who received the original impulse through the greatest number of intervening transmitters, and the shades of graduation were also accurately preserved, the first person scarcely experiencing any sensation, the second feeling a more decided influence, and so on until the last was thrown into the complete mesmeric state."

The theory of ODIC FORCE (*Odology*) as applied to the solution of the Spiritist Phenomena, next claims our attention. This is so nearly allied to the PSYCHIC FORCE, or Nerve-Atmosphere theory, that the remarks already made upon those subjects are equally applicable to it. In fact, the so-called "ODIC FORCE" and NERVE-AURA seem synonymous, but as many persons may be unfamiliar with this peculiar natural force, I will give a brief outline of it:—Professor Reichenbach in experimenting

on certain persons and crystals, through the medium of highly sensitive individuals, ascertained that a gaseous fluid of a blue and yellow colour, exhaled from the poles (or electrodes) of the crystals, and from the ends of the fingers of his subjects, blue from the positive, yellow from the negative pole. This fluid he regards as something more subtle than electricity, invisible to persons in a normal state of the nervous system, but by certain persons, (sensitives,) things invisible to others are perceived pertaining to this highly attenuated or rarefied exhalation. From the finger tips of a male subject it exhales of a blue colour about an inch long, but from those of a female the jet is inconsiderable, imparting as it were merely a luminosity to their extremities. From grave-yards this odic exhalation is abundant, shewing it is not a result of vitality alone in the human body. An "AURA" or HALO of this fluid is said to surround the whole of the human body, and may be regarded as a highly sensitive mirror, in which can be excited latent (odic) spectres, which become visible to those whose brains are subjected to odic, or in other words, polar exaltation. These odic phantasms may emanate from corrupting bodies, mineral or other substances, assuming their figure or conformation; and from *living brains acting upon other living brains*. This strangely coincides with one of the belief of the KABALISTS or ancient Magicians, that the actions of men cause hidden spectral impressions to be made on the external magnetic halo of the Earth, which remain after they are dead and long forgotten, so that by an adequately exciting cause a man's history would be evoked, like the handwriting on Belshazzar's palace wall. It was even believed that these exterior spectral impressions may be discerned by mediums of peculiar sensibility,

so that they may perceive scenes after the actors have become quiet. Analagous to this is the modern science of "PSYCHOMETRY, for the most interesting details of which see NATURE'S SECRETS" by Denton. On such an assumption as the foregoing we had need carefully avoid secret sins lest the impressions of a man's deeds may be reproduced upon the "*sensorium*" of some sleeping or waking Medium, and "what is done in the closet thus be proclaimed on the house-tops," or stare him in his own face when he shall rise from the dead to behold his every action written like Belshazzar's doom on the magnetic page in words of living light. To render this mysterious notion more comprehensible I will put it a very familiar form by comparing the images said to be impressed on the astral ether to the reflection of the furniture and other articles in a room in a looking glass. If a blind man enter a room under such circumstances he is of course ignorant of the existence of the reflection on the surface of the mirror, although be it observed it is none the less present, when however, another having the faculty of sight enters he immediately perceives the reflected images, but they are not *produced there by his vision*, any more than created by his fancy, for the reflection *always existed* whether looked upon or not, the only thing is it disappears if either the mirror, the reflected articles, or the light be removed. But if the mirror had been a sensitive daguerreotype or photographic plate the reflected image would have been retained like the spectre in the luminous ether, but distinguishable only by those possessing the faculty of sight.

We now arrive at the concluding but most difficult and delicate phase of the question, though at the same time the most vitally important, as it regards the subject from a



religious point of view, which, however, we may seek to shun it, is one as involving the assertion of giving actual proof of man's active existence *continuing immediately after death*, that forces itself upon us at the very threshold of enquiry, and by appealing to our innate sacred and earnest yearning to remove the idea of the continued existence of our departed dear ones, from the religion of *faith* to that of *certainty*, takes its strongest hold on the human heart. It is to this property of Spiritism that may be attributed not only its rapid extension among all grades of society, and its ready acceptation by thoughtful minds, but also the fact that like all morbid religious excitement it has induced insanity of a most painful kind in persons of susceptible, excitable and weak intellect. This is a result far too serious to be lightly dealt with, and I believe it to be rather from this fact, than solely from a conviction of its satanic nature that the Roman Catholic Church condemns the countenance and practice of it. Whether a delusion or a reality it is certain that it has produced such sad results by its potent action on the minds of delicate and sensitive persons, especially those of a strongly religious temperament.

