

## THE DOCTRINE OF "RE-INCARNATION."

BY EMMA HARDINGE BRITTON.

To the Editor of *The Spiritual Scientist*:

In compliance with the wishes of numerous of my own correspondents and your admiring readers, I ask the privilege of presenting a few thoughts on a subject which has of late been, like many other obnoxious and repulsive *side issues*—ruthlessly grafted upon the pure and fruitful soil of Spiritualism. Excepting perhaps the infamy of what is popularly termed "Free love," no other theory seems so irrelevant, and certainly none more fraught with baneful tendencies than that of which I write, namely, the doctrine styled "Re-incarnation."

It may be asked, what have any side issues to do with Spiritualism at all, and why should any irrelevant vagaries of modern idealism be foisted on the world as the outgrowth of the Spiritual movement? To the latter question I reply,—because the side issues of which the earnest and thoughtful Spiritualist has the most cause to complain, have chiefly been promulgated by spiritual mediums, speakers, and writers, and hence, both within and without the ranks of Spiritualism their expression has naturally been identified with that of communion of spirits, which is authoritative only because it is based upon facts, but which may become as mischievous as any other fantastic creed or man-made dogma, when it is suffered to drift into the sphere of unsupported theory. To my apprehension, Spiritualism, in its strictest sense, is a demonstration of the soul's continued existence after death; a series of facts proving that under favorable circumstances, the disembodied spirit can communicate with the embodied; the disclosure of an immense range of new powers common to the human soul in both spheres of existence and the opening up of a vast vista of glorious possibilities concerning that soul's future destiny, entirely at variance with man's preconceived opinions of the hereafter as derived from credal faiths, or theologic teachings.

That these sublime revelations—based as they are on stubborn facts, and verified by the experiences of the best minds of the age—must involve the most radical and momentous changes of opinion concerning human law and conduct, no analytical thinker can deny, but that they necessarily imply that those who have been privileged in their reception shall unhesitatingly discard all that they have previously deemed true and sacred, and forthwith accept all the wild schemes and disruptive propositions which fanaticism or iceatiousness may think proper to announce as an "inspiration from the spirits," is an idea so transcendent of the modesty of nature and subversive of that order which has hitherto been regarded as Heaven's first law, that it seems a duty devolving upon those who have hoped most from Spiritualism, labored most faithfully in its behalf, and suffered most from the follies which have deformed its beauty and perverted its uses, to unite in the demand that its true nature and functions shall be more carefully analyzed, and its true genius more thoroughly defined and understood.

Leaving other "side issues," however, for the present, and limiting my attention to that one, which, above all seems most calculated to shake the Spiritualistic theory to its very foundation, and substitute in its place a doctrine as doleful and repulsive as the theologic faith in a final Heaven and Hell, I turn to the subject of Re-incarnation, which however innocuous it might be when presented to the world as the dream of a speculative theorist, startles us out of our brightest hopes and fairest prospects, when it comes to us from the lives of those who claim to speak from the very self same authority upon which our superstructure of Spiritual faith is reared.

Besides the voluminous writings of Allan Kardec, Miss Blackwell, and others claiming to be media for spirit teachings in Europe, we have in America the utterances of some of Mrs. Conant's spirits in the *Blazer of Light* communications, and last but not least, our much admired fellow-worker in the spiritual vineyard, Mrs. Cora Tappan.

Some twenty years ago, when Mrs. Tappan (then Cora Scott) became entranced, under the influence of spirits who manifested their claim to credence by an eloquence, power, and wisdom, far beyond the young medium's capacity, she taught the doctrine of endless *spiritual* progression; the possibility of any retrogression and repeatedly declared in

her inspired trance speeches, that there were various spheres of spiritual being in which all the requirements of the human soul for reform, purification, and development, would be fully satisfied. Among a vast amount of spiritualistic literature now in my possession, I have an abundant record of this lady's past utterances, and in not one is to be found the least allusion to the doctrine of Re-incarnation, or any return of the soul to earth except in the character of a ministering and communicating spirit. Judging by the superior excellence and marvellous character of her earliest addresses, these statements are fully as worthy of credit as those of her more mature years, and yet the latter wholly contradict the former, and that on a point so innately important as an item of religious belief, that I must be pardoned for citing them as startling illustrations of the shape in which this Re-incarnation theory is suddenly cropping up among us.

In some discourses given by Mrs. Tappan in London within the last few months, the controlling intelligences announce the doctrine of Re-incarnation in the broadest sense. In one address, of quite recent date, uttered in irregular rhymes, far inferior in style and tone to many of this lady's published poems, the speaker claims to be influenced by a spirit who alleges that he had first appeared on earth in the most ancient period of the Hindoo dynasty. After describing several consecutive "twelve births," in what we must infer were different forms of humanity, he proceeds to declare that he became an Egyptian, the one who planned and helped to build the Pyramids.

Then he appears as one of Egypt's Shepherd Kings, and after another succession of births, is re-incarnated in the person of Saul, Israel's rebellious king.

