

SPIRIT-IDENTITY

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"Psychography," "The Higher Aspects of Spiritualism," "Spirit Teachings," etc.

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The first edition of *Spirit Identity* has long been out of print, but the demand for it continues. The Rev. W. Stainton Moses (M.A., Oxon.), the author of the book, was the original promoter and the first President of the London Spiritualist Alliance, and the Council of the Alliance issues this reprint as an affectionate tribute to his memory.

**Gift of
John Edgar Coover**

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I inscribe this Volume

to

my old friends,

DR. AND MRS. STANHOPE SPEER,

*As witnesses from the first of that sequence of events of which
this record is but a sample :*

*As those, therefore, who are best able to understand
both what is therein written, and what
is omitted :*

*And, lastly, as a testimony of grateful and
sincere friendship and regard.*

UTTERANCES OF EMINENT MEN OF SCIENCE
ON THE SUBJECT OF SPIRITUALISM.

"Sit with you! No! I have resolved to sit with no one. I made up my mind before coming here that nothing would come of it."—AGASSIZ (*Member of Investigation Committee, Harvard University*) to Mr. Redman.

"They who say they see these things are not competent witnesses of facts."

"It would be a condescension on my part to pay any more attention to them."—FARADAY.

"Spirit is the last thing I will give in to."—BREWSTER.

"I have settled the question in my own mind on a *priori* grounds."—HERBERT SPENCER.

"Supposing the phenomena to be genuine, they do not interest me."—HUXLEY.

"There are people amongst us who, it is alleged, can produce effects before which the discoveries of Newton pale. There are men of science who would sell all that they have, and give the proceeds to the poor, for a glimpse of phenomena which are mere trifles to the Spiritualist."

"The world will have religion of some kind, even though it should fly for it to the intellectual whoredom of Spiritualism."—PROFESSOR TYNDALL.

"A most mischievous epidemic delusion, comparable to the witchcraft delusion of the seventeenth century."—W. B. CARPENTER.

"Spiritualism amongst its more devout followers is a Religion."—CROOKES.

"It demonstrates mind without brain, and intelligence disconnected from a material body. . . . It furnishes that *proof* of a future life which so many crave, and for want of which so many live and die in anxious doubt, so many in positive disbelief."—A. R. WALLACE.

"The Spiritualists, beyond a doubt, are in the track that has led to all advancement in physical science. Their opponents are the representatives of those who have striven against progress."

—DE MORGAN.

Asked, What is the use of it? FRANKLIN replied, WHAT IS THE USE OF A NEW-BORN BABY?

"The testimony has been so abundant and consentaneous, that either the facts must be admitted to be such as are reported, or the possibility of certifying facts by human testimony must be given up."—PROFESSOR CHALLIS.

"Already Spiritualism, conducted as it usually is, has had a prodigious effect throughout America, and partly in the Old World also, in redeeming multitudes from hardened atheism and materialism, proving to them by the positive demonstration which their cast of mind requires, that there is another world—that there is a non-material form of humanity—and that many miraculous things which they had hitherto scoffed at are true."—ROBERT CHAMBERS.

"Even in the most cloudless skies of scepticism I see a rain-cloud, if it be no bigger than a man's hand; it is modern Spiritualism."
—LORD BROUGHAM.

PREFACE.

THIS volume has grown out of a paper originally read at a discussion meeting of the British National Association of Spiritualists, held at their rooms, 38, Great Russell Street, London, on the evening of December 16, 1878.

In that paper I presented certain evidence for the identity of spirits who have from time to time communicated with me ; and I founded an argument upon the evidence produced.

Confined within narrow limits by the exigencies of the occasion, I dealt with one phase of the subject only, and my treatment of it was cursory. I have, however, considered it best to print the paper as it originally was delivered, with some few additional facts, and to supplement its imperfections and omissions, to some extent, in other parts of the book, especially in the Introduction.

I have also reprinted from the *Spiritualist* certain papers bearing on the general subject of this work ; and I have added in another Appendix cases of identity before published, to which allusion is made in the course of my argument.

Writing, as I now do, for the student who has

penetrated within the outer ring of this subject, I assume a certain amount of knowledge on his part, and a certain acceptance of principles, which I do not stop to discuss.

And it is fair to add that I deduce from my facts certain arguments for the religious tendency of Spiritualism, which my readers will modify or reject as it pleases them. Probably they have their own religious notions already; but whether so or not, the facts are independent of any theory that may be built upon them.

M.A., (OXON.)

LONDON,

Christmas, 1878.

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SPIRIT-IDENTITY.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS volume differs from my previous one on *PSYCHOGRAPHY* in this respect: I write now for those who have studied and made themselves familiar with spiritual phenomena; whereas then I wrote for the uninstructed world, who have no knowledge on the subject beyond what can be gained from a casual conversation or a misleading paragraph in some newspaper.

Then I was careful to employ non-committal terms, to state no theory for acceptance, and to refrain generally from the use of any language that might serve to increase the prejudice wherewith new truth is always viewed. Here, on the contrary, I am speaking to the esoteric body, and am propounding evidence for the perpetuation of life and individuality after the death of the body. I am leaving first principles and dealing with profounder mysteries. In so doing, I must assume, on the part of those who read me, a considerable familiarity with the phenomena of Spiritualism, and some previous exercise of thought as to the causes that underlie them.

Speaking to such only, I desire to clear the ground by a few preliminary considerations, the more necessary because a considerable portion of this work is devoted to an exclusive argument dealing only with one side of the question—the return to earth of the spirits of departed humanity. I have no desire to stand committed to any narrow definition or limitation of the Intelligence at work, any more than I wish to ignore

the great weight of evidence that goes to show that in a large number of cases the Intelligent Operator is not the person he pretends to be, or else that he is very unfortunate in his attempts to make out his identity.

Speaking, as I do, almost on the threshold of a vast inquiry, albeit one in which I have spent some years with rare opportunities for forming an opinion—speaking, moreover, of the causes of things in themselves so various, in the methods of their presentation so protean, in their perpetual changefulness so perplexing—speaking, too, as one averse to theorising, especially on a subject so fruitful of fanciful hypothesis, I desire to say as little as possible. But it would be unfair to let this volume go forth without some words on other aspects of the question than those to which I have given prominence in my paper on *THE INTELLIGENT OPERATOR*.

DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY OF INVESTIGATION.

It must be admitted at the outset of the argument that many perplexing questions are raised at every step of the investigation. The experiences of investigators are very various: the attitude of public opinion almost precludes fair ventilation and discussion of facts; the facts themselves are not such as can be published in many cases; and we have to reckon with an Intelligent Operator whose opinion and action are frequently the very reverse to what our own would be.

The gates are set ajar, and a motley company enters: we know little of, and most of us care less for, proper conditions of investigation; and we complicate an already perplexing subject by much careless folly.

It is this line of thought that I wish to pursue.

DIVERGENT RESULTS OF INVESTIGATORS.

The experiences of investigators of the phenomena called spiritual have been even more various than those of investiga-

tors of other obscure subjects. Some have tried for years, and have seen nothing that satisfies them. Others have been flooded with evidence that sweeps away doubt with the torrent-rush of conviction. Some have to take a world of trouble to get means of investigation; and when all has been done, are confronted only with a bewildering mass of illusive phenomena of which they can make nothing, which may mean much or little, but which certainly are not reducible to law. Others carry about with them their own means of investigation, and are not perplexed by any fear of deceit, at least on this side. Some bring to the inquiry a calm and evenly-balance mind, free alike from dogmatic scepticism and enthusiastic credulity. Others gulp down the most portentous phenomena without ever thinking of the conclusions to be drawn from them; and others, yet again, see nothing, hear nothing, know nothing, and shut tight the avenues through which alone knowledge is procurable.

ATTITUDE OF OPINION REPRESSES PUBLICATION OF FACTS.

No wonder, then, that, where experience is so various, opinion is equally divergent. It would be more than strange were it otherwise. The investigator too frequently is compelled by this state of general opinion to approach the study of the subject with a mind befogged by prejudice. If he be a man properly trained and educated to understand the abstruse questions involved in the study of the more recondite phenomena of psychological science, he will have spent most of his time in an atmosphere but little favourable to a candid consideration of the question it involves. The very works that he will have read will be the outcome of the study of insanity by those who have the strongest interest in presenting a one-sided view of the question, and who, it is fair to presume, have no other view present to their minds. On true mental science he will have found no treatise that will enlighten him.

Of the mysteries of spirit and spirit-action he has everything to learn in the stern school of experience. He will hear the whole subject scorned, scouted, and branded by his associates as unclean, to be left severely alone by any one who values a scientific or even a social reputation.

Unclean, save the mark! As if any knowledge could by any possibility be unclean! As if it were more unclean for a man to learn to probe his own mind than to study the organs of his own body! As if he were not acting in obedience to the wisest of all advice, *Γνωθὶ σεαυτόν*, *Know thyself*, in probing to the very bottom the mysteries of his own soul and of its relation to the souls of others, and to the Great Soul of the universe!

But this will be put aside with a scoff, and a significant hint that such ideas are fanatical and quixotic. His reading will supply him with instances of both social and scientific, possibly also (for such things have been) of theological persecution of men who have ventured to handle tabooed topics, or to push on the car of progress when a fossilised orthodoxy, whether in Science, Politics, or Religion, has decided to lock its wheels.

If his own mind be free from bias, he will find it uncommonly difficult to induce any of his scientific friends to tolerate the mention of a subject which they instinctively recognise as inimical to their own pretensions to the exclusive possession of exact knowledge. They will regard him as a dangerous man, as one who is a little erratic; and if a Mad Doctor gets near him, he will probably have him within the gates of his asylum before he is much older.

And so by degrees, if his determination survive this opposition, he will be driven in upon himself, and will reserve what he discovers for future use, or for the service of a later age, when men will have run their heads against hard facts so repeatedly that they will have ceased to view them as their fathers did: when the scorned delusion of his day will have become the great truth of the succeeding age. If he speaks at all, it will be of elementary points, which, though equally

scorned by their fathers, the present generation has grudgingly accepted, and endeavoured to hide or explain away.

Hence one universal result comes to pass. The entire cycle of truth is never publicly presented: only such fragments of it as are forced, by apparent accident, into publicity; here a little and there a little, as a Slade comes to make a special phenomenon matter of notoriety, and a Lankester helps on the work by an appeal to persecution by the law.

The coherent body of evidence for the central facts of Spiritualism is almost of necessity from this cause not public property.

THIS RESULTS ALSO FROM THE INHERENT NATURE OF THE
FACTS.

Moreover, the attitude of opinion, acting from without, finds in the nature of the facts an ally to repress free publicity. I am not speaking now of the mere physical phenomena that lie on the surface, and have nothing but the elusive method of their presentation to interfere with publicity. If a man does not get tired of replying to the fatuous string of questions that the outside world has so largely at command—"Why cannot you produce these phenomena here, there, now, at any time, in my own room, in a public hall, with a medium, without a medium, and so on, and so on? Why cannot I produce them? Why is a medium necessary? Why a circle?"—if he does not get tired of hearing and answering this vapid questioning, there is no reason why attention should not be drawn to phenomena of raps, or even to such a demonstrable fact as Psychography, with much persistence.

But it is different when, through the adit of these phenomena, he has penetrated within the veil to the causes that underlie them, or rather to the intelligence that governs them. He finds then, in the cases that most deeply impress him, that he

is face to face with the evidence on which is rested, rightly or wrongly, the great, the far-reaching claim of Spiritualism,—demonstration of perpetuated life after death, and of intercourse between the world of matter and the world of spirit.

Sometimes the evidence will come from an impersonal source, from some instructor who has passed through the plane on which individuality is demonstrable, but it will none the less impress him with the solemnity of its issues. More frequently it will come from a friend whose affection has survived the great change, and who reaches a hand from the other side to help the struggling seeker after truth.

In either case, the evidence will usually be treasured up, and not made public property. Experience of what was done with the green tree will not predispose him to any experiments with the dry. If the earthly things—the raps and the noises that the ear of sense can distinguish—if the earthly things be derided, who shall tell of the heavenly things? And so they are locked up in the inner recesses, and are produced, if at all, only in outline, and under a strong sense of duty, to one who has in him that yearning after truth, divinely implanted and spirit-nurtured, which makes it imperative on him that has, to give.

Both from the nature of the evidence, and from the attitude of men towards it, the truth is only partially made public.

THE INTELLIGENT OPERATOR HAS TO BE RECKONED WITH.

There is another reason that imports much uncertainty into this special investigation. We are not dealing, as the astronomer, for instance, is, with that which is in itself fixed, which acts according to law more or less clearly known to us, and respecting which we have a body of fact from which we can proceed on our way of further observation and experiment. If the astronomer is concerned in observing the planet Mars,

he knows where to turn his telescope; he has a mass of fact with regard to the planet ready to his hand; he can predict its position, changes, and variations with much certainty for any time to come: and he can correct errors in his observations that may be caused by atmospheric conditions; and, finally, if anything occurs to prevent his observation, or to render the planet invisible, he can tell you exactly what has happened and why his failure has occurred. He is the heir of the knowledge of ages past, and to that body of science his own observations attach themselves in orderly sequence, without any breach of continuity or any rude severance of connection.

It is far otherwise when the investigator comes to deal with spiritual science in its more esoteric aspects. There, at the outset, all is shifting, vague, and uncertain. There is little in the past that can guide him. For the sages of old wrote for the initiated, and were little inclined to scatter their pearls of wisdom. If their books are open to us, we have lost the key, and as guides they are practically worthless.

The observations of others which are accessible to the public are apparently conducted under such a variety of conditions that the results arrived at are conflicting on the surface, and tend rather to bewilderment than to edification. The atmospheric conditions are so variable and exercise so powerful an influence: the investigator is dependent on the aid of others who form his circle; and each one of these imports his own conditions of error into the investigation; these and other causes, none of them tabulated and marked for him on the chart of previous experience, render his early pursuit of knowledge liable to every fluctuating degree of error.

And though increasing experience eliminates many of these deterrent influences: though he finds himself increasingly able to say how and why much occurs or does not occur, though he may even be able to *command* results where inferior agencies alone are concerned, still he will always find himself at last compelled to reckon with the Invisible Operator at the end of

the line. He has not to do with a fixed and changeless subject of investigation, an inert substance the constitution and properties of which are partially known to him, but with an Intelligent Being, who has his ideas, plans, and projects all unknown to the investigator; who has, moreover, his way of looking at things, which is far different from that which obtains among us; and who, if he be a worthy Guide, will not swerve from the purpose set before him.

If he have been fortunate enough to secure the co-operation of a worthy and sufficiently powerful spirit, who acts on principles of integrity, he will be confronted by a new problem. If he have not secured such a guide, then he will find the investigation beset with difficulty, and he must depend for his evidence on sources whence the supply is alike precarious, and, as second-hand, unsatisfactory. He will be tempted to abandon the pursuit, and probably will do so, unless some unexpected avenue opens out.

But assuming him to be in relation with a spirit of whose integrity, wisdom, and power he has satisfied himself, as it is his sacred duty to do before trusting to his keeping the mighty interests that are at stake, then he will have to consider that this intelligence has his plans and methods, with which he can only slightly interfere. He will be forced to decide whether he will allow evidence to be produced at the will of the controlling spirit: whether he will consent to remain, to all intents and purposes, the passive recipient of what is vouchsafed; or whether he will dictate his own conditions, prescribe what he wishes to be done, refuse what he does not understand, and so place himself in relation with some lower intelligence who will bow to his will. He may be well assured that the very fact of his being able to command and subjugate the intelligence that should guide and teach him is proof that he can learn nothing from so complaisant an instructor. He has driven away the spirit that could elevate, and has attracted one over whom he can lord it.

It is to the latter course having been so frequently adopted that I trace much of the disfigurement and defilement of our modern Spiritualism. If the investigator be impelled—I use the term advisedly—to the other course : if he satisfy himself as to the moral consciousness of the intelligence at work, and be content to accept what it presented with full liberty to examine and try it when it is placed in evidence, but refraining from dictation and interference, the course is more or less clear.

He will find, indeed, that he has no power to command phenomena, or possibly even to demonstrate their existence to others on occasions when he most desires to do so. The variable conditions set up by each change in the circle will be found to be an absolute barrier to frequent admission of other friends; and on this head he will soon learn that he has to take his choice between following his own inclinations without success, and obeying the reasonable dictates of the Intelligent Operator, who knows far more about conditions than he does.

I can recall many an occasion when the most earnest requests for permission to show certain facts to friends, to whom I would have sacrificed much to bring conviction, and whom it would have been a valued privilege to have associated with myself in the investigation, were refused again and again, and I have been forced, though most reluctantly, to acquiesce. No doubt each request of such a kind would be more readily granted were it possible so to arrange conditions under which investigations are conducted as to secure a reasonable certainty of success. No doubt as we grow wiser by repeated failure it will be less and less necessary to fence round our circles by such stringent methods of prohibition. As it is, so many causes of error intervene, that the most fruitful of all—the combination of new elements—must be avoided.

Were it not so, we should be perpetually reduced to the necessity of going back to first principles; anything like

progress would be impossible, and we should be "ever learning but never coming to the knowledge of the truth."

The investigator, having gone so far, will find, furthermore, that he is being gradually withdrawn from the material plane of observation on which alone objective demonstration is to be had. Having passed through the hard phase in which he demanded—and most righteously demanded—satisfactory proof as a preliminary to further investigation, and having obtained it, he will find a strong desire on the part of spirit to rise, and to raise him, above the material plane. If the Intelligent Operator is one who has power to teach and guide, he will find that the physical phenomena are treated as "the mighty works" which are to form the material foundation—the "hay, straw, stubble" for the edifice of faith. He will be led, if possible, onward from the plane of scientific demonstration to the higher regions of moral and spiritual enlightenment, and will be led to search into deeper mysteries—*verum cognoscere causas*—so far as to learn that the fleeting phenomena of this world of sense are but the earthly reflections of the enduring realities of the world of spirit. He will be taught to trace the link between the crudities of human forms of faith and the eternal verities, of which only the vaguest outlines are comprehensible by his finite mind. He will find that all paths that lead upward lead in the end to higher religious truth, to a higher conception of duty, and to a nearer view of God.

By such methods his inner self will be purified, his conceptions of life, not as a matter of threescore years and ten on this earth, but as an imperishable and eternal possession, to be utilised and cultivated or to be wasted and destroyed, will be ennobled and elevated. If he be in any sense a true man, he will be morally, and in the very highest religious sense, the better for the training. He will see more clearly what his obligations are, and so will be a better citizen and a truer man in all his social relations. He will have a clearer conception

of his privileges, and will be the more ready to vindicate his birthright. And he will have learned that, whether he wills it or not, he is the arbiter of his own destiny, that he lives in the piercing sight of the world of spirit, and he will increasingly rise above the meannesses and pettinesses that disfigure our modern life, and the anthropomorphic conceptions that form our modern theology.

Far more than this. He will find as he goes on, that his early notions of literal demonstration and scientific analysis are becoming impossible. He will see that the subtler truths of spirit—or rather the higher conceptions of spiritual truth—lend themselves to no such methods; and that they even elude the hard limits of human language, and find expression or adumbration (if at all) in the language of symbolism and allegory. More frequently they are intuitively perceived, and elude absolutely and entirely the crude methods of human expression.