The objections advanced against Spiritism by many Clergymen and Ministers of different denominations, mostly allow that the alleged "Manifestations" are really intercourse with spiritual Beings, but of a nature analagous to the prohibited necromancy and "seeking unto the dead" and unto familiar spirits, set forth and condemned as "unlawful divination" in the Old and New Testaments. But there are also some among our religious teachers who dispute the fact of human spirit-intercourse entirely, and even its possibility, on the grounds that Man's future active life does not commence immediately upon the death of his

body, nor until the general resurrection or rising out of the dust of the earth, for say they man can hope for no immortality whatever except through a resurrection, as it is written.—“If there be no resurrection of the dead then they who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.” They maintain that it was clearly the teaching of the Apostles supported by the testimony of the Bible that the dead know not anything, and that there is neither knowledge nor wisdom in “Sheol” whither we go. Now Divines make this word “Sheol” equivalent to Hades, the place of departed Spirits (not the grave) and if this definition be accepted then there is neither knowledge nor wisdom in the place of departed spirits, termed by modern Spiritists the Spirit-sphere or Summer-land, and a period of *inactive existence*, is established for human spirits from the death of the material body to the period of its resurrection at the last day, constituting a *break* in the continuity of the soul’s active existence. Of the possibility of Satanic influence, or Possession we have no grounds whatever save what are contained in Bible statements, and the whole belief in such as invoked by Witches or practised by Sorcerers, etc., seems evidently to have taken its rise from and been founded solely upon these biblical narratives. Thus, upon this part of the question it is with Bible evidence alone we are compelled to deal. Now we read in the Scriptures of men possessed by one and even by seven devils; we are also plainly told that devils and unclean spirits spoke out of the mouths of those possessed, in one case stating to Jesus Christ that their name was “Legion” for they were many, and beseeching him to permit them to enter into a herd of swine near at hand, on quitting the man from whom he was about to cast them out, rather than he should send them to their own

place. These, with numerous other instances, clearly prove the possibility of satanic possession in those days, and I am not aware of any passages in Scripture whence we can conclude that the possibility should cease or had ceased at any particular time. In the absence of such it seems only rational to conclude that it continues to the present moment, and will so long as the world endures.

The supporters of this interpretation of the Spiritist mystery argue thus. "The facts of Spiritism are sufficiently authenticated, they cannot be interpreted in the light of imposture, jugglery, or trickery, nor can they be accounted for by any known law, therefore they are super or preternatural, and their source satanic, because, 1st. Such satanic manifestations are predicted in the Scriptures. 2nd. They are corroborated by the facts of History. They also lean to the idea that the direct instruments are rather demons according to the interpretation of that word as meaning the spirits of deceased *bad* men, that is to say demoniacal rather than diabolical, or obsession rather than possession. In short, that the alleged modern spirit intercourse is a direct realization of the prophecy in Timothy "that in the later times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils (or teachings of demons) speaking lies in hypocrisy," and that, notwithstanding that the Spiritists say "that as Spiritism inculcates such things as love to God, charity towards man and morality of life, it is impossible it can be satanic, for then satan would be divided against himself" these hold that it is in that very fact the *seducing* of the text consists, and it is but demoniacal trickery, the demons knowing well enough that rank atheism, open immorality, and a negation of all religion would never do at the commencement, their



stratagem for the present being, that satan himself be transformed into an angel of light and preach morality through the demons who are his subordinate ministers. The powers of darkness say they can afford to love charity and righteousness, if at the same time they can insiduously subtract from the creed of their victims the saving points of the gospel. Demons can afford to proclaim morality if at the same time they can destroy the notion of natural depravity of a Saviour and of future punishment. They assert that Spiritism is the very form of delusion predicted by St. Paul in his epistle to the Thessalonians, where he says "whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all powers and signs and lying wonders" and for this cause God shall send them strong delusions that they should believe a lie. It must however be stated that the Spiritists while asserting that they receive teachings from the ghosts of dead men admit that the "*manifestations*" are both by good and bad spirits, the former being the Spirit-guides or Guardian-angels alluded to in Scripture as Ministering Spirits; the latter the unclean spirits against whom the Bible so often warns us. It must also be remembered that in earlier times the term demon equally signified *good* and *bad* spirits of deceased men both among the Christians and the Pagans. Justin Martyr says: "Demoniacs are persons who are seized and thrown down by the souls of the deceased." Dr. Campbell states that all the pagan divinities are ghosts of dead men, and Grote the Greek Historian, writes that demons and gods were one and the same thing in Greece. Dr. Lardner says: "that the Souls of the dead having power over the living was universally believed by the heathen," and St. Paul seems to imply the same thing in Corinthians, where he says, "the things which the

Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God," adding, "and I would not that ye should have fellowship with demons." It is therefore clear that the promulgators of this evil-spirit theory can adduce numerous prohibitions against necromancy, both from the old and new testaments, in support of their argument "that having recourse or seeking to" the spirits of the dead is forbidden in the Bible, and that it is the apostacy from the truth foretold to occur in the later days, and to be brought about through the agency of evil spirits. In the 18th chapter of Deuteronomy charmers, consultants with familiar spirits, wizards, and necromancers, are said to be an abomination unto the Lord, and in the 22nd chapter of the first Book of Kings we have an account of the persuading of Ahab by a Spirit to go up to Ramoth-Gilead that he might fall there "Then there came forth a Spirit and stood before the Lord and said I will persuade him, and the Lord said unto him," wherewith? and he said "I will go forth and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets, and He said "thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also, go forth and do so." It is also said of Manasseh, King of Judah, "He wrought evil in the sight of the Lord to provoke him to anger, for he made his son pass through the fire and observed tunes and enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards. In Leviticus the following passages occur, "Regard not those that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards" "The soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, I will even set my face against that soul and will cut him off from amongst his people;" and in Isaiah we find "and when they shall say unto you, seek unto them that have familiar spirits and unto wizards that peep and mutter, should not a people seek unto their God.?" The chief

force of these arguments seem to lie in the assumption that the Spirits of the good and holy cannot be participators in that which the Divine Being himself prohibits, and therefore if there are Spirits of the dead now communing with living men, they must necessarily be evil ones, for as the Poet says:—

“ Oftentimes to win us to our harm  
The instruments of darkness tell us truth,  
Win us with honest trifles, to betray us  
In deepest conscience.”

It has also been said perhaps something *may* be known besides what God has revealed in his word, and yet that something be too much, and if obtained in rebellion against a wise authority that has laid a ban on all attempts to rifle the realms of death of their secret, then certainly it is too much.

I think the time has fully arrived when it is to be expected that our religious teachers should step in, and at least promulgate their opinions upon this subject, opinions which while based upon the word of God, should also be fortified by an accurate knowledge of the subject with which they are dealing, obtained not alone from Spiritists but from Psychologists and Physicists, as the results of scientific research and logical deduction, and thus this highly important “QUESTION OF THE DAY,” should be at once and for ever solved.

We have now reached that portion of our task which leads to the “*teachings*” of Spiritism, we have been told “to try the Spirits” and “that every tree shall be known by its fruits,” and it is in the philosophy and religion of Spiritism that we must look to find these “teachings”



embodied. I hope at some future time to submit an analysis of these topics including the alleged gift of healing by imposition of hands, speaking with many tongues and similar gifts claimed by Spiritualists as well as the leading features in the Spiritist's Children's Progressive Lyceum."

As it may cause some surprise if I sit down without alluding to the *professed* production of Spiritualistic phenomena by jugglers and sleight of hand adepts, I will just remark, that as far as I have seen, their performances only seem calculated to deal with certain manifestations of the nature of the rope-tying of the Brothers Davenport, the spirit or blood writing of the Medium Foster, the so-called ring test, and the apparent levitations of articles by unseen means, and it is not impossible that at séances where manifestations were not forthcoming on demand, because not within the certain call or control of Medium or Sitters, clever jugglery may have been summoned to the rescue as applicable at least to some of the more essentially physical manifestations. Indeed, Spiritists themselves have admitted, with regret, that with them as among all other bodies of fallible men, the *base* has been found among the *pure* metal, the tares among the wheat:—

I must now leave as yet unsolved,

“ Whence the strange inborn sense of coming ill,  
 That sometimes whispers to the haunted breast,  
 In a low sighing tone which nought may still,  
 Midst feasts and melodies a sacred guest ?  
 Whence doth that murmur come that shadow fall ;  
 Why shakes the Spirit thus ? 'Tis mystery all.

And the far-off wandering of the Soul in dreams,  
 Bringing up shrouded faces from the dead,  
 And with them soft or solemn gleams,  
 Our memory quickly to o'erspread,  
 Perhaps chased with love, or joy, or fear,  
 These are night's mysteries, who shall make them  
 clear?

Darkly we move, we press upon the brink,  
 Haply of unseen worlds, and know it not,  
 Yes, it may be that nearer than we think,  
 Are those whom death has parted from our lot,  
 Fearfully! wondrously! our souls are stayed,  
 Let us walk humbly on, yet undismayed.

Humbly, for knowledge strives in vain to feel,  
 Her way along these marvels of the mind,  
 Yet undismayed—for do they not reveal,  
 The immortal nature with our dust entwined,  
 So let us deem, and e'en the tears they wake,  
 Shall then be blest for that high nature's sake.

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F I N I S .

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