And if he penetrates far enough, he will find himself in a region for which his present embodied state unfits him: a region in which the very individuality is merged, and the highest and subtlest truths are not locked within one breast, but emanate from representative companies whose spheres of life are interblended.

The will of the Intelligent Operator in the best cases is added to causes before enumerated, so as to render the free dissemination of truth difficult.

These causes combine to make a full publication of cases, which seem to those best able to judge to prove spirit-identity, well-nigh impossible.

I have said nothing of the sentimental side of the argument: of the impatience that a number of investigators who have by patient waiting obtained their results,—of the impatience that such reasonably feel at being compelled again and again to begin *de novo* by the repeated introduction of fresh elements

into their circle. Nor have I touched on the stronger impatience of those who have intercourse with their departed friends, and who live, as in a risen life, in that sacred consciousness, at being interviewed by some pragmatic person or even by some very earnest but incompetent investigator, and being forced to produce evidence which wrings their very inmost souls for the satisfaction of a man for whose convictions pro or con they care, except on abstract principles of universal philanthropy, extremely little. It is easy to say that "to whom much is given, of them shall much be required." But this *is* much, very much, and, as a rule, it is not given.

Nor have I touched upon the extreme, the almost insuperable difficulty of putting into the syllogisms of cold logic, or even into such exact statements as a hostile critic claims, evidence that frequently appeals more to the heart than to the head, and which is best and safest precisely in proportion as it is least reducible within those hard and fast limits. Such evidence must appeal to another class of inquirers, and perhaps to a later age of enquiry, when the rough work of preparation, the ploughing and harrowing of the unpromising soil, has been done by the pioneers who are hardy enough and persistent enough to do it.

But, passing from the difficulties inherent in the subject itself, there are other causes that tend to make public evidence hard to be had.

THE GATES BEING AJAR, A MOTLEY CROWD RUSHES IN.

The world from which disembodied spirits return to us is very much like our own. The denizens of it are of varying degrees of progression; and those, unfortunately for us, who are least progressive, least developed, least spiritual, and most material and earthly, hover around the confines, and rush in when the gates are set ajar.

We have small reason to complain of this. It is our own option to seek intercourse with the world of spirit; and we are certainly doing our best to keep up the supply of unprogressed and undeveloped spirits who are perpetually passing from our state to that with which we voluntarily open communication. Of course we reap what we have sown; that is an eternal law.

Our criminals, for some of whom we are responsible both in life and death,—for we provide the best possible conditions for their production and nurture, and, when the full measure of their iniquity is consummated, we considerably facilitate their departure from us into the world of spirit,—our criminals we have always with us.

The dwellers in our lanes and alleys, for whom we make a decent life impossible: the victims of our lusts and debaucheries, whom our conditions of life drive, like the poor sheep that they are, to inevitable sin and shame—these scapegoats of advanced civilisation (the civilisation of the later days of the Roman Empire), for whom we have made spiritual life a thing not even intelligible, and distasteful were it even understood,—these we have too, answering the first call, only too ready to come back to the only place they care for.

They who have lived the life of incarnation without progress: they who have hoarded their treasure here, and have no *home* elsewhere; they who are tied to earth by any of the bonds that chain down the spirit; they for whom heaven has no meaning, and who would find their highest gratification on the earth that they should have quitted for ever; those, in short, whom we, by our vicious civilisation, by all the methods whereby worldly wealth and power preys on and degrades those who are the ministers of its lusts and material cravings and necessities; those whom we have reduced to the level of mere physical machines, and robbed of the precious birthright of spiritual progress and true life—these find the gates ajar and vex us.

I sometimes wonder where those, who believe that man has a soul and a future before him, think that he goes when they lose sight of him. If they propound to me the notion that the soul is in some purgatorial state, or some antechamber of expectation, awaiting reunion with the body that the crack of doom will miraculously recombine, I have nothing to say. We have no common ground on which we can meet. I am concerned with those who accept and understand the rational scheme of progression that awaits the soul newly released from the prison-house of the body. Among these are many who are distressed by the vagaries of spirits who communicate with them, and who, in perplexity and bewilderment, are inclined to refer the whole vexed question to diabolic action.

I would say to such, Why do you import into the argument a new element of disturbance? If there be a Devil such as you postulate, but do not by any means prove, or even give any fair evidence for, I can understand the whole mystery of evil; and I should, if I believed it, be very anxious as to my future, not knowing what pranks such an omnipotent fiend might not elect to play with one who habitually meddles with his spiritual domain. If I did not believe, as I do, that this very human fiend is the creation as much of Milton and Dante as of the earlier conceptions of the Pentateuch, I should find him, as the appropriate Prince of many embodied fiends that we have successfully developed on this earth, a very present cause of trouble.

But is there not enough embodied folly, roguery, iniquity, vice, and sin, the product of our own civilisation, the outcome of our society, ay, even the consequence of what it pleases us to call our religion, perpetually going into the world of spirit to account for all we see and deplore?

We are agreed that man survives physical death. We are agreed that he is an accountable being, who will have to render account for the deeds done in the body. He must,

therefore, be the same man in spirit that he was in the flesh, or where is the possibility of judgment?

Well, what was he? and what does Holy Writ say? "He that is unjust is unjust still; and he that is filthy is filthy still." Carry on the argument, and the conclusion is inevitable. We have elements set loose from this world of ours day by day, endowed too, with perpetuated life and energy, sufficient to make it not only probable but certain that, once we establish communication with the disembodied state, they will return to vex and harass us, as we know they do.

We are face to face once more with the working of inevitable law. "As a man sows, so will he also reap." We are sowing the wind with much daily energy, and we reap the whirlwind in due course.

This of itself is a grave cause of complication; and it is aggravated by our own folly and neglect of reasonable precautions in investigation.

NEGLECT OF CONDITIONS IN INVESTIGATING.

Most of the facilities for investigation which an ordinary investigator finds at his disposal are such as seem to be constructed for the very purpose of bewildering one who possesses this mysterious psychic power; and some, I fear, who only pretend to its possession, advertise that, for a small remuneration, they will place the public in relation with the world of spirit. This of itself is, I should hope, a transitory state of affairs. Far be it from me to utter a word that could even seem to disparage the work done by public mediums. I am conscious that it is not held in the estimation that it should be; and that perhaps as much from the obloquy brought upon it by some whose frauds have discredited it, as from any other cause. When it is discharged as I have seen it, with a sense of responsibility and an honest desire to bring to the investigator such evidence as is possible, much good is effected.

But too often what happens is this: A number of persons assemble, most of them densely ignorant of any conditions to be observed; some animated by mere curiosity, a few by a dumb desire to see what can be had through the only source open to them as evidence of a future life: all, in nine cases out of ten, unfit, for one or more of many causes, for the solemn work they have undertaken. The link between the two worlds, the line that the Intelligent Operator must use, is out of order, overwrought, in anything but a satisfactory condition. How should it be otherwise? Anyone who can spare five shillings runs to him for proof of immortality! The burden is more than he can bear; and if he be a model of integrity, a very storehouse of psychic power, he becomes distressed and broken down. His nerves are shattered; he is open to the assaults of all the malicious, tricky spirits that his vocation brings him in contact with, and, as a consequence, he is in grievous peril—through our ignorance and folly as much as through the ever-present danger of his vocation—of moral, or mental, or physical deterioration. Then comes the necessary sequel: temptation, obsession, fraud, buffoonery, and all that we so lament as associated with phenomenal Spiritualism.

These are the circumstances under which a large proportion of those who desire to gather evidence respecting the intercourse between the two worlds are forced to get it. I am astonished at the results. I know of many cases in which unmistakable evidence has, under these most faulty conditions, been brought home to the enquirer. I repeat that I am astonished that any evidence should be worth counting that is produced under such conditions; and I do not wonder that, as a rule, the evidence is faulty, and that the conditions set up and perpetuated by us result in much that is discreditable, and even shameful.

In so saying, I have in my mind many a scandal that has brought shame on the cause that I advocate; and I am not so

much inclined to blame the perpetrators of the iniquity, though they must bear their righteous burden, as I am the folly and stupidity that make such scandals possible.

And even in circles where better conditions may be expected we find the gravest neglect of precautions that experience has shown to be indispensable.

We know that out of our bodies, in some mysterious manner, by some chemistry unknown to us, are provided the means by which the invisible operators work. Yet few consider that they are bound to prepare themselves in any way for the part they have to play. A copious dinner and a free supply of stimulant are considered to be a reasonable preparation for "an hour's communion with the dead." And then they grumble because they do not get their "dead" of so high quality as they would desire! Or, worse still, they welcome anything with hilarious merriment, and embrace the "dear spirits" as if they were the very Angels of Light.

A melancholy picture, too often drawn by those who would cast a cheap sneer upon us. Let it for once be painted by one who desires only to point its morals.

That is not the way to investigate Spiritualism ; nor is the Intelligent Operator to blame for results that our own folly produces.

These, the results—alas! the only results that the general public knows as Spiritualism, are by common consent undesirable. If the opening of communication between the two worlds results necessarily in this, by all means let us have the gates closed at once. That it does not so result of necessity I hope to show ; and I trust that the efforts that are now being made, and the general spread of knowledge on the subject, will result in wiping away at once and for ever this bar to investigation, and in opening out better avenues for intercourse between us and the world of spirit.

I put it, then, to the candid reader, whether it is any cause for reasonable surprise that, having regard to those spirits, the

dwellers on the threshold who vex and plague us, and to those on our side who are best known to the public as exponents of experimental Spiritualism, there should be a deal of nonsense and folly current in its name? Is *any* evidence that is precise and clear to be expected under such conditions? Is any intercourse to be looked for with any spirit that can elevate and ennoble man? any proof evolved in orderly and exact method? anything, in short, save that questionable benefit of proving that man's vices and follies survive his death, and that there is no monopoly of those qualities on this earth?

Let us purge away from our side these blots which defile our communion with the world of spirit before we charge its manifestations on a Devil, or associate them with the vagaries of soulless and irresponsible elementaries.

AGENCIES OTHER THAN THOSE OF THE DEPARTED.

Here I hope I may be pardoned if I append a few words almost of personal explanation, which are demanded from me if I would make clear the position I occupy: a duty, as it seems to me, incumbent on everyone who presumes to address the public.

It is not for me to deny that there are at work in Spiritualism agencies other than the departed spirits of our kind. If I insist on the action of these human spirits, it is because I think I see need to do so in order to preserve the balance of truth: not because I have any intention of ignoring the action of spirits below the plane of humanity, or of minimising the undoubted power of trans-corporeal action of the embodied human spirit.

I may perhaps be permitted to say that, at a time when I considered it opportune, I did what lay in my power to draw the attention of investigators to both these points, then almost entirely unthought of by English Spiritualists. It seemed to me that our lines of investigation were too cramped, our view not sufficiently wide; our modern self-complacency was

turning its back on what the past had done to throw light on these vexed problems; and it was time to point out that the world of spirit is capacious, and that there is room in it for something more than the whole family of man.

The action of sub-human spirits, and the part they are alleged to play in Spiritualism, ably and enthusiastically set forth by students of the occult literature of the East, popularised in America by Madame H. P. Blavatsky in her great work *ISIS UNVEILED*, and since then advocated in England by a little band of writers hardly less able and energetic, has not needed any other help to secure it from oblivion or neglect, I have not lost sight of that side of the question, even when I have endeavoured to redress the balance by drawing prominent attention to what I hold to be an infinitely more important element—the action of departed human spirits. I should apologise for introducing a word about so unimportant a matter as my own opinions, but I have no desire to be credited with any change of thought which has not taken place, or to seem to be one-sided in my view. I hope I may disavow that supposition without laying myself open to any charge of egotism.

I have brought forward a small portion of the evidence that I have collected for the return of the departed for a plain reason. It is this: For some time past there has seemed to me to be creeping over a prominent section of Spiritualists, the most able, the best informed, and the most active in informing others, an inclination to what in a doctor I should call *Specialism*. Just as the Specialist who deals with the heart refers all symptoms of illness in his patients to some fault in that organ, while his neighbour who deals with the lungs finds in them the root of all evil that comes under his ken, so these Specialists seemed inclined to refer everything that has occurred in our experience of the domain of spirit to any cause except what I hold to be the chief of all—the action of departed human spirits. That, the most potent factor, seemed

to me to be relegated to the lowest place, as, for instance, it is in *Isis Unveiled*, and to be practically ignored, though theoretically and hypothetically admitted as a possible and latent element, by an influential and active body, most of whom would call themselves, and all of whom would be called by the outside world, Spiritualists.

My own view was different, and I thought it well to set it forth. In a prolonged experience—the length of which is not measured by time so properly as by the rapidity with which events have crowded one upon the other, so that day and night were set thick with them—in an experience at least as long and as diversified as that of most of those who arrive at other conclusions, I have found abundant evidence for the action of human spirits, and comparatively little for the action of any sub-human spirits. I am aware that spirit is not conterminous with humanity, and I know that spirit exists on an inferior plane to that on which we live. But I believe it impinges rarely and slightly on us, and personally I know very little of its operation.

I know that the power of the human will is great—of the trained and developed human will, that has regained by long practice its lost birthright of power, I believe the potency to be of unknown magnitude. But the exercise of Will is little known among Western nations; and, as a factor in the production of these phenomena, I believe it to be of the very slightest value.

I know, too, that the liberated spirit of the Psychic has powers with which Spiritualists, as a body, are but slenderly acquainted. I have had some considerable acquaintance with this trans-corporeal action of spirit, both in my own person and with others. I have had grave reason to form the opinion that, in our present state of ignorance, it is an extremely dangerous experiment; one, too, that is very rarely successfully practised, inasmuch as natural gifts must be supplemented by a power of concentration of will very rarely attained by

any Western people. I have no belief that this enters as an indistinguishable factor into the production of these phenomena. Such few cases as are attributable to it are well marked and readily distinguishable.

I profess once more my belief that these subjects—the action of inferior spirits, the trans-corporeal action of the incarnated human spirit, and the potency of the human will—are worthy of our deepest study. Not until we have solved some, at least, of the mysteries that beset them, shall we penetrate far in our study of the phenomena called spiritual. No one-sided view will embrace the field of Spiritualism, and no student of the subject can afford to overlook causes which may be so influential in the production of abnormal phenomena as these.

I, at least, should like to know more of the powers inherent in my own spirit, and of the results that may be produced by their development. Therein, I feel convinced, lies the key to many a mystery, and I regard no time that can be spent on such self-analysis as misplaced.

But I should be doing what I am ready to blame in others, I should be one-sided and blind, were I to neglect to note what lies immediately before me, what has been infinitely the most prominent factor in the spiritual phenomena that I have observed—the action of the spirits of the departed.

For these, among other reasons, I wrote and now publish, with additions and appendices, the paper which bears the title of *THE INTELLIGENT OPERATOR*.

RELIGIOUS ASPECTS OF THE QUESTION.

One other reason influenced me. It has seemed to me that some of us have been for a long time past so much occupied with the husk and shell of Spiritualism that we have lost sight of the inner truth.

Now it is to the last degree important that the phenomena of Spiritualism should be placed on a basis of scientific,

demonstration, and no pains are too great to spend on so desirable an object. To this end it is especially desirable that any who possess psychic power should be encouraged to devote it designedly and by exercise of will to the elaboration of one particular experiment, so as to rise superior to conditions, so far as that may be. We have every reason to believe that the simpler objective phenomena can be so brought under control. The great difficulty is one of time and patience; and unfortunately, during the time spent in this preparation the powers which furnish the medium with his subsistence are unproductive; and few private individuals, who have nothing to gain, can be expected to give up time and labour to such an end.

The first step towards this result has yet to be taken; and this is to secure some one who possesses the power, to remove him from the necessity of exercising his gift for gain, to seclude him from external influences, and to give him opportunity of cultivating gifts that are innate, and of supplementing them by the power of his trained will.

The first step towards rescuing what the outside world knows as Spiritualism from charlatanry and imposture, and placing it on a basis where scientifically accurate results may be expected, will be taken when some such method is adopted. It remains, however, to be done.

But there are other sides of the subject that are not touched by any such methods as these. One of them I have pointed out in my paper which forms the bulk of this volume—the religious aspect of the question.

Ever since I became intimately acquainted with the subject, I have been deeply impressed with some serious considerations respecting it.

One is, that there is an organised plan on the part of spirits who govern these manifestations—of which all that we can get is but a fragmentary view—to act on us, and on the religious thought of the age. In this I presume the methods employed

are analogous to those that have been used in other transition epochs.

Another is, that as soon as we escape from the very external surroundings of the subject—an escape that some persons, however, have not yet made—we are brought in some way or other into relation with this plan, or some phase of it.

A third is, that there is an impulse and yearning in certain persons who are brought into relation with the world of spirit, which enables them to receive and assimilate what to others has no beauty that they should desire it. I have recorded elsewhere my own personal experience of this; and the truth is, that all new epochs have been introduced by some such means. They have dovetailed one into the other; and there have been of necessity pioneers, often men in advance of their age, who have caught up the courier-fire, and have handed it on to those who come after them.

And, lastly, I see in this organised influence of spirit on those who have the inward preparation precisely what I can trace in other epochs of the world's history, when, as now, old truths have lost their energy, when they require re-stating, and when the progressive thinkers, who always bear the brunt of obloquy in introducing new truth, are receiving its seeds into mental soil that has been prepared for its germination.

He is but a blind student of the history of the development of religious truth who does not see this. All truths, *i.e.*, all human conceptions of essential truth, pass through phases such as those which the human body, for instance, undergoes. Growth, vigour, decay, death, recombination, and reconstruction—these are the stages of progressive change; and the processes are similar in respect of the development of truth in all cases.

The truth that has sufficed the wants of one age, and in course of time has received glosses, explanations, and comments, which have obscured its original simplicity, impaired its adaptability to daily use, and encumbered it with

a mass of fallacy, this adulterated truth fails any longer to suffice the wants or meet the cravings of a succeeding age. The times have changed. Man has progressed. Pioneers of a new epoch have shadowed forth their ideas, the message with which they are charged. Destructive criticism has dealt with the old truths, and, albeit unable to touch them in so far as they are fragmentary statements of eternal truth, has found plenty of weak places in man's glosses and additions.

And so "the old order changeth, giving place to new." Fashion reigns in the realm of thought as elsewhere; and by degrees a new view of the old truth is presented, a new combination has been effected, and truth is presented in a more acceptable guise, and perhaps in fairer proportions to those whose inner natures crave enlightenment.

This process, acting throughout the mighty chain of sequence from the Supreme Inspirer and Originator, Whose eye is over all His works, through His various intermediary agencies, by whom He reaches these lower worlds, and again through those of us who on earth are prepared to receive, assimilate, and state the truth, down to the humblest recipient who asks and receives spiritual food—this process is one specially exemplified in all great crises in the world's history, such as that in the midst of which we live.

It is only in the light of some such explanation as this that the history of the world's progress can be grasped. The story has been the same at all great epochs. It was so when the Christ came to shed on an age of midnight darkness the strongest gleam of light of which we have any record. Those who should have been most ready to receive and welcome the new truth, whose office pointed them out as its natural recipients, and who, by virtue of that office, were bound to be its foster-fathers, were foremost in stifling its voice and crucifying its Herald.

Never, perhaps, has it been otherwise. Those who by their position should be prominent in the ever-pressing work

of reform, in whatever department of human life, are the last to welcome what, almost of necessity, rises outside of their order, and comes to them with no sanction of orthodoxy. It is outside of the priestly caste, beyond the pale of the prescribed succession, that the voice crying in the wilderness is first heard. And it is they only who feel the need, who have within them the desire, "the prepared heart," that catch its first accents. As the new truth is popularised, when it is assimilated to the dominant tone of thought, and fitted to men's needs, as it never is at first, then the message spreads, and obloquy is succeeded by what is much harder to bear—prosperity.

It does not require much discernment to see that we are in the inception of one of these great epochs. An age is drawing to its close, and a new epoch is beginning, in which new views of truth will prevail, and many an old fallacy will expire. Peace to their ashes! We have so many that we can well spare a few. Those who succeed us will see the phases of the conflict as we who are in the thick of it cannot. The fight will be prolonged, for all new truth is born in anguish and distress, and is ushered into life amid a scene of contest and battling of opposing forces. When it is over, the world will awake to find itself the possessor of a new heritage.

One of the earlier methods of this presentation of new truth, I believe, we find in that tangled, bizarre movement known as Modern Spiritualism; so repulsive in some of its aspects, so ennobling in others; so glorious in design, so marred by man's ignorance and perversity; so pregnant with possibilities of blessing if man will but use the means presented to him; so sure to fail, as many another plan for his benefit has failed before, if he hardens his heart, and sets his face against the boon; or if, as seems only too probable, he scoffs at and tramples it underfoot.

These feelings have influenced me in doing what I can to draw attention to the higher and more strictly religious

aspects of Spiritualism. What I have said is but a hint of what I feel to be the projected outcome of the subject, if it have free course. It will probably pass through many phases before it finally succeeds or fails in its mission.

But, meantime, it is acting as a very wholesome leaven on the whole mass of contemporary thought, and influencing even those who are most unconscious of its power, and who would most scornfully reject its overt claims, though they cannot resist its silent influence. It is liberalising opinion in many unlikely directions ; it is making men braver, more self-reliant, more manly, by teaching them to dare to exercise that noblest of their hereditary privileges, that birthright which none may sell and not fall into sin—the right to think for themselves. The beams of the sun of spirit are loosening the icy barriers that hem in the arctic climes of thought, whether in politics, religion, or social life ; they are making it possible to breathe in those hyperborean regions, and to hope that it may not always be night there. And they are shedding on many a receptive soul light that is to it the very “dayspring from on high,” the herald and forerunner of the brighter light that is to come.

What modifications the external form may take I do not venture to predict. Sufficient that, for good or for evil, there is at work in our midst a mighty influence, which it is the part of the wise man to recognise and, if possible, to control.

THE INTELLIGENT OPERATOR AT THE OTHER END OF THE LINE.

*(A Paper read before the British National Association of
Spiritualists, on Monday, December 16, 1878.)*

It was Mr. Crookes¹ who described the Intelligence that is at the root of the "phenomena called Spiritual" as "The Intelligent Operator at the other end of the line." Unwilling to commit himself to anything definite, he, with true scientific caution, borrowed a simile from telegraphy, and used terms strictly non-committal.

I have ventured to employ the phrase as the title of this paper, because it admirably states the position whence I start on a consideration of the question of Spirit Identity.

SCOPE OF THE INQUIRY.

My business is simple, if not easy. I am not about to use any arguments to prove the existence of the soul. The eminent "Spiritualist without the spirits" (as it pleased Captain Burton to describe himself), who preceded me on this platform, was, in respect of soul, agnostic. He would not, indeed, interfere with other people's souls, nor even go so far as to "assert that spirits do not exist"; but, for himself, "having managed to live for some years without what is popularly called a soul," or, as I should prefer to say, without being conscious of such a possession, he proposes to continue soulless to the end, which, having regard to the

¹ Now Sir William Crookes.

allotted age of man, is more or less imminent. Then I doubt not he will find his soul, and live, I trust, the same vigorous and energetic individual that he now is.¹

Well, I, on my own account, do "assert that spirits do exist." And I presume, further, that most of us are pretty comfortable as to the existence of our souls, whatever we may be as to their condition. I shall not stay to debate a question which is fundamental to our very existence as a body of Spiritualists.

Furthermore, I shall re-state, without argument, another proposition on which we are agreed—*viz.*: That there exists a force conveniently called PSYCHIC, and (*pace* Captain Burton) not conveniently called ZOO-ELECTRICITY,² inasmuch as the experiments of men of science, so far as they prove anything respecting its nature, show that electricity is about the worst term to apply to the force in question. Still less conveniently is the action of this force described as MAGNETISM,³ a word already appropriated in quite another sense.

And yet once more, I assume that we have evidence that this force is governed by an Intelligence which, in many demonstrable cases, some of which I shall quote, is not that of any person present at the time of the experiment under notice.

THE NATURE OF THE INTELLIGENCE.

Of what nature is the Intelligence? This is the precise question to which I shall try to suggest materials for an answer.

¹ "Personally, I ignore the existence of soul and spirit, feeling no want of a self within a self, an I within an I. If it be a question of words, and my *ego*, or subject, as opposed to the *non-ego*, or object, or my individuality, the concourse of conditions which differentiates me from others, be called a soul, then I have a soul, but not a soul proper. For some years, however, I have managed to live without what is popularly called a soul; and it would be hard to find one violently thrust into the recusant body."—*Captain Burton before the B.N.A.S.*

² Captain Burton before the B.N.A.S.

³ Captain Burton before the B.N.A.S.

A full answer would involve a complete statement of the various theories which have commended themselves to various speculators.

I should need to give reasons for putting aside that strange theory that the force itself is responsible for all, instead of being to the Intelligent Operator merely the correlative of the electric force, which enables the telegraphic clerk to transmit his message.

I should have to discuss the devil theory, and even to inquire into the origin and character of the Arch-fiend.

Elementals and elementaries would claim a hearing, and I should need to investigate the exact extent to which they are responsible for some of the vagaries which the Intelligent Operator does undoubtedly perplex us with.

I should be forced to go into that bewildering field of investigation which lies nearer home, and inquire how far the liberated spirit of the Psychic, acting unconsciously to himself, can communicate knowledge which in normal moments he is profoundly unconscious of possessing.

All this I manifestly cannot do now. I shall treat psychic force as the mere instrument that it is. I shall ignore the devil and all his works for the time being. I shall leave untouched the question of the action of sub-human spirits and of the action of those spirits that are still embodied on this earth, and I shall pin myself down on this occasion to the narrower issue that lies immediately before me.

IS THE INTELLIGENCE HUMAN ?

It is obvious to note at starting that, with so few exceptions as only to illustrate the rule, the Intelligent Operator claims to be human. He is a member, according to his own story, of that great human family, whereof the majority has passed into the world of spirit, whence they—still the same men, with the same interests, and the same affections, with an unbroken

continuity of individual existence—communicate with us, the minority, who are passing through the phase of incarnation which they have done with, once they have emerged from the prison-house of the body.

What ground is there for declining to accept this general statement as true? Several suspicious circumstances combine to throw doubt upon particular cases.

ASSUMPTION OF GREAT NAMES.

The free use made of names great and honoured amongst men is one of the most suspicious; especially when we find, as is too frequently the case, that they are made the sponsors for pretentious nonsense, bombastic platitude, or egregious twaddle; still more so when the claims put forward break down on the simplest examination. Such baseless assumptions breed a spirit of suspicion which is apt to generalise from single instances, and allege universal imposture. This is to rush to another extreme. It must, however, strike any rational observer that this prevalence of illiterate Shakespeares and twaddling Swedenborgs, of scientific names that the world holds in the highest esteem, who return only to demonstrate their present ignorance of the first principles of that science which they once illuminated and adorned on earth, is strong presumptive evidence that the Intelligent Operator is not, in all cases, the person he pretends to be.

To what are we to attribute this? Is it to the absence of scientific knowledge on the part of the Psychic, and to the fact that his ignorance is the measure of the knowledge that can be conveyed through him? That, at any rate, is not always the case.¹ Is it to the mysterious conditions that beset the spirit who seeks to resume relations with our world, and cause unintentional error in the matter of his communications?

¹ See a remarkable narrative by Mr. Barkas in the "Psychological Review," October, 1878.

Or is it that there are in the world of spirit, as with us, those who delight to strut in borrowed plumes, and to pass themselves off for something great and good, being but sorry stuff after all? Can spirits, being, as we know, able to obtain access to sources of human information,¹ get up their facts and give such travesty of them as they can remember: reckoning, not without some show of reason, on the credulity which will accept any plausible story, or on their power to psychologise the investigator, or so to mix up fancy, frauds, and fact as to bewilder and perplex him?

These are some ideas that must have occurred to many of us. To whatever cause it may be attributed, the manifestly baseless assumption of great names goes far to cast ridicule and suspicion on the claims of the Intelligent Operator in certain cases.

ABSENCE OF PRECISION IN STATEMENT.

Another cause of doubt is the extreme difficulty that is usually found in getting any facts precisely given, especially facts that are certainly external to the knowledge of the sitters. There is a general haziness about the messages, where there is not positive error in the statements made; and it is extremely difficult to get anything like definite and precise facts plainly put, unless this be insisted on as a preliminary to further colloquy. This was my plan. I used for a long time to refuse to hold any converse with a spirit from whom I could not first obtain some plain facts that I could verify, or that carried on their surface evidence of probability. I had perplexed myself by reading hazy messages in the works and journals of Spiritualism, until I came to doubt the identity of all communicating spirits. I found great trouble in getting what I wanted, but I persistently stuck to my point

¹ See Appendix I.

until, by determined exercise of will, by refusing to have anything to do with spirits that declined my method, and, above all, by the good fortune of being able to enlist the co-operation of a spirit in whose integrity and power I had the perfect confidence which repeated trial and long experience alone can give, I did in the end get my proof.

Having got my facts, I found them accurate in all cases when I was able to verify them. They were at any rate true. I do not pretend that this fact proves anything as to the pretensions of the particular spirit who gives them, beyond establishing a favourable presumption. I have reason to believe, from what I know of spirit action, that all such facts might be got up and retailed to me. Against this I have to say that the facts in question were assuredly unknown to myself: and, if they were so got up, we have a very curious point before us. They bore, however, no appearance of deceit, and I have full confidence that no systematic course of imposture, such as this argument contemplates, would have been permitted by the controlling agency.

This confidence, born of experience, I can no more convey to others than I can impart the reliance on the integrity of an old and tried friend which I have built up for myself by the outcome of year after year of intimate association. But it is a very powerful factor in my argument. And so it is in numberless cases outside of those within my knowledge. There are multitudes of private circles—the world has no notion how many—in which evidence of the return of those who have gone before is presented day by day, through years of intimate association, to the minds of those who are best, nay, who alone are fitted to judge of its true value. It is this reiteration of proof that the private circle furnishes which carries such full conviction. The promiscuous circle, from the very nature of its constitution, can hardly ever give it, and then only in an inferior degree.

CONTRADICTORY AND ABSURD MESSAGES.

Another cause which has strengthened the inherent feeling of antecedent improbability with which most of us start, is the mass of contradictions in the messages, and the general air of unreality that very frequently pervades them. It seems unreal and unlikely that a friend with whom our converse was that of soul to soul should appear for a moment only at a promiscuous séance to give the briefest passing word of salutation, or to cause the poor mourner to vex himself as to the identity of his friend, if not to feel disgusted at an apparent attempt to sport with his feelings. It is not thus, we sadly think, that our friend would have spoken, had he really come back to us. And the improbability becomes stronger as we dwell on the cases too well known where contradictions and grotesque absurdities, due for aught we know to difficulties that beset the very method of communication, as much as to intentional deception, have demonstrated at least error. From these the contagion of doubt overspreads all. The best cases are, from their very nature, unknown to the public, and those only where evidence is least conclusive become generally known. Nor will this great difficulty be overcome until the time when antecedent improbability has yielded to experience, and observers can contribute their stone to the cairn of evidence, without the certainty of having it flung back in their face by some shallow sciolist who decides dogmatically that such things are contrary to the laws of nature, and therefore cannot be.

CONDITION UNDER WHICH GOOD EVIDENCE IS OBTAINED.

It is not surprising, then, that it is only when conditions are scrupulously guarded that reliable evidence is obtained. In the seclusion of the family circle there occur repeated cases

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in which there are the strongest reasons for believing that the spirit is what it pretends to be—very many in which there remains no room for doubt. Such cases, I repeat, are too sacred for publicity. They do not find their way into print ; and even if they do, no coldly precise record, such as would find favour with an antagonistic critic, can give to him the conviction that comes from many a little turn of expression, or reference to scenes long past, or possibly from nothing more tangible than the intuitive certainty that this is indeed our friend, though we should find it as hard to prove it as some, even in our own days, have found it to prove their own identity.

Under such conditions, where sincerity absolutely prevails on our side as well as on theirs, when we have taken care to present ourselves both “pure in heart and sound in head” for the “hour’s communion” with the friends gone before, the spiritual atmosphere is pure, and we feel it. There is an air of moral consciousness, of straightforwardness, that gives reality to what is done, and predisposes us to believe that we are not the victims of an organised system of cruel imposture, prolonged over a period of many years, and trifling with the most sacred subjects as well as with the tenderest feelings of the heart. The spirit that could so act, and yet maintain an air of sincerity and even sublimity in tone, must surely be the very devil transformed into an angel of light. I have no such fear as that ; and it is under circumstances such as these that proofs come which are ~~sheet~~ anchors to hold on by in the midst of much that is shifty and uncertain.

Under these conditions, too, are given the prolonged series of tests and proofs of the continued existence of an individuality once familiar to us in the body, which form a cumulative argument of great cogency in favour of spirit-identity.

There is no one but notes in his intimate friends traits of character and points of personal peculiarity for which he would look as evidence of identity after long absence. Such are the tokens by which he would recognise his friend : unnoticed by

others, they would be to him proof positive. It is these little tokens, so convincing to those who find them, so hard to put on paper, so impossible to analyse and dissect in public, that come in the privacy of the domestic circle, repeated again and again in many a form, until doubt simply dies of inanition.¹

VALUE OF CORROBORATIVE TESTIMONY.

When, moreover, in addition to reiterated evidence derived through one channel, similar evidence, slightly varied by varied conditions, is obtained through an independent channel, the weight of the testimony is much increased. When, further, this is so far multiplied as to be produced on all occasions when intercourse is sought with the world of spirit; when the human instrument's fallibility is corrected by the unimaginative record of the photographic camera, a chain of evidence is completed which only the novelty of the subject permits prepossession to ignore.

Such a case was recorded by Mrs. Fitzgerald² in a paper read before the B.N.A.S. on November 18, 1878, and there are many who, if they would imitate her disinterested example, could give corroborative testimony from the experience of their own private lives.

Evidence such as is frequently adduced to establish spirit-identity; evidence given through various channels, by various methods, and extending over a long period of time; evidence, too, be it remembered, that is usually fragmentary, for the obvious reason that those who enjoy the blessing of renewed intercourse with their departed friends are not usually persons of trained legal minds, nor are they employed in getting up a case for our courts of law: evidence such as is produced by these methods would establish in fair minds a

¹ Appendix II.

² *Spiritualist*, Nov. 22, 1878

strong presumption of spirit-identity, were it not for the inherent improbability to which I have alluded (and which is due to theological errors of belief as much as to any other cause), and for the perpetually recurrent cases of fraud which defile and bring contempt on a great truth.

Admitting, however, to the full the weight of these considerations, and knowing, as I do, that certain classes of mind will give them a weight quite disproportionate to their real value, I claim, with entire confidence, that spirit-identity is a proven fact. I am about to state some few cases that are within my own knowledge, and I shall refer to others which I have already published.

In this part of my work I must claim indulgence if I do not give names and facts at length in every case. I pledge myself to the exact accuracy of every statement I make, and I will gladly satisfy any private inquirer respecting any case, if I can reasonably do so. But I am holden from the publication of names and addresses in some cases by the knowledge that friends of the departed are still surviving, and that I must respect their feelings. I have no right to invade the sacred privacy of the memory of their dead, even in such a cause as that of the demonstration of what is loosely called Immortality.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES.

It is now four years since my mind was so greatly vexed on this question that I determined either to satisfy myself or to abandon any further attempt at intercourse with the world of spirit as vague and unsatisfying. I had not had sufficient evidence of personal identity of spirits to enable me to build on it a firm argument. No doubt I had had some, which has since had its due weight in my mind, but the mass of my communications had been of an impersonal character, with spirits who preferred to rest their claims to my attention on

the matter and tendency of their messages, rather than on the authority of any name, however great that authority might be. They had passed out of the sphere of individuality, and chafed at being recalled to it. I, on the contrary, pined for something definite, some evidence that would satisfy me that I was dealing with the spirits of my kind. The Angelic was "too high for me. I could not attain to it."

For a long time I failed in getting the evidence I wanted; and if I had done as most investigators do I should have abandoned the quest in despair or disgust. My state of mind was too positive; and I was forced, moreover, to take some personal pains before I obtained what I desired. Bit by bit, here a little and there a little, by steps which I do not detail here, that evidence came, and as my mind opened to receive it, some six months were spent in persistent daily efforts to bring home to me proof of the perpetuated existence of human spirits, and of their power to communicate with me and give evidence of their unimpaired individuality, and of the unbroken continuity of their existence.

Some of those who so came I had known during their life on earth, and was able not only to verify their statements, but also to note the little traits of manner, peculiarities of diction, or characteristics of mind, that I remembered in them while in the body.¹

Most of them were unknown to me, and came, always in obedience to the controlling spirit who arranged everything, to give their evidence, and go their way when the task assigned them was done. Of these some came from the most unlikely quarters, and gave me and my friends no little trouble to verify their statements.

Some came at the time of death. At that time, it would seem, the spirit finds it easy to manifest its presence, and the facts that it can give are readily capable of verification. Some

¹ Appendix II.

had been long dead, as men count time, and came back in a dazed and awkward fashion to revisit the old scenes of earth, cramped and straitened, as it were, by taking on again the old conditions.

But wherever they came from, and however they communicated, one and all bore with them an air of sincerity and earnestness, as of those who were themselves impressed with the deep significance of the work they had in hand. And all, without a lonely exception, told the truth about themselves, so far as we could verify their story. Many statements were from their nature not capable of proof; a vastly greater number were minutely accurate; and none suggested any attempt at deception. I cross-examined these invisible witnesses in every conceivable way, and with a pertinacity that left nothing untried to elicit facts. Many of my queries were unanswered, for I am afraid I asked many unreasonable questions; but I failed to shake their story, or by the most cunning *suggestio falsi* to lead them into mistakes.

I refer for evidence of this to my records, kept during all this period with scrupulous regularity day by day, minute in detail even to recording temperature and atmospheric conditions, and checked by independent records kept by another member of the circle in which these facts were communicated. Any gaps in my own narrative, such as would be caused by my being, as I frequently was, in a state of unconscious trance, are thus filled up, and my own record is checked by independent observation.

Referring to these records, I find that from New Year's Eve to January 11, 1874, during which time I was staying at Shanklin, Isle of Wight, as the guest of Dr. Speer, we had a continuous chain of testimony at our daily sittings, all bearing on the question of the identity of spirit. The evidence was given in various ways, principally through raps on the table, many of these raps produced entirely without contact of the hands of any person present. Some facts were given by

direct writing on previously-marked paper ; some by automatic writing ; some through clairvoyance, or clairaudience. In a few cases corroborative evidence was drawn from all these sources.

During those twelve days eleven different cases of identity were made out by facts and dates. Three of them were entirely unconnected with any of us ; and of one of them none of us had ever heard the name, or any particular. Yet his full name, his place of residence, the name of his house, and the dates of his birth and death, were given with perfect accuracy. One was connected with Dr. Speer, five with Mrs. Speer, and two were friends of my own.

Of these last, one was a near relative, whom I remembered as a child ; and I, being at the time of this communication perfectly free from any abnormal influence, such as occasionally entrances me whilst these phenomena are in process, cross-questioned the alleged relative at great length. The answers were given through raps different from any we had heard before, and during a great part of the time without any contact between our hands and the table.

I inquired of her as to minute facts and dates, her birthday, the day of her death, her children's names, and a variety of details, such as occurred to me. I then asked if she remembered me as a child. She did. I proceeded to detail two imaginary incidents such as might occur in a child's life. I did it so naturally that my friends were completely deceived. It never occurred to them that I was making up a story as a test. Not so, however, my Intelligent Operator. She refused altogether to assent to the truth of my story. She stopped me by a simple remark, that she remembered nothing of the sort. Nor could I by any means get her to waver, or to admit that she might be mistaken. She repeated that she did not remember anything of the kind.

I had frequently been told that spirits would assent to anything ; and my pious fraud had as much for its object to test

this allegation generally, as to prove identity in this particular case. Like most general statements, it is incorrect and inexact. Some spirits will assent to leading questions, and, possessed apparently with a desire to please, or unconscious of the import of what they say, or without moral consciousness in themselves, will say anything. And a deal of harm is done by quoting the foolish utterances of such spirits, given, usually, in response to leading questions, which invalidate the replies made to them. I may say, once for all, that we made a point of not putting leading questions at all, and that very many cases of identity were made out by the invisible witness without our intervention in any way.

This spirit, at any rate, refused to assent to what I suggested. I certainly rose from the table convinced that I had been talking to a person who desired to tell the truth, and who was extremely careful to be exact in statement. I verified all the facts, and found them correctly given.

During this same period came three relatives of Mrs. Speer's, and gave full evidence of their identity. One of them had before manifested in another way at a public circle, showing his face and a peculiarly delicate hand, which was characteristic of him in earth-life. Another had attempted to show himself at the same time, but had failed to obtain recognition. With that strong desire which animates many spirits to get recognition, a desire that seems to grow with each failure, and to spur them on to renewed attempts, he followed me to a circle held at the house of Mrs. Makdougall Gregory on December 20, 1872, and manifested his presence there, though none of his own friends were among the guests. No one knew him, or took any notice of his brief announcement, that he was a brother of Mrs. Speer's who had passed away thirteen years before. I was unconscious at the time, and found out the fact of his having communicated by the merest accident. I was turning over the manuscript book of records of Mrs. Gregory's sésances, long after this particular day, and

my eye accidentally fell on the name George —. I read that he had announced himself as one very desirous to give his name, and obtain recognition as a relative of Mrs. Speer's, who had tried before to attract her attention. This attempt failing, as the first had done, he availed himself of the organised plan for bringing home this evidence which was being carried out at Shanklin, and there established his identity. This done, he went his way, and we have seen him no more. He had gone to America to look after a brother who went to New York twenty-eight years ago, and was never afterwards heard of.

In the *Spiritualist* of August 31, 1877,¹ reference is made to the appearance of an old lady who had just been freed from the body, and who, as she said, had been enabled, by prayer and loving sympathy, to raise her husband, long prisoned in the sphere of earth, to the higher state for which she had fitted herself. When she departed he was permitted to accompany her, and the two were reunited.

That husband manifested his presence during this same period of eleven days. Each spirit selects, apparently, a special rap, knock, or form of signal, which never varies, and which possesses as much individuality as the human voice. He came with the strangest and most uncomfortable sound, sometimes like a whizzing in the air, sometimes like a harsh grating on the table, each equally suggestive of unrest. The atmosphere that surrounded the spirit, and of which I was painfully conscious when he manifested his presence, was similarly indicative of unhappiness, and he earnestly asked for prayer. He had been a grasping man: gold had been his god; and he had lived on to find himself bound by golden fetters to the earth where his treasure had been. I have no words to describe the sensation of cold discomfort that his presence brought, nor the air of gruesome and grim misery

¹ Appendix II.

that was conveyed to us by what was told respecting him. His designation in spirit-life was WOE. The spirit who told us this was asked to put in one word what had brought him to this state. That word was given at once, with an intensity that impressed us all most powerfully: GREED. Yet he had not been what the world calls an evil-liver, nor neglectful of his duties. On the contrary, in his hard mechanical way, he had been punctual and exact in their discharge. But his spirit had been starved, and he awaited the time when the simple loving soul, who on earth had been his companion, should rejoin him, and infuse some spiritual life and vigour into his cold and cheerless existence. I think none who witnessed the painful reality of his manifestation would entertain any doubt as to his identity. I never quite understood till then the meaning of those words addressed by Christ to highly respectable men of the world, who, no doubt, were punctual and exact in business: "The publicans and harlots shall go into the kingdom of heaven before you."

INFLUENCE OF ASSOCIATION, ESPECIALLY OF LOCALITY.

This spirit had first manifested after Dr. Speer and I had visited his grave. There was some link between him and the last resting-place of his body. I do not understand how or why, but I have come, after repeated evidence, to accept as a fact what I cannot give a reason for, that an earth-bound spirit is frequently associated with locality, with the home, the place of death, or even the grave. The presence of personal friends, especially if they possess the mysterious psychic power, or be accompanied by one who does, will frequently attract an earth-bound spirit, or even recall one who is not tied to this lower sphere.

This was the case with the man who met his death by

being crushed with a steam-roller, recorded in the *Spiritualist* of March 27, 1874.¹

This was the case when Dr. Speer and I, then on an excursion in the North of Ireland, visited an old disused burying-ground at Garrison. There were in it some curious Runic crosses, of which I wanted sketches. We remained a considerable time, and were greatly shocked at the skulls and bones that we found lying about in all directions. The result of that visit was such an uncanny noise in my bedroom, which was separated from Dr. Speer's only by a thin partition, that I know he entertains a lively remembrance of the visit to that graveyard. He describes the sounds as utterly destructive of sleep, and was much aggravated to find, on coming into my room, that I was slumbering peacefully through it all.

Another case occurred during these eleven days which estified again to the connection between the spirit and the resting-place of its body. In the course of a walk I had visited a beautiful churchyard, and had wandered through it. In the evening came a spirit, whose body lay there, an old friend of Mrs. Speer's, who communicated with much apparent joy, and gave clear and complete particulars of her identity, though (as I find from my record written on the spot) I was carefully occupying my mind by reciting some passages of Virgil while the message was being given, and though the table on which the raps came was absolutely untouched by us. This, I may here say, is a precaution that I habitually took in order to eliminate the disturbing element of my own mental action. The automatic writing, which has brought to me the greatest weight of evidence, has been, in very many cases, executed while I was occupied in reading a book, sometimes of a very abstruse character.

The last case during this period which I will notice was that

¹ Appendix III.

of the spirit of a person lately departed, of whom no one present had even heard. He had been brought, for purposes of evidence, by the spirit who controlled the circle, and whose organised plan for presenting once for all evidence that should break down my unbelief I am now imperfectly recounting. He gave minute facts and dates as to his life, and went his way. We had some considerable difficulty in verifying the facts, but finally succeeded in doing so by a letter from his nearest surviving relative.

This case has been paralleled in at least twelve other instances, respecting each of which I am certain that information was given that was foreign to my own mind, or, as I am assured, to that of any person present.

The case of Abraham Florentine,¹ published in the *Spiritualist* of March 19, 1875, may be mentioned in this connection, as also that of Charlotte Buckworth,² published in the *Spiritualist* of January 21, 1876.

SPIRITS WHO HAVE COMMUNICATED FOR A LONG PERIOD.

I pass to a case in which a spirit, who first manifested her presence on September 4, 1872, has remained in permanent communication with us ever since. I note this case because we have the advantage of prolonged intercourse to aid us in forming an opinion as to the identity, and because the spirit has not only given unequivocal proof of her characteristic individuality, but has evidenced her presence in various ways. This is a remarkable case, too, as tending to prove that life, once given, is indestructible, and that the spirit which has once animated a human body, however brief its tenure, lives on with unimpaired identity.³

The spirit in question announced herself by raps, giving a

¹ Appendix III.

² Ibid.

See some striking evidence on this point in *Heaven Opened*, by F. J. T.

message in French. She said she was a sister of Dr. Speer's, and had passed away at Tours, an infant of seven months old. I had never heard her mentioned, and her brother had forgotten her existence, for she lived and died before his birth. Clair-voyants had always described a child as being in my company, and I had wondered at this, seeing that I had no trace of any such relation or friend. Here was the explanation. From the time of her first appearance she has remained attached to the family, and her clear, joyous little rap, perfectly individual in its nature, is a never-failing evidence of her presence. It never varies, and we all know it at once as surely as we should know the tone of a friend's voice. She gave particulars of herself, and also her four names in full. One was new to her brother, and he verified it only by reference to another member of the family. Names and dates and facts were alike unknown to me. I was absolutely ignorant of the fact of the existence of any such person.

This little spirit has twice manifested her presence on the photographic plate. One of these cases was attested by direct writing, and both will be found clearly detailed in the course of my researches, in the chapter on Spirit Photography, published in *Human Nature*, vol. viii., p. 395.¹

CHILD-SPIRITS COMMUNICATING.

This is by no means a solitary instance within my experience, of the appearance and communication of those who have been removed in tender infancy from the world of matter.

On the 10th of February, 1874, we were attracted by a new and peculiar triple tap on the table, and received a long and most circumstantial account of the death, age (even to the month), and full names (in two cases four, and in the other three in number) of three little ones, children of one father, who had been torn from him at one fell swoop by the Angel

¹ Appendix IV

of Death. None of us had ever heard the names, which were peculiar. They had passed away in a far distant country, India ; and when the message was given there was no apparent point of connection with us.

The statements, however, were afterwards verified in a singular manner. On the 28th of March, 1874, I met, for the first time, Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Watts, at the house of Mr. Cowper Temple, M.P. Our conversation was concerned chiefly with evidence of the kind that I am now summarising. I recounted various cases, and among others, the case of these three children. Mrs. Watts was much struck with the recital, which corresponded in outline to a very distressing history which she had just heard. On the Monday previous Mr. and Mrs. Watts had dined with an old friend, Mrs. Leaf, and from her had heard a distressing story of bereavement which had befallen the relative of one of Mrs. Leaf's acquaintances. A gentleman residing in India had, within a brief space of time, lost his young wife and three children. Mrs. Leaf entered fully into the melancholy details, but did not mention either names or the place of the sad occurrence. In reciting the incident of three young children communicating with me, I gave the names and the place, as they had been furnished to me in the messages. Mrs. Watts undertook to ascertain from Mrs. Leaf the particulars of the case she had mentioned. She did so on the very next day, and the names were the same.

Through the kindness of Mrs. Watts I made the acquaintance of Mrs. Leaf, and was much impressed with the perfect correspondence of every detail given to me with the facts as they occurred.

It is not a little remarkable that, on the very day on which this communication was made, Mrs. Watts, who possesses a very beautiful gift of automatic drawing, which had for some time been in abeyance, was impelled to draw three cherubs' heads, which, she was afterwards spiritually informed, were

drawn in typical allusion to this sad event. Other details, symbolic of the country in which it occurred, and of the attraction of the mother's spirit to her three little ones, were added. The drawing forms a very striking illustration of the various methods employed by spirit to reach various types of mind. Mrs. Watts—at that time, be it noted, unknown to me—had always been instructed in the language of symbolism, by poetic simile, and by artistic representation. The Voice appealed rather to Spirit and to the inner consciousness than to the outer sense and to methods of exact demonstration. I, on the contrary, had not progressed so far. I was on a material plane, seeking for truth after my own fashion, and craving hard logical demonstration. So to me came hard facts, clearly given, and nothing more. To her came the symbolic indication, the artistic delineation, the poetry of the incident. The source, however, was one. It was Spirit manifesting Truth to us according to our several needs.

OTHER EVIDENCES OF IDENTITY.

A different kind of evidence has come to me several times : namely, from recalling minute incidents long past which, by no conceivable possibility, could have been within my knowledge or recollection. I append an instance. It occurred at a time when I was much occupied with automatic writing, and came to me *apropos* of nothing. The spirit was present, I presume, and seized the opportunity of approaching her friend.

On a certain evening [April 8, 1874] I was about to put a question on what had just been written, when the hand began to draw, or rather to move aimlessly over the paper, as is frequently the case when a new spirit comes. Piece by piece a long communication of a very personal nature was written out. It must necessarily lose very much of its force from the brief abstract, which is all that I am able to print now. I was staying at a house in the country, and the communicating

spirit was known to the lady of the house, and also to me; or rather she had known me as a boy, twenty-nine years ago. She first gave her full name, and enquired if I remembered it. I did not. She then said she was a cousin of the lady of the house where I was staying. She died on May 15th, 1873. In answer to my questions, she said that she had been married, and, further, gave her maiden name. The maiden name I dimly remembered, and recalled the place where she used to live. This produced a record of her life, including time and place of birth—a *description of the very house and the name of its occupier*—particulars of her married life, and date and place of death, with her age. Then followed a very exact statement of a very trivial episode in my boyhood, when I had gone on a visit to her house. In the course of this, minute incidents were recalled, and microscopic facts given which I knew nothing of, and which it is very hard to imagine any personating spirit getting up.

I subsequently verified, from two sources, what she said, and found every particular literally exact.

I enquired, further, whether she had any object in coming to me. Yes; she wished a message given—"I lost much of my opportunity for progress through the gratification of bodily appetite. This cast me back. My course of progress is yet to come. I find my present life not very different from yours. I am nearly the same. I wish I could influence —, but I cannot get near her."

I asked for any other evidence, and she said no more could be given. Then, just as she was going away, "Stay! Ask — about D—and the trap-door." I had no idea what this might mean, and inquired if she were comfortable in her present state. "As happy as may be in this state." I asked how she found me out. She came, I was told, hovering near her friend, and discovered that she could communicate. I asked if I could help her. The usual request for prayer was made.

I subsequently ascertained that the trap-door incident

about which I was told to ask was another of those minute details of daily life of thirty years ago, which seem to me to furnish about the best evidence of identity. The absurd incident alluded to could hardly have been known to any except the actors in it. The incident, I may say, occurred when I was about five years old. The person to whom I was referred recalled the trap-door episode with difficulty, and only after a night's thought.

One more case of extremely minute evidence given in detail through the means of raps, and corroborated by automatic writing, must be given before I close.

About this same time of which I have been speaking, the whole of one of our séances, extending nearly to two hours, was taken up by the communication of a series of facts, names, dates, and minute particulars, from a spirit who was apparently able to reply to the most searching questions. The day of his birth, particulars as to his family history, and details of his early life were given at my request. Then came a perfect autobiography, so far as salient facts were concerned, and embracing some trivial particulars, which, however, fell into their place in the most natural way. All questions were answered without the faintest hesitation, and with perfect clearness and precision. The particulars were taken down at the time, and are in all respects, where verification is possible, exact and accurate.

Even if this case stood alone in my experience, it is more difficult for me to imagine that what was so laboriously and precisely given was the product of imposture, the fraud of a deceiving spirit, or the vagary of an errant brain, than to believe, as I assuredly do, that the intelligent operator was the man himself, with memory unimpaired and individuality undestroyed by the change which we call Death. Resting, as it does, on the same basis with other facts that I have detailed, and with many that I have not, it presents one more link in the chain of evidence.

In addition to the long series of facts thus communicated by means of raps, there stands in a book which I used at this time for automatic writing a short letter written automatically by me, in a peculiar archaic handwriting, phrased in a quaint old-fashioned way, and containing a curious piece of old-fashioned spelling. It is signed with the name of the spirit in question, who was a man of mark in the days of his life on earth. I have since obtained a letter in his handwriting, an old yellow document, preserved on account of the autograph. The handwriting in my book is a fair imitation of this, the signature is exact, and the piece of old-fashioned spelling occurs exactly as it does in my book. This, it was said, was purposely done as a point of evidence.

A POSSIBLE MISCONCEPTION GUARDED AGAINST.

I refrain from adducing further evidence of this nature, though my records contain a great number of other cases similar in kind, and equally precise in detail. There is a point beyond which such evidence ceases to be cumulative, and that point I seem to myself to have reached.

I have been concerned solely with what I consider to be facts connected with an elementary principle of spirit communion. I have tried to lay the foundation of proof that man survives physical death, and is able, under certain conditions, to demonstrate his individuality, and to show the permanence of his interest in old associations of his earth-life.

I must guard myself, however, against a possible misconception. There are many spirits, as I know full well, who have passed beyond this plane, and who have, apparently, lost the power of proving their recollection of this portion of their existence. Earth and the scenes of Earth have faded from their gaze, and have been lost in the vaster prospect that has opened out to them. Grandeur interests absorb them, and when they revisit us it is to warn, instruct or guide us :

to discharge some portion of that great work which has been assigned them. There is order in the world of spirit, and many are engaged in that great missionary work which has for its object the progressive enlightenment of humanity; the revelation of higher views of truth as man grows able to bear them; the development among mankind of those nobler and purer conceptions of the Supreme that they have learned in the progressive life that is theirs. From such no such evidence as I am now concerned with is procurable; but they too bring their own contribution to the cycle of proof in the atmosphere of moral purity and elevation that accompanies them, in the vaster scope of their interests and in the absence of the pettinesses and trivialities with which we are so much engrossed.

Nothing has more impressed me than the breadth of charity and love, the purity and zeal for truth, which such spirits show. To commune with them is to be raised above the cares of earth, and to see with keener insight "the one thing needful": as the traveller who ascends the mountain-side looks down on the mists and fogs that wrap the valley below him.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS.

The facts that I have enumerated stand as integral parts of one great system. They fit into their own place, and they are correlated with a series of other facts within my own experience, and that of the vast majority of patient students of this subject—students I say, and patient students too, for I decline to admit that there is any value in the opinion of the mere wonder-hunter, who buzzes about at a few public séances, or in the dogmatic belief of the man who has an antecedent objection to look into any evidence, or to have what he is pleased to call his faith disturbed in any way; or in the captious criticism of the few who turn a careless glance

on what they regard as the puerilities of spiritualism compared with the imperial interests that engross them.

These facts, I say, viewed in their due relation by the patient student, establish, as I believe, two primary conclusions on which I desire to insist. They are these :--

1. Intelligence is perpetuated after the body is dead. Thought is not a question of the brain only. The man is the man still, albeit his body has mouldered into dust. The immortality of the human spirit is arguable from a secure basis of established fact. It is reasonable to propound the indestructibility of the human spirit from what we know. The dogmas of Divine Revelation receive a new illustration from the evidence of man's research. This first.

2. And next. The human spirit after its separation from the body loses none of its individuality. In other words, the real man survives. He will be *himself* in the next state, and will know and appreciate intercourse with his friends. He will carry on the interests of his life, only under changed conditions.

PERSONAL IMMORTALITY, AND PERSONAL RECOGNITION.

These two doctrines of personal immortality and personal recognition, integral parts of that divine revelation which we, as Christians, have accepted as the Word of God, seem to me to be receiving practical illustration and demonstration from what is occurring all round us. From articles of faith they are passing into logical deductions from experience.

The desire to live is strong in the heart of man, and the desire to live in the continual exercise of the affections which have gone far to make the sunshine of his earthly life is hardly less potent and universal. Those who in these modern days of Nihilism, when it is the fashion to be encumbered with as little faith as possible, asserted that man has no soul and no future before him, these lightly-equipped skirmishers

will tell us that a universal impulse, which somehow or other our race possesses, has been transferred to the pages of Revelation : and that man, having fabricated his God and his heaven, has amused himself with hopes of immortality that are the figments of his own brain.

We, who think otherwise, who regard this universal impulse as, in itself, a witness to the truth that underlies it ; we, who believe that the spirit is the man, and who offer some logical evidence as a ground for adhering to that ancient and venerable belief—a belief undamaged by the assaults of modern incredulity—we are not disposed to esteem lightly the testimony that is being day by day brought home to us on these points. They are to us the foundations of our religious belief so far as it respects ourselves. They do not, and they cannot, stand alone, for, once recognised, they carry in their train an entire code of personal religion.

Am I to live on after my body is dead ? Then it concerns me to know where. What answer comes to me from the land beyond ? You are the arbiter of your own destiny. You will live there as you are living now. By the acts and habits of your daily life, you are preparing for yourself the place of your future habitation. The filthy is the filthy still, as the pure in heart preserves his purity. You are working out your own salvation, or preparing for yourself misery and woe.

And what of the friends of earth, with whom my interests are so bound up that to sever them would be to tear out the heart-strings, and destroy the half of myself ? They live still, the same friends with the same interests, and the same affections. If you desire to join them, and to associate yourself with those who can lead you on, forward and upward, you must live as in their presence, under their piercing eye : you must energise to lead the life that has elevated and ennobled them : the life of self-abnegation and self-discipline, as of one who subdues the flesh to the spirit, and subordinates the temporal to the eternal.

In short, the whole fabric of religion, so far as it affects man, excluding for the moment the worship due to the Supreme, receives its sanction and stimulus from these doctrines which are becoming integral parts of the daily life of so many of us.

In days when a fading faith has relaxed its hold on human life, or, if you prefer it, when man has lost his grasp of it, when religion, as a binding power, is losing so much of its vitalising influence, and becoming less and less a factor in the formation of the national character, we are being, by the mercy of that God whose response is never wanting to the aspirations of His creatures, brought face to face with the reality of our spiritual existence.

There are many of us who are fain to cry, "Lord I believe : help Thou mine unbelief," not because of the prescription of a time-honoured creed, nor because of the faith which our fathers have handed on to us, sadly battered and shattered by many a blow from destructive criticism ; still less because of the dogmas of any ecclesiastical corporation ; but because we have seen with our eyes, and have proven by severe methods of logic, that DEAD MEN LIVE,—because we can argue from their perpetuated life to our own,—because we can believe that we too shall one day join the great company that has preceded us,—and because we have learned from some of them lessons reasonable, comprehensible, and coherent, of life and discipline, which following we may fit ourselves for the progressive life to come.

It is this that constitutes for me the moral beauty of Spiritualism. Apart from its religious aspects, viewed as a question of mere psychology, I should always regard it with deep interest, but it would possess for me none of the far-reaching significance that it now has. Its phenomena impress me with ever increasing wonder, though I am not always grateful for the bewilderment they cause me, nor thankful for the prominence assigned them by some well-

meaning but injudicious friends who mistake the husk for the kernel. The buffoonery that passes current in the public mind for Spiritualism;—the fraud and folly that besmirch it;—the unclean things that get mixed up with it;—the vagaries of the unbalanced minds that are inevitably attracted to a new and fascinating subject;—these things I deplore, but contemplate without dismay. They are ephemeral, and will live their little life and die. Born of human ignorance, nurtured by human folly, they will yield to advancing knowledge and increased sense of responsibility, when the true moral significance of the subject is recognised among us.

And when they are dead, or when men can look through the fog that encircles them to the light beyond, it will be seen that the moral grandeur of this much-abused Spiritualism rests on the firm foundation of our knowledge of perpetuated human life, whence flow naturally those deductions respecting our own disembodied future, those rules for our own embodied life, which I have before indicated. Nay, more! These cardinal principles will be found to be the master principles of a Revelation that still approves itself Divine, though it has been so sorely misinterpreted by man, so grievously adulterated by human glosses and misconceptions.

I shall be content if, by anything that I have now said, I lead anyone to think out for himself what in his own life depends on the ascertained presence of that "Intelligent Operator at the other end of the line."

APPENDIX I.

ON THE POWER OF SPIRITS TO GAIN ACCESS TO SOURCES OF INFORMATION.*

IN the retirement of private life, a vast number of séances are held, at which very interesting manifestations and revelations are frequently made, which never come under the notice of the public. A large number of Spiritualists and mediums see no reason why they should incur obloquy and abuse by telling spiritual truths to unwilling listeners, especially as it is more the business of those listeners to learn where they are going to after "death," than it is the business of anybody else to force them to accept such useful knowledge.

Recently we have been present at some séances at the residence of Dr. Stanhope T. Speer, Douglas House, Alexandra Road, St. John's Wood, at which some most interesting manifestations took place, through the mediumship of a gentleman in private life. He obtains both physical and mental manifestations of a high order. Raps, tiltings of the table, the carriage of small solid objects from one room or house to another, are common phenomena in connection with his mediumship. Large spirit-lights are seen through his mediumship, and the direct spirit voice is in the incipient stages of development. He also obtains direct spirit music—that is to say, one of the spirits usually plays, in the air, upon what sounds like a stringed musical instrument, when there is no musical instrument of mortal make in the room.

**Spiritualist*, December 15, 1873.

Like most other mediums, this gentleman finds that uncongenial company reduces the manifestations to a minimum ; they are moderately strong in ordinary circles, and of great power when none but intimate friends and no new influences are present, the spiritual harmony reacting in the usual manner upon the manifestations. So strongly is this fact recognised, that he has been advised by the communicating intelligences to refrain from all attempts to elicit phenomena, except in the circle with which he habitually sits. The wisdom of this advice is shown by the fact, repeatedly made clear, that any attempt to introduce new elements is attended by failure of the phenomena, as well as by the most serious physical consequences to himself. An unsuccessful séance will leave its mark upon him for some days. It is to be greatly regretted that under these conditions it is impossible that the results of his mediumship should be experimentally known to a great number who earnestly desire to witness them.

But the most valuable features of his mediumship are not seen in the physical manifestations, but in the higher developments of trance speaking and automatic writing. Whenever he has been entranced in our presence, the whole room has been in a state of incessant vibration, which could not only be felt, but heard ; the vibrations go on steadily during the whole of the entrancement. Having never seen this phenomenon in connection with the trances of other mediums, we asked the spirits the reason of it. They replied that there was much surplus power during his entrancement, and their method of expanding the surplus caused the physical vibrations.

The communications obtained through his writing mediumship are of the greatest value. His handwriting changes with every different spirit who controls him, and these spirits, who are chiefly literary and theological men of past ages, give their names, the particulars of their earth-life,

extracts from their writings, and on inquiry and search at the British Museum Library and elsewhere, their statements are found to be true. The medium criticises and questions all the results of his own mediumship as closely as any scientific man would do. He says that he is assured that the messages come from individuals outside himself, the facts, arguments, and lines of thought being foreign to his own, and often strongly and seriously at variance with his own opinions, especially on theological matters. The true particulars the spirits have given about their earth-lives would make a small biographical dictionary; and although the facts stated he felt sure to be quite new to him, yet, he argued, "how can I be *perfectly* certain that they were not once in my mind, and afterwards forgotten?" On the 22nd May, 1873, the medium held the following conversation with the spirits, he writing the questions, and the answers coming afterwards by what Dr. Carpenter would call "unconscious cerebration governing the motions of the hand":—

THE READING OF BOOKS BY SPIRITS.

Can you read?

No, friend, I cannot, but Zachary Gray can, and R——. I am not able to materialise myself, or to command the elements.

Are either of those spirits here?

I will bring one by and by. I will send . . . R—— is here.

I am told you can read. Is that so? Can you read a book?

[Spirit handwriting changed.] Yes, friend, with difficulty.

Will you write for me the last line of the first book of the Æneid?

Wait.—"Omnibus errantem terris, et fluctibus ætas."

[This was right.]

Quite so. But I might have known it. Can you go to the book-case, take the last book but one on the second shelf, and read me the last paragraph of the ninety-fourth page? I have not seen it, and do not even know its name.

"I will curtly prove by a short historical narrative, that popery is a novelty, and has gradually arisen or grown up since the

primitive and pure time of Christianity, not only since the apostolic age, but even since the lamentable union of kirk and the state by Constantine."

[The book on examination proved to be a queer one called "*Roger's Antipopopriestian*, an attempt to liberate and purify Christianity from Popery, Politikirkality and Priestrule." The extract given above was accurate, but the word "narrative" substituted for "account."]

How came I to pitch upon so appropriate a sentence?

I know not, my friend. It was by coincidence. The word was changed by error. I knew it when it was done, but would not change.

How do you read? You wrote more slowly, and by fits and starts.

I wrote what I remembered, and then I went for more. It is a special effort to read, and useful only as a test. Your friend was right last night; we can read, but only when conditions are very good. We will read once again, and write and then impress you of the book: "Pope is the last great writer of that school of poetry, the poetry of the intellect, or rather of the intellect mingled with the fancy." That is truly written. Go and take the eleventh book on the same shelf. [I took a book called *Poetry, Romance and Rhetoric*.] It will open at the page for you. Take it and read, and recognise our power, and the permission which the great and good God gives us, to show you of our power over matter. To Him be glory. Amen.

[The book opened at page 145, and there was the quotation perfectly true. I had not seen the book before; certainly had no idea of its contents.]

Here, then, are very strong proofs of spirit identity, and of spirit messages very free from bias due to the thoughts of the medium. As some spirits can read books when conditions are favourable, the fact brings their personal identity again into question, for may not a deceiving spirit extract personal particulars from a book, and give them as appertaining to himself?

Seeing, then, certain spirits are, on the whole, giving very fair proofs of their identity and truthfulness through this

medium, the following communication about Dr. Dee is of considerable interest, especially as we gave a brief review of the life of Dr. Dee in a recent number of the *Spiritualist* :—

DR. DEE'S SPIRIT.

April 19th, 1873.

Can you tell me about the spirit who came last evening ?

He was the same spirit who has visited you before, and has made the loud and sharp knock. He said of himself truly that his name was John Dee. He was a man of vast research and great refinement, versed in the mysteries of ancient magic and astrology, and all the occult sciences. He was also skilled in the exact sciences, being once lecturer on Euclid in the University of Paris. He was in earth-life a progressive spirit, and versed in the subject of intercourse between us and your world.

He lived in Queen Elizabeth's days, he says.

Yes. He was consulted as to the voice of the spirits on the occasion of the Coronation, and fixed the day at the instigation of his spirit guides. I do not know the year of his birth or death, but he was a friend both of your King Edward VI. and of Elizabeth. She took great interest in his marvellous collection of works on occult science, and visited him frequently at Mortlake, where he lived and died.

But he was abroad, you said.

Oh yes, much. He studied at Louvain, and at Cambridge. He had great power of application, being able to study eighteen hours a day.

April 20th, 1873.

You were telling me about John Dee.

He is here. He will give you particulars through me. He was born in London in 1527. He went at fifteen to St. John's College, Cambridge. There he studied eighteen hours a day, devoting four only to sleep. You inquire about his foreign travel. He went to the Netherlands after taking his degree, and before leaving Trinity. He studied at Louvain, and lectured at Paris. Edward VI. gave him Upton-on-Severn. He lived and died at Mortlake, with a magnificent library of books on both the exact and occult sciences.

He was born in —, he cannot remember now. In 1551 he associated with himself Edward Kelly in the pursuit of astrology, magic, and what you call Spiritualism. The Palatine of Siradia, who was in England on a visit, patronised him and took him back to Poland. Growing tired in time, he gave them over, and they were patronised by the Emperor Rodolph. Banished thence by the Pope's decree, he was hidden by the Count Rosenberg in his castle, where they carried on their occult arts, as they were called.

What do you mean by "gave him Upton-on-Severn"?

Appointed him priest of that place: though, in fact, it was not for aught but the gain that the appointment brought.

Was he then in orders?

No, friend, never.

What do you mean by his "lecturing on Euclid"?

He gave mathematical lectures, especially on Euclid's view of geometry, of which he somewhat disapproved.

Who was the Palatine of Siradia?

Albert Laski was his name, Count his title.

How has he come to me?

In earth-life he was an earnest and advanced communer with the spheres, and ever since it has been his special mission to aid those who are willing to seek into the mysteries of the spirit land. He was a great medium, and was aided by spirits greatly. Now he repays his debt. You will hear more of him. Now he bids you farewell.

One of the most conclusive instances of an intelligence existing outside of the medium was furnished by a spirit who gave the name of Zachary Gray, who stated himself to have been in earth-life a cleric, who was much concerned in religious disputation between the Church and the Puritans. He lived at Cambridge in 1725, and was Vicar of St. Peter's and St. Giles' there, and also of Houghton Conquest. He was best known in the literary world for his edition of "Ye Immortal Hudibras," as he himself said. This spirit wrote in a most peculiar handwriting, and in the old English spelling, the extracts which are appended. After much trouble they have been verified, with the exception of the last, no trace of

which could be found till the reference was supplied by the hand that wrote the extract. They come from a rare work of John Lydgate's, called "The Lyfe of our Ladye," a copy of which may be seen, under carefully prescribed restrictions, in an inner room at the British Museum. Copies of this work are extremely scarce—we know of no other—and none, we are thoroughly assured, had ever come under the notice of the medium through whom the extracts were written.

On the 24th April, 1873, Zachary Gray wrote as follows:—

Black was his wede, and his habyte also,
His heed unkempt, his lokis hoare and gray,
His loke downe caste in token of sorrowe and wo:
On his cheeks the salte teares lay,
Which bare recorde of his deadly affray.

His robe stayned was with Romaine bloode:
His sworde aye redy whet to do vengeance,
Lyke a tyraunt most furyouse and wode
In slaughter and murdre set at his pleausaunce.

On the 20th July, 1873, he wrote, having previously written a long extract from the "Lyfe of our Ladye,"—

Friend, we continue ye excerpe from "Ye Lyfe of our Ladye."

And dryeth up ye bytter terys wete
Of Aurora, after ye morowe graye.
That she in wepyng doth on flowres flete,
In lusty Aprile, and in freshe Maye:
And . . .

(a long pause.)

Friend we can no more.—Zach: Gray.

On the 12th June, 1873, he wrote:—

Friend, I once wrote for you an excerpt from the works of John Lydgate. I have been waiting an opportunity to give you another. Here is a curious and picturesque description of Fortune in her perpetual changefulness.

"Her habyte was of many folde colours,
Watchet blewe of fayned stedfastnesse,

Her gold allayed like sun in watry showres,
Meyxt with grene for change and doublesesse."

On the 20th July, 1873, the following was written :—

"In the countrey of Canterbury most plenty of fish is :
And most chase of wilde beastes about Salisbury Irvis :
At London ships most ; and wine at Winchester :
At Hartford shepe and oxen : and fruit at Worcester :
Soape about Coventry : and yron at Gloucester :
Metall, lead, and tynne in ye countrey of Exeter :
Evordwicke of fairest woode : Lincolne of fairest men :
Cambridge and Huntingdon most plenty of deepe venne :
Elie of fairest place : of fairest sight Rochester."

Friend, I have remembered it right well.

Farewell.—Zach. Gray.

In one of the above extracts two stanzas have been incorporated into one, and the intermediate portion of the original left out, which could scarcely have been the case had the medium ever seen the lines anywhere, so that they might be supposed to have come out afterwards unconsciously from his brain.

APPENDIX II.

ON SOME PHASES OF MEDIUMSHIP BEARING ON SPIRIT-IDENTITY.

THE evidence for what is broadly known as the Spiritual creed rests upon many bases, each having its own special weight, and its own adaptability to special types of mind. Phases of mediumship furnish different phases of evidence, and it is useful to collate and compare these now and then, and to see what they prove, and to what conclusions they point.

The two things, be it observed, are very different, and it is to the common practice of confounding presumptive evidence with proof that much of our weak argument is due. It is extremely difficult to *prove* anything outside of mathematics; perhaps it is impossible when we deal with the spirit, and the unseen, and the future. But, short of mathematical proof, there is moral certainty. We are morally certain of many things that we cannot prove, and that we have not subjected to personal test, or that, for one or more of various reasons, we cannot demonstrate. And on this we act throughout our lives. It is this position that I conceive to be attainable in reference to the creed of Spiritualism.

And this applies to that greatest *crux* of every intelligent Spiritualist, which is at the same time the most attractive article in his creed—the Immortality of the human spirit, especially of his own departed friends, and so, by inference, of himself. Here, again, there is some laxity in the use of

terms. We cannot *prove* Immortality—we can only establish a more or less strong presumption of perpetuated life after physical death. And this presumption some, who have time for study and opportunity (which all cannot get), and some little logic in their heads (which all have not got), may carry to the plane of moral certainty. It is well for Spiritualism, as popularly understood, that this is so; for it must be admitted that the popular interest largely centres in the selfish view; and if one could prove that human kind do not live and talk (even the nonsense that usually *is* talked) to us, most would turn aside with a shrug and say, “I want *my* dead; not all these spirits,”—just as the lonely child, left in the dark, sticks its fingers into its eyes, and cries, “I want *my* Ma!”

What light, then, has mediumship to throw upon this question? In the popular estimation, much. A great deal, however, must be ruled out on the score of enthusiasm, insufficient evidence, imperfect observation, and the like, before we get to the root of the matter. And when we do, in individual cases, get evidence that will bear investigation, we should cherish it as a specimen to be collated with other specimens and preserved for reference. It seems to me that another fallacy of constant recurrence in this subject is this. Every case of identity is submitted to jealous sifting, and most rightly. But every case is received with a stare of surprise, as if it were the first of all its race, as if no traveller had ever yet come back from the *outré-tombe*; as if this were a lonely phenomenon. Now this is a fallacy; for the weight of evidence is cumulative. The first case proves little; the next more; the third more still, especially if the observers have made independent records. So that when one sane and capable observer steps forward and says, “I have recorded a hundred cases in which those called dead have communicated to me evidence of their perpetuated identity,” and when, from another place, another says, “And I too”; and

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a third, and so on to a vast number, who give their own proofs, and display their own reasons for belief; and when all this evidence is found to make for one conclusion—then the cumulative weight is so great that to ignore it is a very serious fallacy.

One great difficulty in presenting evidence of this kind to the public is, that it is impossible to publish names, facts, and dates *in extenso*, at least in many cases. The facts refer to persons still living; or the dead have living friends, whose feelings must be respected. The medium would object to vivisection and the friends to the *post-mortem* examination, which would be held by very rude enquirers. I have now and again recorded cases such as that of Abraham Florentine, and others, which the curious reader will find incorporated in SPIRIT TEACHINGS, that present strong evidence of identity; and I know many more; I have records of (I believe) at least a hundred. Many others must have similar records, if their observations have been carefully kept, and if their opportunities have been fairly large. Most mediums, I believe, who do not waste their force in the elementary phenomena which the lower class of spirits delight in producing to the exclusion of all others, can get such evidence with patience. But they must wait, and (in most cases) they must be content to take what comes. Earnest desire for the return of a particular individual usually defeats its own object, and this a young observer has to learn. "Expectant attention" (*pace* Dr. Carpenter) does *not* manufacture the desired result. But patience, careful observation, and a passive mind do, in my experience, produce their fruit.

I will record, with such precision as circumstances permit, the facts which have led me into this train of thought. An extraordinary severe strain of work left me a month ago, it is necessary to premise, with the mental powers jaded and used out, so that even to read a newspaper was irksome. Consequently I removed from the whirl of London and the excite-

ment of its busy life to the peaceful quiet of the country, and occupied myself in the busy idleness of doing nothing. That is not much in my way, and at first nothing but sheer inability to think kept me still. Soon, however, rest began to do its beneficial work, and I experienced the returning sensations of mental vigour. During all this time, and for some weeks before, the objective evidences of mediumship had been absent, save only for some remedial processes, which are usual when I am out of health. But now, as health was re-established, and the conditions of quiet and rest permitted, there supervened a condition of great lucidity. On ordinary occasions, in the press and worry of daily occupations, the spiritual faculties with me are dimmed. I see (if at all) "through a glass darkly," and have to test and try my sensations before they can be accepted. Here there was none of that: the vision was "face to face," and I found myself receiving its evidences with the same unquestionable acceptance that I do the phenomena that surround me in the natural world. I look at myself in the glass and accept the counterfeit presentment without argument. I know, of course, that *I* am not there—that the solidity is visual deception, and so on; but I accept the working model and am content. So in the cases of clairvoyant vision. The vision was so palpable that it created no revulsion, no wonder, no questioning in my mind.

The first of my cases occurred on August 18th inst. I had returned from a three days' absence to the house of friends with whom I was staying. When I left, a friend of the lady of the house was unwell. During my absence she died very suddenly. When I entered the room I saw her standing beside her friend—the lady whom I was visiting. The disembodied phantom was as clear to my gaze as the living person to whom I was talking. "So Miss —— is dead," I said, forgetting that the good lady could not see her ghostly visitant. "Yes." "And buried," I continued, for the words sounded in my ear. "Yes, but how did you know?" Then I

remembered, and turned the subject, for my hostess would have fainted in horror had she known how near to her her friend was. Strange! a few hours ago and she would sit by the bedside and clasp the clammy hand, and kiss the lips on which death already had set the seal of silence: yet she would have screamed at the friend whose self was by her, minus that old and shabby body which it had cast off. That is what "I believe in the resurrection of the body" has brought us to. I took careful note of the dress, mien, and face of the ghost—I had never seen the original in the body—and, as occasion served, I elicited from my hostess a description, which greatly tallied with my vision, except in one point. The ghost wore a brooch of peculiar make, which I could get no description of. On the following day, however, my hostess came back from her friend's house with the identical ornament in her hand. Her friend had left it to her as a memento. She looked puzzled at me—very; and I think she suspects something uncanny, for she eyes me now and again as one would study a phenomenon.

During the whole of that day I was in this state of lucidity, and could see and converse with *persons* who were as clear to my eye, and whose voices sounded as distinctly to my ear, as any that impinge on my natural organs of sense. One special visitor of that day impressed me much. He, too, was lately dead, and I made his acquaintance thus for the first time, yet his form and features are as clear in my mind as are those of the worthy clergyman who has just done me the honour to call upon me and talk conventional platitudes for half an hour. Here are facts which should concern him; yet I know full well (his face was enough!) that if I had enlightened him on the matter he would have bolted as from Old Scratch, and probably have thought it necessary to purify himself somehow.

During this same day I was conscious of the *presence*, rather than of the *form*, of a spirit that tried to make itself clear, but failed. This is a familiar fact to me; and I find

frequently that some try and never succeed, but go away, after fruitless efforts, or communicate through a medium-spirit. In this case I watched the efforts of the spirit at intervals during two days. The "atmosphere"—what shall I call the sensation of a known presence without a recognised form?—of the spirit seemed familiar, and I thought it was, but did not know who it was until I was told by a spirit-friend who gave me the name. It was that of an old lady, a connection of near friends of mine, and her husband had been a frequent visitor to our circle when we used to meet at Dr. Speer's. The figure never was very clear, as the others had been, to my eyes, but the recognition was made complete by some very touching communications made from her. She had been a loving, simple soul, who had lived out all her days, and had dropped from this material plane after a life as blameless and as innocent in its sincerity and simplicity as most of us would desire to spend. Her husband had been other in his nature, more material, more given to hoarding wealth, and to the things of this world. The union, however, between the two natures seems to have been real. And now the freed spirit found its delight in union with her earthly husband, and the two rose together beyond the atmosphere of earth in which one of them had been prisoned so long.

The communications are too sacred to quote, and the scanty details I have given are very meagre compared with the reality. In all such cases experience is necessary in order to realise the truth. It would be impossible to convince me that I was under hallucination in these cases. I should scout the notion of a personating spirit with scorn. There was in all, and especially in the last cases, an essential character of truth, too subtle to be analysed, too fleeting to be fixed in print, but which is—to one who has grasped it—the *ne plus ultra* of conviction.

The phase of clairvoyance gradually passed, as it became necessary for me to return to work which pressed. I have

had recurrent phases like it again and again, but they go when the stern work of life needs doing. We shall not get any persistent experience of this kind until the possessors of the gift are isolated, separated from contagious influences, removed from worldly cares, and treated as the ancients treated those through whom they gained their glimpses of the future. But much may be done by careful observation, when such is possible, especially by the medium himself fixing his sensations, noting every small point—none is too small to be of import—and keeping exact record of all.

Above all, it is necessary, in the present stage of our knowledge, to avoid dictating conditions in these experiments. That may sometimes be done in the investigation of the physical phenomena, but not here. The conditions are so delicate, they are so fugitive, we know so little, that observation prolonged and patient is the wise course. Anxiety, we know, will upset the conditions at once; hence, possibly, so few personal friends return to a medium. Most of those who come to me are strangers to me—persons whom I never heard of. Some are apparently brought by my own guardians to convict a stubborn scepticism of its shallowness; some are attracted by a certain sympathy, some by curiosity, some by a desire (seldom gratified) to be allowed to get at their earthly friends; some come, as though they were still in the flesh, as one might call on an acquaintance.

I will record such a case, not because it is peculiar, or because it presents any features that mark it out for special attention, but just because it is one of many—a typical case, where there was no “expectant attention,” no scope for “unconscious cerebration,” no apparent object for deception. Some six or seven years ago, when I first became acquainted with the phenomena of Spiritualism, I had a friend who was engaged in press work for one of the leading newspapers. I was full of the subject, and I thought I would discuss it with my friend. (I never had the conversion craze.) He

was unreceptive and argumentative, and I did not make any impression on him other than to impress him with a conviction of my sincerity and earnestness and an entire disbelief in the spiritual origin of my facts. One day we were walking together and rain came on. To avoid a wetting we took refuge in a billiard-room near at hand, and whiled away the rainy hour with a game, discussing all the while. The proprietor was the only other person in the room, and he showed some interest in what I was saying. He asked some questions, and seemed rather frightened than otherwise. He was a wine merchant, and gave me his card as I left, asking for custom. From time to time I did purchase some goods from him, and on perhaps half a dozen occasions exchanged some words with him. He always asked me about Spiritualism. The last time I saw him he was ill, and said that he was in the doctor's hands, but was mending fast. I saw no more of him until sitting alone, as my habit is, in my study in the early morning, he appeared to my clairvoyant eye. I was writing about transcorporeal action of spirit, the double, and such phenomena, and I wondered much at this apparition. I never thought for a moment that it was anything but a double of the living man. For a time he could not speak; but when he managed to make me hear, he saluted me as he would have done in the flesh, calling me Mr. —, a name which he heard my friend use while we were together in the billiard-room. It was a name used by him, and known, I am sure, to no one else except two or three acquaintances. Yet this spirit used it quite naturally, as he would have done in the flesh, though he knew my real name well enough. I gradually inquired what brought him, and learned that he had "come to see me." He was dead—had died some two months ago at a place and address which he gave me. He likewise told me his full name, the disease which carried him off, and the date of his death. All these facts were entirely outside of my knowledge. He died at a watering-place far

away. His full name, disease (a peculiar one), and death, were utterly unknown to me. I and some friends verified them all, and found them literally exact. Yet he seemed to have no special reason for coming, unless it was to add his stone to the cairn of evidence. He did not even say that he had discovered the truth of my faith, and had come to confirm it. He came, and he went, and, like many another who has done the same, I have seen him no more.

These are specimens of the facts that have set me moralising. What do they go to prove? What conclusion am I justified in drawing from them? Briefly, disembodied intelligence. And not that only; but, perpetuated individuality. Phenomenal facts, of which I have seen shoals, are in my mind outside of a "perhaps." I do not only *believe*—I *know* them; and any number of counterfeits (greatly as I deplore every one of them) would do nothing to shake the weight of positive evidence. They have their use, which I admit gratefully, and in their place they perform valuable work. But they will not prove my case; and they ought to be but the stepping-stones to further knowledge. They will not do for my purpose, which is to prove what is loosely called IMMORTALITY. I know *them*; but I do not know *what causes them*. I have not interviewed "the Intelligent Operator at the other end of the line." (When I so say I allude to mere cases of physical phenomena when no information or name is given: not to cases like Florentine's, where the facts were given through table movements entirely.) I do not look to such cases for the class of evidence I want. I believe it must be had on another and higher plane, and after patient and laborious search. It does not lie on the surface, and is not to be gathered up like manna fresh sent from heaven.

In my quest after this evidence I must part company with many with whom I should like to find myself in company.

1. I must leave men like Professor Huxley, and the large number of persons who say, quite sincerely, "I don't care

about all this. It does not interest me. I don't want to listen to these idle words; and I really do not care whether I live again or not." From these I must separate *in limine*. I *do* care very much about the matter. I think it is *the* problem to which the interest of all others must yield. I want to live, to go on living, working, learning, in short, energising. And I very sincerely hope that Professor Huxley *will* live again, in spite of himself, if need be. I should mourn the extinction of such "a particle of the Divine mind."

2. I must leave the man who finds himself unable to get any evidence that will satisfy him, and who is, therefore, always concerned with superficial phenomena, "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." There are some minds, I fully believe, that are not constructed to receive any such evidence as can be had on these matters. They must be left to grope, or to gain their evidence elsewhere, or not to gain it at all. I have got what I hold to be proof, such as is possible, such as I want. I will go forward.

3. Then I must leave those who indulge in mere logomachy, hair-splitting, "curious questionings" on superficial matters of no real moment. We may do that till we "fade into the infinite azure," as Tyndall puts it, or, as his irreverent parodist translates it, "till all is blue." There is no end to mere war of words. Let us get on; having made sure of the fortresses behind us, let us progress.

4. Nor can I think that those who shout theological warnings about the Devil deserve any more heed. I do not notice them. I have talked with many and many a spirit, good, bad, and indifferent; some who were what we call evil-livers; some who were what we call decent folks, to outward appearance (whited sepulchres, nevertheless); some who are happy, some who are not; but I have found no Devil yet. I have no fear of Bogie, and would leave him to frighten those whose hands first formed him. Spirits are very *human*; as a rule (which has its exceptions), they are men and women

with the frailties, and passions, and peculiarities, and characteristics of their earth-life. They are just what they made themselves, and so they remain till they make themselves something else. They are neither gods nor devils.

5. One more class I leave, and that is those who beguile me with fantastic hypotheses, unproven and unprovable; cunning devisements of curious brains, invented for the purpose of ignoring the plain explanation of facts and substituting some fine-drawn subtlety which is worthless unless proven, and which may be left alone until it rests on a solid basis. I believe in plain explanations unless they can be disproven. The *onus* rests on those who reject them; and I have a firm belief that we are logically right in dismissing, or at least in relegating for future examination, hypotheses which rest on the airy basis of imagination. Eliphaz Levi, for instance, and a certain class of occult writers, tell us that the astral spirit will maintain individual existence for some time and then be resolved into its elements, just as the physical body will moulder and be disintegrated at last. This astral spirit, they say, can communicate for awhile after bodily death, make itself visible, and do, in effect, what we say spirits do. But it will be disintegrated soon, and you will hear no more of it. Well, this is theory. Why, we may ask, and when? I have had facts and statements, and have verified them too, from spirits who have left this earth hundreds, in some cases many hundreds, of years, and I have had similar statements and facts from spirits that have gone thousands of years. These rest on the same authority which I have found faithful after reiterated proof, and therefore, though I cannot verify the statements from the lapse of time, I am entitled to produce them as secondary evidence. This leads me to put aside such hypotheses, at any rate for the present.

Leaving these alone, then, I wish to direct attention to the facts, specimens of which I have adduced; to the

characteristics of their production ; to the cumulative nature of the evidence—only one side of which, be it remembered, is here noticed—and to the conclusions logically deducible from them. These facts, taken in their due and natural connection with other facts bearing on the subject, seem to me to demonstrate—

1. Unembodied intelligence,
2. Of a character that is human,
3. Maintaining the individuality of its earth-life.

I must not dwell on arguments further ; but I insist that the facts are very numerous ; that their force is cumulative ; and while I cheerfully make large deductions for enthusiasm, fraud, looseness in recording, and the like ; and while I also admit and believe that intelligence not human is also at work, I nevertheless hold that man does in many ascertainable instances live after his bodily death, and that in that disembodied state he preserves his characteristic individuality of mind.

I believe that this, logically, warrants me in arguing on to the general canon of personal existence beyond the grave for mankind *en masse*, though I am willing to admit exceptions (which, by the way, prove the rule).

I believe that the agencies concerned in Spiritualism are principally departed human beings, though I also believe that some or many of the lower phenomena are caused by beings who have not yet reached man's plane of intelligence, even as I hold most surely that some, who have progressed far beyond it, do return to enlighten and instruct him.

With Professor De Morgan I admit that the spiritual explanation is "ponderously difficult," but I also insist that, as the result of my own experience and reading, and after long and careful study, the weight of evidence is, to my mind, "ponderously" on its side.

APPENDIX III.

CASES OF SPIRIT-IDENTITY.

I.—MAN CRUSHED BY A STEAM-ROLLER.*

ON the evening of Saturday, February 21st, a few friends met together at the house of Mrs. Makdougall Gregory, 21, Green Street, Grosvenor Square, W. The party numbered six in all, and included the Baron du Potet, and the gentleman to whose mediumship we are indebted for the SPIRIT TEACHINGS which have appeared from time to time in your columns. There was no intention of having a séance, and ordinary topics were the subject of conversation, when suddenly, in the middle of dinner, this gentleman surprised us by saying he felt a spirit standing near him between himself and the Baron (who sat on his right); whether good or bad he could not tell, but the influence was by no means pleasant. The spirit was also perceived by the Baron, to whom it conveyed the impression that it was in a state of great distress, and that it was the spirit of a person who was then alive. Nothing more was said at the time, but the medium continued to feel a disagreeable influence near him, and spoke of it to me when dinner was over.

As soon as we reached the drawing-room, he was impelled to sit down and write; and when a pencil and paper had been brought, his hand was moved backwards and forwards with great rapidity, and an object was roughly drawn on the paper which resembled a horse fastened to a kind of cart or

* *Spiritualist*, March 27th, 1874. (Contributed by an eye-witness of the séance.)

truck. Several attempts were made to depict it more clearly, and then the following sentences were written:—"I killed myself—I killed myself to-day—Baker Street—medium passed." Here the writing became unintelligible, as the medium grew more and more agitated, until at length he rose from his seat in a state of trance, and exclaimed in broken sentences—"Yes! yes! Killed myself to-day, under a steam-roller. Yes! yes! Killed myself—blood, blood, blood!" The control then ceased, but the medium felt the same unpleasant influence for some hours afterwards, and could not entirely shake it off for several days.

In reference to the communication, I may state that, although the medium had passed through Baker Street in the afternoon, neither he nor any one else present was aware that a man had committed suicide there in the morning by throwing himself under a steam-roller. A brief notice of the occurrence appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette* in the evening, but none of the party had seen that paper. It is worth remarking that on the front of the steam-roller which was used in Baker Street a horse is represented in brass, and this, perhaps, may serve to account for its appearance in the medium's drawing, where we should certainly not expect to find it.

Allow me, in conclusion, to point out a few of the inferences which may fairly be drawn from the facts I have stated by those who are willing to accept them as true. In the first place, they would seem to prove that no amount of injury done to the body at the time of death incapacitates the spirit for immediate action. In this case the unfortunate man was literally crushed to pieces, and yet a few hours afterwards his spirit could communicate in writing through the medium, and could also make use of his organs of speech. In the next place, it would appear that a spirit just released from the body carries with it something corporeal; otherwise it is difficult to account for the Baron's impression that the spirit he perceived was that of a person who was then living.

Again, we may infer that spirits immediately after death are able to recognise a medium through whom they can communicate.

In the case before us, it would appear that the spirit followed the medium from Baker Street, and waited for an opportunity of making his presence known. And, lastly, I would add the remark, that the man who accepts the facts I have stated, and seeks for a solution of the difficulties that surround them, will look in vain for much assistance from psychic force or unconscious cerebration.

2.—CASE OF ABRAHAM FLORENTINE.*

SIR,—In the *Spiritualist* of December 11th, 1874, you printed a letter from me, a letter the main portion of which, in view of the information elicited by it, I will ask you to reproduce:—

In the month of August last, I was staying with Dr. Speer at Shanklin, Isle of Wight. We had a number of sittings, and at one of them a spirit communicated, who gave his name as Abraham Florentine. He said that he had been concerned in the war of 1812, and that he had lately entered spirit-life at Brooklyn, U.S.A., on August 5th, at the age of eighty-three years, one month, and seventeen days. We had some difficulty at first in making out whether the month and days referred to the age or to the length of his illness, but he returned on the following evening and cleared up the difficulty.

The manner in which the communication was made was most singular. We were seated, three in number, round a heavy loo-table, which two persons would move with difficulty. Instead of raps, to which we are accustomed, the table commenced to tilt. So eager was the communicating spirit, that the table rose some seconds before the required letter was arrived at. In order to

**Spiritualist*, March 19, 1875.

mark T, it would rise, quivering with excitement, in a manner perfectly indescribable, about K, and then descend at T with a thump that shook the floor. This was repeated until the whole message was complete; but so eager was the spirit, and so impetuous in his replies, that he bewildered Dr. and Mrs. Speer completely (I was in deep trance), and caused the process to be prolonged over the whole sitting. If I may venture on a guess, I should say that Abraham Florentine was a good soldier, a fighting man not nice to meet, and that he retains enough of his old impetuosity to rejoice at his liberation from the body, which (if I may guess again) had become a burden to him through the painful illness.

Will the American papers copy, and enable me to verify my facts and guesses?

M. A. (OXON.)

Mr. Epes Sargent, to whom I privately communicated the facts of the case, was kind enough to insert for me a paragraph in the *Banner of Light* of December 12th, 1874, embodying the same inquiry. The result was to elicit what the *Banner* calls "one of the most singular and well-attested evidences of spirit return which it has been our good fortune to chronicle during a long experience." The matter may best be stated in the words used by the writer in the *Banner of Light* of February 13th, 1875. It will be observed that a misconception as to the meaning of the words "a month and seventeen days" occurs at first, but this is subsequently, cleared up, though, according to the widow's account, the age should have been 83 years, 1 month, 27 days. This, however, does not affect the case of identity.

The original inquiry in the *Banner* was this, and the result is quoted direct from that newspaper:—

"At a séance in England lately, a spirit communication was received by means of the tilting of a heavy table. The whole table seemed alive, and as though it were being disintegrated in the very fibres of the wood. The gist of

the communication was that the spirit was one Abraham Florentine, who died at Brooklyn, N.Y., August 5th, 1874. He said he was in the war of 1812, and then, after an interval, added, 'a month and seventeen days.' Can any of our Brooklyn friends inform us whether they ever heard of Abraham Florentine?"

"No sooner had that issue of our paper found its way to the public, than we received by due course of mail the following reply, which speaks for itself—

"To the Editor of the 'Banner of Light.'

"In the *Banner* to-day received here, is a paragraph concerning a spirit who manifested through the medium of a dining-table at some place in England, and gave the name of Abraham Florentine, a soldier in the war of 1812. You make enquiry whether anyone ever heard of Abraham Florentine. I cannot specifically answer that question, but having been engaged some fourteen years since in auditing the claims of the soldiers of 1812 in the state of New York, I am yet in possession of the records of all such who made claims for service in that war. In those records appears the name of Abraham Florentine, of Brooklyn, N.Y., and a full record of his service can be obtained in the office of the Adjutant-General of the State of New York, in claim No. 11,518, war of 1812. I think, however, that he there claimed for a longer term of service than that he gave in England, his allowance being for 58 dollars.

'WILSON MILLAR, Claim Agent.

'WASHINGTON, D.C., December 13th, 1874.'

"Pursuant to the advice of our legal correspondent, we addressed a letter to the Adjutant-General, S.N.Y., asking for the facts, without, however, giving any reason for our request, and received the following courteous reply:—

*"General Headquarters, State of New York,
Adjutant-General's Office, Albany, Jan. 25th, 1875.*

'SIRS,—In reply to your communication, dated Jan. 22nd, I have to furnish you the following information from the records of this office:—Abraham Florentine, private in Captain Nicole's

Company, 1st Regiment New York Militia, Col. Dodge, volunteered at New York on or about the 2nd of September, 1814, served three months, and was honourably discharged. He received Land Warrant No. 63,365, for forty acres. The above is taken from the soldier's sworn statement, and not from official records.—Very respectfully.

‘FRANKLIN TOWNSEND, *Adj.-Gen.*

‘Colby and Rich,
No. 9, Montgomery Place, Boston.’

“Those who are acquainted, through experience as investigators, with the workings of the spiritualistic circle, will bear in mind that the correct giving of dates is ever a matter of difficulty on the part of the returning intelligence, and, therefore, the slight discrepancy existing between the length of service given by the spirit Florentine and that embodied in the record is easily explainable.* But the main facts are established. Here is a spirit who manifests under the most peculiar circumstances, and in the most forcible manner, to a circle in a foreign land, whose members are all strangers to the fact that such a being as himself ever trod the planet; a member of that circle asks through an English paper that proof (if any exists in America) may be given him as to the verity of said spirit's assertions, and the same inquiry reaches us by private letter; we then call upon the public for information concerning one of whom we have never before heard; we receive in reply—from a legal gentleman in Washington, whose acquaintanceship we have never had the pleasure of making—the information which leads us to address the Adjutant-General of the State of New York (who is also a total stranger to us), and are assured from data existing at his office that such a soldier did serve in the war of 1812, as claimed. The theory of collusion is untenable here, as the several parties who have given in the testimony are strangers

* This is a misconception. The one month seventeen days, refers to age, not to length of service.

to each other. The chain of evidence is complete. Let those who think they can explain this occurrence on any other hypothesis than that maintained by the spiritual philosophy make the attempt."

When that statement appeared, my friend, Dr. Crowell, was kind enough to take steps to obtain additional verification from Florentine's widow. I append his letter, published in the *Banner*, February 20th, 1875:—

To the Editor of the "Banner of Light."

SIR,—Upon reading in the *Banner* of the 13th inst. the article headed "Abraham Florentine—Verification of his Message," I examined my Brooklyn Directory, and there found the name of Abraham Florentine, with the address 119, Kosciusko Street. Being at the moment disengaged and interested in pursuing the subject, I at once sought the street and number indicated, and my application at the door was met by an elderly lady, of whom I enquired whether Mr. Abraham Florentine resided there. The reply was "He did reside here, but is now dead."

Ques. May I enquire whether you are Mrs. Florentine, his widow?

Ans. I am.

Upon my here remarking that I would be pleased to obtain some information about her late husband, she invited me to a seat in the parlour, and our conversation was then resumed.

Q. May I ask when he died?

A. Last August.

Q. At what time in that month?

A. On the fifth.

Q. What was his age at time of decease?

A. Eighty-three.

Q. Had he passed his eighty-third year?

A. Yes; his eighty-third birthday was on the previous eighth of June.

Q. Was he engaged in any war?

A. Yes; in the war of 1812.

Q. Was he naturally active and self-reliant, or the reverse?

A. He had a will of his own, and was rather impetuous.

Q. Was his last illness of long or short duration, and did he suffer much?

A. He was confined to his bed for a year or more, and suffered a good deal.

I have here given the questions and answers in their relative order, and in their exact words, from notes taken at the time. During a slight pause following the last answer, Mrs. Florentine, who appeared to be a very respectable lady of about sixty-five years of age and of American birth, inquired my object in asking these questions, when I read to her the article in the *Banner*, which evidently puzzled though it interested her, and I then entered into a full explanation of its purport, greatly to her surprise. She then fully endorsed every line of it, and I left, thanking her, and promising, at her request, to send her a copy of the last number of your journal.

It will be observed that while the spirit of Mr. Florentine states his age to have been eighty-three years, one month, and seventeen days, according to his widow's account it should be twenty-seven days; but this discrepancy is hardly worthy of notice, as either he or she may here be equally mistaken.

As the case stood, before this additional confirmation of its truth was obtained, it certainly was a remarkable verification of a spirit message, but as now presented it appears to me the evidence is conclusive.

I would add that I have some acquaintance with "M.A. (Oxon.)," the gentleman in London who applied in the *Spiritualist* for information of Abraham Florentine, and I can assure your readers that he occupies a very high literary position, and his character is a guarantee against collusion and deception, and I take pleasure in contributing to establish the identity of the communicating spirit.—Yours truly,

EUGENE CROWELL, M.D.

BROOKLYN, N.Y., February 15th, 1875.

To me personally it is extremely interesting to find my queries verified by facts. I never doubted that the case would turn out, as so many others have done, to be true; but the interesting point of observation to me was as to the

correctness of the deductions I drew from the singular way in which the communication was made. The vehemence of the tilts and knocks, the (to us) entirely novel mode of communicating, and the evident earnestness of the spirit, and its eagerness in trying to "have its say," were very striking. Doubtless, what will strike your readers more, is the singularly conclusive nature of the evidence respecting the actual return of the departed. Most undoubtedly none of us had ever heard of Abraham Florentine, nor had we any of us friends in America who could have given us news of what went on there, nor, if we had, could they have mentioned to us a fact in which we should have felt no interest. As a plain matter of truth, I repeat that both name and facts were entirely unknown to any of us. And this is one among many instances in my own experiences which I hope to gather up and record in its place.

March 10th, 1875.

M.A. (OXON.).

3.—CHARLOTTE BUCKWORTH.*

A spirit communicated by means of raps, giving particulars as to her life, which were precise, and entirely unknown to any member of the circle.

On the day following, I enquired respecting her, and an account was given, to the effect that her name, Charlotte Buckworth, was rightly given; that she had no special connection with me or with my friends, but spoke as one who was present. The fact that I had been on the previous day in company with four persons, all more or less mediumistic, had prevented regular communications, and had introduced a disturbing element.

It was said that Charlotte Buckworth, the spirit in question, had been suddenly deprived of bodily existence in 1773, at a party of pleasure, at a friend's house in Jermyn Street.

* *Spirit Teachings*, "*Spiritualist*," March 25, 1874.

Further inquiry elicited the information that she had suffered from a weak heart, and dropped down dead while dancing. My friend who was writing could not say at whose house, but subsequently returned to give me the information—Dr. Baker's—on December 5.

We were not able to verify this information, and had given no further thought to the matter. Some considerable time after, however, Dr. Speer had a friend at his house, who was very fond of rummaging among old books. We three were talking one evening in a room in which there were a number of books rarely used, arranged in shelves from floor to ceiling.

Mr. A. (as I will call him) mounted a chair to get at the topmost shelf, which was filled with volumes of the Annual Register. He took one down amid a cloud of dust, and commented on the publication as a valuable record of events. Almost anything, he said, could be found in it. As he said this the idea flashed into my mind at once most vividly that there was the place to look for a record of Charlotte Buckworth's death. The event would probably create interest, and so would be found in the obituary which each volume contains.

The impression was so strong—it seemed as though a voice spoke to my inner sense—that I hunted out the volume for 1773, and there I found among the notable deaths, a record of this occurrence, which had made a sensation, as occurring at an entertainment at a fashionable house, and with awful suddenness. The facts were exactly given.

The book was thickly covered with dust, and had evidently not been disturbed since it had been consigned to the shelf. I remembered that the books had been arranged five years before; there they had lain ever since; and but for Mr. A.'s antiquarian tastes, no one would have meddled with them.

The verification was, I believe, as distinctly spiritual in its suggestion as was the communication.

APPENDIX IV.

EVIDENCE FROM SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHY.*

THE photograph under notice was taken by Hudson during the time that he lived in Palmer Terrace, Holloway. The little child in the centre of the picture is a baby sister of Dr. Speer, the sitter on the left, in the foreground; and the shadowy form in the right front is the mother of the infant. I have related before how this child-spirit has persistently manifested at our circle almost from its first formation, coming with a French message first of all to suggest her identity. She passed from this sphere of life more than fifty years ago at Tours, being then only seven months old. Her little joyous message, "*Je suis heureuse, très heureuse,*" was the first indication we had of her presence, and that the little child, so constantly described by clairvoyants as standing near me, was this little spirit, who, by a round-about means, was trying to get at her brother. Since then she has never left us, and her joyous tap is rarely unheard at our séances. She lives in the house as much as one of the children of the family; and is as well known to me, is just as real as they are. I see her, and hear her voice by the inner senses; I have felt her touch, and twice have had her portrait on the photographic plate.

This particular group was taken under strict test conditions. Dr. Speer and I followed the plate throughout, and no precaution which I have before detailed was neglected. We never lost sight of the plate from the very first, and can give unhesitating testimony that no suspicious element presented itself.

* Extracted from "Researches in Spiritualism," by M.A. (Oxon.)—*Human Nature*.

The day following that on which the photograph was taken was Sunday, and I had joined the family dinner-party. When dinner was nearly finished I became partially entranced, and loud knocks were heard on the dining-table. The alphabet was called, and Dr. Speer was requested to go to the room in which we usually meet and he would find a message for him. He went, but could not at once find anything. He was directed by the same means to look again, and he eventually discovered under a whatnot, lying so that the direct rays of light did not fall upon it, a piece of paper, on which was some curious-looking hieroglyphic. We could make nothing of it for some time, until it occurred to us to hold it up to the mirror. We then found that it was a message, written from right to left, and from the bottom of the paper to the top. The same rude cross which then accompanied every message, and which even now is frequently used, is on the paper, and the message, at first sight, looks unintelligible. Deciphered in the way I described, it runs thus: "I am Spirit of Love. I cannot communicate, but am near. The photograph was of little Pauline." Pauline was one of the names of the child; her full name (by the way, *unknown to any of us*) was correctly spelled out in answer to our request—Catharine Pauline Stanhope Speer—together with date of birth and death. Another clear case of unconscious cerebration for Dr. Carpenter!

This writing, so obtained, in a room where nobody was, into which nobody would go, and under circumstances where to play a trick (if it were in anyone's mind to do such a thing) was impossible, gave us the clue to the identity of the spirit. I say trick was impossible; for there was no one in the house who could have executed such an abstruse hieroglyphic, no one who would have dreamed of doing so; no one, except our immediate selves, who knew the child's name—Pauline. The same agency that was at work to produce the picture also authenticated it to us.

On a minute inspection of the picture we were struck by two special points. The little figure is so perfect that a powerful glass reveals the details of feature most distinctly, and, amongst others, the large eyebrows which are a characteristic of the whole family. A stranger might not at once notice what is apparent to all who know them. Again, the constant habit of those who return from the land beyond is to identify themselves by the reproduction of some peculiarity either of dress or demeanour. In another picture it is a black cap. Here it is a large, loose glove, which appears on the hand of the mother, the kneeling figure nearest to the child. It was her habit to go about the house arranging and tidying in housewifely manner, *with a loose glove on the hand*. She was notably careful about the whiteness of her hands, and took that means of preserving it.

Before I have finished this chapter I shall have other instances to adduce of this habit of identification by the reproduction of some known peculiarity. For the present I have more to say about the little child.

We went about a month ago to try for a photograph with Mr. Parkes (of whom more hereafter), and she appears again. I sat at a little table, and was almost immediately entranced. In my clairvoyant state I saw the child standing or hovering by me close to my left shoulder. She seemed to be standing near the table; and I tried in vain to call Dr. Speer's attention to her. As soon as the exposure was over, and I awoke, I stated what I had seen, and on the plate being developed, there stands apparently on the table a little child's figure. The position is exactly where I saw and felt it. And the figure, which also bears traces of family likeness, was immediately claimed by the little spirit as her picture; unbounded joy being expressed at the success of the experiment. So clear was my vision, so sure was I of what would be found on the plate, that I would have staked all my possessions on the result before I saw it.

APPENDIX V.

ON SOME DIFFICULTIES OF INQUIRERS INTO SPIRITUALISM.*

IN dealing with an inquirer's difficulties, I must draw upon other sources of information than my own personal experience. For myself, although I have met many a difficulty since, I had at first no considerable trouble in making myself acquainted with the facts of Spiritualism. It is in the explanation of facts that the perplexing problems come in. As to the phenomena themselves, though many persons do seem to find it very difficult to obtain the evidence of their own senses, and still more to believe that evidence when they have got it, I found myself in risk of being bewildered only by the superabundance of phenomena which challenged my attention.

MY INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUALISM

was in this wise. In the early part of the year 1872, some friends, with whom I was then staying, showed me Lord Adare's book of records of séances with D. D. Home. I tried to read it, but it seemed to me the dreariest twaddle I had ever come across. With many a pish and pshaw I got through half of it, and then tossed it aside. About six weeks after, my friend put into my hand one of Dale Owen's books, with a request that I would read it, and investigate the matters with which it dealt. It was with much reluctance that I agreed to meddle with the question again. It did not interest me,

* An address delivered at a meeting of the Association of Spiritualists, 38, Great Russell Street, London.

and I was busy with other things. In spite, however, of this *passive* want of interest (*active* or dogmatic opposition had no place in my mind), I found myself greatly impressed with Mr. Owen's statements and arguments. From whatever cause, whether internal spiritual preparation or intellectual conviction, I found myself impelled with irresistible power to use every means of inquiring into the alleged phenomena which were so startling to my mind.

I procured every book that I could lay my hands on and devoured them all with avidity. I inquired where I could see for myself these new phenomena, and was informed that Miss Lottie Fowler was about to hold a séance that very evening (April 2, 1872) at 15, Southampton Row. I went, and was greatly astonished at what I saw and heard. I need not take up time by detailing the occurrences of the first part of the sitting: most Spiritualists are familiar with the usual routine of Miss Fowler's séances. Much hazy nonsense was talked, and many vague statements made, which seemed to me to be of no use whatever as tests of spirit identity. I was rapidly becoming nauseated. I craved for something more clear, something on which I could rest as a stable piece of evidence. I inquired, therefore, whether I might endeavour to obtain some such proof for myself. Leave was at once given by the director of the circle, and I addressed the spirit who controlled the medium.

"You're tiring your medium, and making fun of us. Go and send someone who is serious."

The medium shivered, and turned away, and the voice came as though troubled. "You've nothing to do with me. I won't go. Me *no* go."

"Yes, you will. You'll go, and send someone else."

After more colloquy the medium again shivered, seemed to be in pain, and stood rooted to the spot, crouching as if in dread.

After a time the voice came again, but utterly changed;

the voice, this time, of a man, very calm and unimpassioned, instead of the child-voice speaking baby-jargon.

"You want me?"

"Yes. What is your name?"

"I'd rather not tell you. You can ask me any questions."

"No. Tell me what you see, or describe any one whom you see near me. I will answer yes or no; no more."

"I see a man, very old, tall, with a long white beard, and long hair."

"Yes."

"The beard is very white indeed."

"No. Go on."

"He has a very high broad forehead, and his eyes are drawn down. Why, he's blind!"

"Yes."

"And his face is black and blue. And (here the medium shuddered violently), oh! what's that in his mouth? It's like slime . . . and mud . . . and . . . oh! blood."

"Yes."

"And . . . It's dark. I can't see."

"Go on. How is he dressed?"

"He has on a long blue coat. No, not exactly a coat, . . . something long. I can't see his feet."

"Where does he stand?"

"Right opposite; close by you."

"Can you see his name?"

"No. He seems in trouble. I think it's money. He looks so horrible. Let me go! Why do you keep me here?"

"Go then. Do you know me?"

"No." (This very emphatically.)

I shall not attempt to describe the scene during the time that this conversation was being held. I have quoted from a full and careful record written at the time, and the whole scene is photographed indelibly on my mind. Everyone

seemed petrified and astonished. They would have been still more so, had they known with what photographic accuracy a scene in my own private experience was being re-enacted before my eyes. It was, I am sure, unknown absolutely to any person in the room, as unknown as I was myself. It was a scene that passed in a very distant part of Great Britain, and it was reproduced with a realistic power that bore down before it, as with torrent-force, all doubt and hesitation. I felt that the man was there before me; himself reproducing the story of his death for my conviction.

HOW I BECAME A SPIRITUALIST.

That experience made me a *Spiritualist*: it gave me a *faith*—I will say a *knowledge*—which no amount of after-experience has served to shake. From that time to this I have never wavered, though I have seen much to perplex me, much that greatly offends good taste. Though I have heard of deception, and though I believe that fraud exists; though I see reason to question the all-round conclusions of some Spiritualists, and to assign a wider area to the realm of cause than they are disposed to concede; though I meet problems day by day which I cannot solve, and difficulties which only advanced knowledge and experience can fully grasp: in spite of all this, the conclusions of that night, supported and confirmed by many an after-experience, remain firm and unshaken.

FURTHER INVESTIGATION.

I might detain you at length, which would be tedious, by dwelling on the steps by which further evidence was brought home to my mind. I went to the public séances held by Herne and Williams, and found no difficulty in obtaining phenomena for observation. They occurred in abundance;

but I wanted more time and facility for looking into them. The conditions of the public circle irritated me, and I determined to try for some private séances with Herne and Williams, myself and one friend being the only observers. The first of these, held May 29, 1872, was a total failure, and we adjourned to June 5, when Herne did not enter an appearance. A third appointment, for the 8th, was made as a last resource, for my mind was being gradually prejudiced by this shilly-shallying, and I was getting disgusted. We sat for more than half an hour with no result, and I proposed to withdraw. I had read (for during the interval I had got every book on Spiritualism on which I could lay my hands) that some persons stopped manifestations, and I believed it possible that I might be such an offender. I retired, and phenomena occurred at once. I returned, and they ceased. This occurred thrice; and communications were at length obtained through the alphabet. They soon ceased, however, and Herne and Williams commenced to jerk, and quiver, and twitch, and wriggle about, in the true mediumistic fashion. To my great horror, I found these jerks communicated to myself. My right arm was seized about the middle of the fore-arm, and dashed violently up and down with a noise resembling that of a number of paviers at work. It was the most tremendous exhibition of "unconscious muscular action" I ever saw. In vain I tried to stop it. I distinctly felt the grasp of the hand, soft and firm, round my arm, and though perfectly possessed of my senses and volition, I was powerless to interfere, although my hand was disabled for some days by the bruising it then got. The object we soon found was to get up the force, for Herne was levitated on to the table, and his chair was placed so as to rest on the table from the mantelshelf near which he had been sitting. Other phenomena took place, and especially striking was one that occurred just as we were going away. Williams preceded me downstairs, then came my friend, Dr.

Speer, and Herne was last. I turned on the stairs to say something to him, and I saw in clear light a chair sailing along nearly three feet from the floor, and coming towards us. It fell on the landing close to our feet. It is needless to say that this movement in mid-air of a weighty article—it was a very substantial chair—caused us to examine it carefully, and to return to the empty room which we had just left. No suspicious wire or mechanism was there, nor could any device that I can imagine have produced what I saw without instant detection. No more complete proof of the existence of an independent force can be conceived.

CONFIRMATORY EVIDENCE.

I had thus obtained strong evidence of the existence of the force, of its being governed by intelligence, and of the fact that that intelligence was, in one case, that of a departed friend.

I pass over a great amount of other confirmatory evidence, and hasten to tell in a few words another occurrence that greatly deepened the impression already made on my mind. My friends were going to the seaside for a summer holiday, and I was to join them after a short interval. Meantime, I went to visit an old friend whose health was failing, and who had written to beg me to go and see him at once, as he felt his time was growing short. I hurried to comply, but arrived only to be told that he had passed away a short time previously, regretting that I had not come in time to see him. I remained in the house, and when in due time I went into the room where the body of my friend lay, the spirit-form stepped forward to greet me as he would have done in life, with a smile and out-stretched hand. I saw him with clair-voyant sense as really as my natural eye discerned the objects that surrounded me; and that not once only, but on repeated occasions.

This, I need not say, deepened my faith, and strengthened its foundations. Many a stone has since been laid on that foundation, and the superstructure has reached a goodly height, but it is none too high or heavy for that on which it rests.

PRIVATE EXPERIMENTS.

I pass on to notice very briefly that I rejoined my friend and our experiments were resumed in the family circle. One by one all the most usual phenomena were produced, and many a new marvel was added. Though I have had extraordinary opportunities of witnessing the phenomena of Spiritualism during the past six years, I have seen nothing equal to the variety of the manifestations, and to the spontaneity with which they were produced. They occurred at all times, and in all sorts of places, in the house and out of it, with no formal séance; at meals, in church, in empty rooms, here, there, and everywhere, until none of us could, as sane and capable observers, entertain any doubt of the independent nature of the intelligence, any more than, as ourselves truthful and earnest inquirers into the source of the intelligence, we saw any cause to doubt its unequivocal affirmation, solemnly and repeatedly made, that it proceeded from spirits pure and good, some of whom, at any rate, were departed friends of our own, and all of whom had once been denizens of this earth.

VARIOUS INQUIRERS AND THEIR DIFFICULTIES.

Such is my own record; and in dwelling upon it I feel that I have taken some liberty with my subject, for it is not a record of difficulties. But though I have no troubles of my own to narrate, I have a large acquaintance on paper with the troubles of other people. The past five years have been

filled with a correspondence large enough to tax the energy of one man without any other occupation; and this has related mainly to the doubts and difficulties, theories and opinions, and especially to the multifarious *desideranda* of inquirers.

PSEUDO-SCIENTIFIC.

1. One class of correspondents, whom I may call the scientific or pseudo-scientific, take much trouble to explain to me, some with great courtesy, others with great pity, some with patience, and a few with asperity, that I am a fool—they don't say so, but they mean it none the less—for believing in or troubling myself about these matters. Mediums they regard as vulgar rogues, doubtless on the *ex uno disce omnes* principle; investigators as shallow fools, presumably because they do not employ the scientific method made notorious in a recent celebrated instance. I get the full benefit of discourses on the laws of nature (all of which are apparently well known to my correspondents): on snapping tendons, cracking toe-joints, expectant attention, unconscious Carpenterianisms, *et id genus omne*.

This is, perhaps, the weariest and dreariest reading of all; but it serves to show that the dominant ideas fostered by this "science, falsely so called," are one great hindrance to the fair and free investigation of Spiritualism.

THEORISTS.

2. A second class are those who have an idea, a plan, a theory—the Trochus of whom the War Office, and many other departments, could tell a tale. I do not mean those who have mastered facts, and who earn the thanks of all by devoting themselves to the task of suggesting explanations of them. These merit the enduring gratitude of all lovers of truth. I refer to those who regard fact as a subsidiary

matter altogether, and whose eyes are filled with the fair proportions of their own idea. Suggest to them that they are not quite acquainted with the facts, which do not, indeed, accord with their theory, and they wave them aside with much dignified complacency, explaining that if their ideas are properly estimated they must be found to be true, and so that, since Nature works according to law, the facts will, in the end, be found to fit into their place. One correspondent expounds to me this delightful piece of argument in connection with his idea that simultaneous hallucination accounts for all.

These correspondents lead me to believe that another cause why success does not attend the investigations of some persons, is because their minds are hopelessly darkened, to the exclusion of all light, by the blind of a false theory.

THE IGNORANT.

3. A third class is the purely ignorant. These usually profess themselves to be so; they will even parade what is already sufficiently obvious, as though it were, like the beggar's rags and professional shiver, an excuse for appealing to the public pity. Starting from this platform, these persons will propound the most astonishing queries as to things heavenly and spiritual. They will ask questions which (I presume) an arch-angel would be unable to answer, simply because that exalted being would find in the questioner no antecedent knowledge which would make a reply intelligible. They will ask about God and creation, and the nature of the occupations of eternity, demanding with much *naïveté* a biography of all the heavenly host; and a topographical plan of the spheres. They will propound simple questions about predestination, and the nature of evil, and the incarnation, and other theological problems, which they seem to suppose become all completely clear to the spirit that has been, if only for a few poor years, emancipated from the physical body.

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These impress me with a belief that another cause of failure in some inquirers is, that they have not prepared themselves, by gathering antecedent knowledge and clearing away old fallacies, to receive new truth. The ground has not been ploughed up, harrowed, and cleansed of weeds, so that new seed may have a chance to grow.

THE CAPTIOUS CRITICS.

4. Closely allied in ignorance are those whom I may call the captious; those who "want to know" why such and such conditions are necessary; why such and such things can't be done in such and such a way; why phenomena can't be got at the Royal Institution; why there should be any such thing as a medium or a circle; why not abolish them, and let every man be his own medium; in short, why everything is as it is, and why everything isn't as it isn't. These persons, one would declare, know how everything ought to be, and could amend God's universe to an improved pattern, and run it on entirely new principles. They may be recommended to begin their improvements by making a clean sweep of Professor Tyndall's "conditions" in his laboratory at the Royal Institution; and when they have abolished the developing room of the photographer we will begin to talk with them.

These lead to the belief that there are some, I fear I ought to say many, persons, who carry in their own minds a captious spirit—intolerant, arrogant, and dogmatic—which is a sure barrier to the reception of truth. They have not merely not swept and garnished the chamber, but they have barricaded all points of access with *chevaux de frise* of foolish objections, and strewed the floor with torpedoes into the bargain.

It was Mr. Spurgeon who, in describing a captious questioner, declared of him that if the constellation Orion were pointed out to his view, he would immediately suggest

that the shape of it was poor, and that the stars might be rearranged on a new principle.

Such captious critics are not all outside of Spiritualism.

INQUIRERS.

5. Lastly, there is the large body of Spiritualists whose questions are extremely suggestive.

Some—most of them—are engaged in a search after their departed friends. If anyone wants to know how deeply the affections enter into the motives which interest men in this subject, he need only talk to any one who has had opportunities like my own of seeing into the minds of those who are interesting themselves in spiritualism. Many who have neglected the subject before find it attractive when there is hope of reunion with one who has been reft from them. Many who have had desultory interest in it on scientific principles, or out of mere curiosity, find a deeper and keener inducement when death has invaded their homes. And many, I fear, finding that all is not so plain as they had hoped; that there are laws beyond the grave, even as here; and that these preclude or delay the coveted intercourse—many go back, and impatiently say that Spiritualism is a mockery, an affair of sub-human spirits, a dealing with devils.

This is, after all, but a refined form of selfishness, and suggests to us another antecedent difficulty in the inquirers' way, *viz.*, that a too eager desire for one thing, and a too positive state of the mind, are well-nigh sure to produce failure. The mind must be at peace, in harmonious balance, and not biassed or excited. The best attitude is one of simple receptivity; an attitude, let me say, quite compatible with the keenest scrutiny, and the most accurate observation.

Again, the letters of enthusiastic Spiritualists betray a singular inability to understand the laws of evidence. There are many grounds on which conviction comes to the mind, especially in the matter of intercourse with those who have

been dearly loved, and who are lost to us. It may be that to one has been vouchsafed the proof he craves for, through some message, some private test, some little clue that speaks at once to his heart. But in recording this occurrence, frequently almost too sacred for publicity, he forgets that others have not the same means of judging that he has, and to them his language of enthusiasm and exaggerated joy seem only as the over-wrought utterances of a crazy brain.

Or, again, one séance out of many is recorded, perhaps anonymously. No fair evidence is given; no test recorded. These, it may be, have been applied before, and conviction has been established, and tests are no longer useful. Yes; but the narrator forgets, in his enthusiasm, that his letter is isolated, its statements loose, its phenomena astounding. And so the neophyte reads, wonders, and is repelled. "These men," he says, "do not know what the laws of evidence and the rules of logic mean."

THE NEED FOR DISCRETION.

It would be better, I earnestly believe, that no accounts should be presented to the public except such as will stand the test of cross-examination. Many, very many, would so be excluded; but the world would be the better for it, and fewer stumbling-blocks would be laid in the inquirer's way. I know that there are many facts for which chapter and verse cannot be given—many occurrences round which clings the odour of affection, that cannot be exposed to the rude blasts of criticism. I know it well; and I would say, "Keep such for private satisfaction, and for future use. The time will come when such records will find their place, and when the feelings of the living will no longer need to be spared; and, if not, the test, hallowed by sacred memories, will lose none of its value if you keep it consecrated to the purpose for which it was originally given."

I shall probably command the assent of all reasonable persons when I say that to the uninstructed mind—to the mind that is not familiar with the phenomena of Spiritualism—many of the records must read strangely lax, both in method of observation and in language. We, who write too frequently, sometimes forget that some who read have no antecedent knowledge, and that what to us is familiar is very strange to them. We should consciously remember that no man ought to be asked to assent to such facts and truths as we propound for public acceptance—facts new and strange, and not only that, but transcending, and, in some cases, reversing previous experience—save on the most exact and complete evidence. It is an insult to intelligence to expect belief on any other basis; and the converts, let me say, that could be so obtained are not of the highest order of mind.

And while I am on this topic, I must ask your permission to say one word more. It is not only inexpedient and wrong to publish inaccurate and loose records, but it is not always wise to print—still less to recount with all the emphasis of enthusiasm—even exact records of very extraordinary phenomena, unless they can be attested by such a weight of testimony as to make it impossible for a fair mind to reject the record. I believe that it is not wise to force too strong meat on those who are not prepared to digest it. Let me not be mistaken. I mean exactly what I say. I do not think it wise to tax the belief of those who are not familiar with the subject. It is all so strange, so subversive of previous experience, that I counsel discretion. The ancients were wise when they maintained the esoteric circle as well as the exoteric.

It is within my knowledge that much harm has been done on many occasions by injudiciously forcing on unprepared minds what seem to them monstrous narrations of unexplained and inexplicable occurrences. The digestion turns, and the bewildered hearer says, "I could have stood a little of that,

but this is a little too much." Depend upon it, there is philosophy in that remark. The growth must be gradual, and should be made so. Forcing is bad in all ways. The fruit looks well, but it has no flavour. The plant is luxuriant, but it will not stand the cold wind. The inquirer so treated is very apt to turn sick.

I have already trespassed beyond my limits, and have not said half that occurs to me. It is no part of my business now to point out how the inquirer may avoid the pitfalls that lie in his way, nor to say how the enforced methods of investigation of which he is the helpless victim aggravate his difficulties. It is more to the point now that I draw your attention to the fact that many of the inquirer's difficulties are of his own making. They spring, as I have tried to show, from ignorance, from arrogance, from a biassed mind, from wilful or unconscious one-sidedness of view, from a fixed determination to seek for one (perhaps unattainable) end, from excitement and enthusiasm, and from lack of calm and dispassionate and patient painstaking investigation.

APPENDIX VI.

SPIRIT-IDENTITY—EVIDENCE OF DR. S. T. SPEER.*

To the Editor of the "Spiritualist."

SIR,—The enclosed spirit communications, given through the mediumship of a gentleman well known to yourself, are so remarkable as bearing upon the question of an outside independent intelligence and of identity, that my egotism in submitting them to the readers of the *Spiritualist* may possibly be pardoned.

The singular character of these communications lies in this: that perhaps upon no single point that could be mentioned is the medium so absolutely devoid of all ordinary information as upon matters musical; whilst the details here given of the lives of certain old ecclesiastical musicians, purporting to have influenced my son (a boy of fourteen), are so minute, and so absolutely accurate in every respect, that no living musician, albeit trained from childhood in a cathedral choir, could, without reference to a musical biography, afford such information.

I may add that, at present, every manifestation occurring in our circle has apparently for its object the establishment of the all-important question of *identity*.

STANHOPE T. SPEER, M.D., Edin.

Dudley Villa, Shanklin, Isle of Wight,

January 19th, 1874.

In order to render intelligible the following curious communications, it is necessary to premise that they relate to a son of Dr. Speer's, a boy of fourteen. From the earliest years he has displayed remarkable musical ability, and has

* *Spiritualist*, January 23, 1874.

attracted notice from, and raised the highest expectations in, all who are able to judge of his compositions. So large a number of communications having been given on various subjects, Dr. Speer requested the medium to ascertain, if possible, whether any musical spirits were concerned as the boy's guides. It was in reply to this request that the sub-joined information was given. The information given was unknown to the medium; indeed, it is so minute in detail that it could only be verified at some considerable trouble through a friend who consulted a biographical dictionary of music. The names given are such as would be unknown to any, except persons who were versed in the history of church music. The curious point is, that the compositions of the boy were markedly influenced by the peculiar style of the composer, who was declared from this independent source to be concerned with him at the time. Even more details than those here printed were given; but enough is quoted to show the tenor of the writings.

[*April 14th, 1873.*] *Can you give me any information about C——'s guides?*

C——n is principally guided by an earnest and very thoughtful spirit, who was in earth-life a member of that same family from which came Janet Nares Lydgate and John Lydgate, with whom you have communicated. His name was James Nares.

Was he a musician?

Yes; like C——n, he played with great skill upon the organ, and was organist to the king, and master of the royal choristers.

How came he to be attracted to C——?

Spirit guides are not always attracted. Sometimes they are selected for their own fitness. They are naturally apt to teach. Sometimes they are sent with a special commission. Sometimes they are picked out because they are able to supply that which is wanting in the character which they

are to train. Sometimes they themselves select a character which they wish to mould. This is a great pleasure to the higher spirits. Sometimes they desire, for their own spiritual progress, to be attached to a soul the training of which is irksome and difficult. They toil upward along with the soul. Sometimes they are attracted by pure affinity, or by remains of earth-love. The guide in this case was appointed because he too on earth was an accomplished musician at an early age. When organist at York, not yet twenty years old, he won great renown.

[April 20th, 1873, I have ascertained that the information is correct.] Where was Dr. Nares born?

At Stanwell. His father was under the Earl of Abingdon.
Who trained him?

Gates first, and then Pepusch. The former was master of the royal choristers.

Where was his first appointment?

As deputy to Dr. Pigott, at Windsor, and finally to Dr. Salisbury, at York. There it was that the old man scorned him as a child, and that he played a very difficult service, although at half a note below the pitch, so that he brought it into the key of seven sharps. He succeeded Dr. Green as organist to the king; and also filled the place of his old master, Gates. To him, friend, you owe the first introduction of expressive melody into church music.

Is he the only guide?

No; there are others. The Brothers Lawes.

Give me facts. I especially want tests of identity. The minutest facts.

They were pupils of old Caperario; sons of a Vicar-Choral of Canterbury they were in earth-life. William, the elder brother, was a friend of young King Charles I. He composed fantasias for the viol, songs, and masques. Henry, the younger, was a friend of Milton and Waller. Milton wrote the "Comus" for him, but the music was lost.

I never heard of them. Can you tell me when they lived ?

[After a pause.] Henry passed to the spirit land in 1662, William in 1645. .

[September 12th, 1873.] *I should like to have the scraps of information which have been lately given put into a connected shape. The great question in my mind is that of identity. Any minute points which you can give I will test. All you have said as yet is literally true.*

We will give every proof that is in our power. Indeed these minute details are worthless save for your conviction. Until that is established little more can be done. Therefore we devote ourselves to demonstrating the reality of those who, themselves unseen, communicate with you.

Benjamin Cooke is now greatly concerned with C——n, being attracted to him by similarity of taste. He in the life of earth was early developed as a musical genius. It was, I think, before he reached the age of fourteen years that he performed upon the organ of Westminster Abbey. Like James Nares, who has communicated to you, he was a pupil of Pepusch and of Gates, both of whom he succeeded in their work.

Is the spirit himself present ?

He is here.

Will he reply to me in detail ?

He will give you proofs. He was born in 1730, and had progressed under care of Pepusch so far that he was sub-organist of Westminster Abbey in 1742. He succeeded his master Pepusch as principal of the Academy of Ancient Music; and Gates as organist and lay-clerk of the Abbey, as well as master of the boys. He was then 32 years old. As a child he was a prodigy of musical talent, and therein has great sympathy with your boy.

Is he the Dr. Cooke whose name we found at the head of a chant ? The Christian name was not given.

Yes; he obtained the degree of Doctor of Music from the

University of Cambridge in 1775, when his anthem "Behold how good and joyful" was performed as exercise for his degree.

Did he write any considerable work ?

We do not know what you call a considerable work. It was as a secular composer that he most shone, though he was organist of the Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields. He wrote much for the Catch Club. Collin's "Ode to the Passions" was among his longer works. He passed over at the age of 63.

The other spirit is Wellesley, Earl of Mornington. He too was early developed. His father played the violin, and the child delighted in the instrument. He played it as soon as his infant hands could grasp it. At nine years old he composed, without any earthly instructor, a serenata for the violin. This was under spirit guidance.

And he had no masters at all ?

He composed so well that Gemminiani and Rosengrave could give him no assistance.

These are now concerned with C——n.