More successions of "twelve births" follow, after which the wandering soul becomes a Jewish child encountering and being blessed by Christ in Jerusalem, then a martyr to the Christian faith, then a Christian priest, then somebody else, and somebody else still, then Michael Angelo, busy in building St. Peter's at Rome, and after sundry other transmigrations not clearly stated, he becomes a poet and the author of those exquisite lines on God, so familiar to all readers of spiritualistic literature commencing,—

"O, Thou eternal one, whose presence bright  
All space doth occupy, all men in guide,  
Unchanged thro' time's all deriding flight,  
Thou only God, there is no Lord beside."

After sundry other wanderings detailed in rhymes, which too surely prove that his poetic effluvia has not improved since the above quoted sublime lines were written, the text goes on to say that through all these long centuries of re-incarnation, the main object of the pilgrimage has been to discover his twin soul, counterpart, or affinity: a final union with whom, completes his destiny, revolves him into a fully perfected being, and henceforth he becomes a saviour and tutelary spirit to the human race. Now if this remarkable address were put forth as a mere poetical rhapsody, the hearers and readers thereof might accept it for its simple worth in a literary point of view, but as I understand it, it is given as a statement of facts on the authority of a spirit controlling Mrs. Tappan, and not only giving through her lips, his own autobiography, but weaving it into a series of addresses preceding and succeeding it, all of which claim to teach, upon spiritual authority, the same doctrine of Re-incarnation.

If we are to lose our belief in the existence of the soul after death, upon the communion of spirits, and one of those methods of communion is trance speaking, mark the dilemma which the acceptance or rejection of this one medium's utterances alone would place us in?

Either we must believe that Mrs. Tappan or her spirits are deceiving us. If the medium is false, whom can we trust? If the spirit, are we in any better plight? Allen Kardec is alleged by his admirers to be no less trustworthy than Mrs. Tappan. Miss Blackwell is equally regarded as a mediumistic oracle. If they are false; why are not all media the same? If the media are all unreliable from whence comes our Spiritualism, and what becomes of our authority?

All our knowledge of spirit life and being, all that we have learned or think we have learned, during the last eventful twenty seven years, of what we have fondly deemed communion with the beloved ones gone before—depends for its acceptance on

the integrity of the media through whom the communications are received, on the truthfulness of the beings who actually do communicate. There can be no half measure about this proposition; as on a careful review of the characteristics which mark spirit communion, since its first advent through the Rochester knockings, it is a simple impossibility, I believe the mediums capable of originating all the immense mass and variety of test facts that have been given through them, often involving the private histories of thousands of persons with whom they could have had no acquaintance: either we must invalidate the authority of the communicating spirits, or come to the conclusion that we have not yet arrived at a sufficiently definite standard of truth in spirit communion—that we are at fault in the matter of what to reject and what to accept, and we are too often priding ourselves, upon having progressed beyond the ABC of our spiritual faith, we have not in reality learned fairly how to recognize the A when we see it.

Apologists for contradictory communications are perpetually reminding us that the immense diversity of life, character, and condition in the spirit world, like that upon our earth, is amply sufficient reason to account for contrariety in the communications. In matters of opinion and theory, even in descriptions of the spirit life and land itself, this is certainly true; but when media undertake to give us consecutive biographies of the spirit speaking through them, and boldly proclaim their identity with divers of earth's deceased notables, are we to believe or disbelieve them—which?

If we disbelieve—the whole fabric of our faith, as built upon the integrity of our media, is shaken. If we accept—human individuality, identity, together with the whole realm of earthly loves, friendships, and ties of kindred melt into the illusion of a fleeting dream. There is nothing real, nothing permanent; self-consciousness itself is a myth. Every successive death is an annihilation; and instead of a long and shining list of immortal saints and philanthropists, poets and painters, martyrs and heroes—earth's history is made up of the biographies of a few wandering sprites who keep stretching out their histories through all time, and reproducing themselves under all manner of protean forms and circumstances.

The hapless believer in Re-incarnation can be as little sure of himself or his own identity, as his most intimate acquaintances are for him. He has not a chance to know who he is himself; who he was yesterday or who he will be to-morrow; and as to the precious ties of parentage, or the divine impulses of family love, kindred and friendship, they are all floating emotions to be blotted out in the grave, and lost in new successions of new lives, new relationships, new deaths, and succeeding oblivions. The most remarkable and certainly not the least indefensible part of the Re-incarnationists' theory is, however, not only that they have no *facts* on which to ground their assertions, like the majority of their fellow believers in Spiritualism, but that they infer there must be countless millions of spirits communicating through other channels who have no knowledge of Re-incarnation, and even emphatically deny its truth.

Can the controlling spirits of the Re-incarnationists be the only ones enlightened on such a stupendous item of the soul's destiny?—an item which if not common to all, must be known to all—and that in realms where such changes must be perpetually going on as would render ignorance of the subject impossible?

If we may trust other media as reliable as those whose authority we have cited, Michael Angelo has been just as busy in America as in London; and yet, when questioned on the subject by his American friends, he can only remember having been engaged in building the Pyramids and fighting the battles of the Israelites as King Saul, when he vaticinates through the lips of one medium in London. Were I disposed to treat this subject from a ridiculous rather than a serious standpoint, I should find food enough for my purpose, even in the hazy attempts at a theory put forth by the best defender of the doctrine—Allan Kardec himself. As it is, I only desire to remove this fungus from the pure and wholesome soil on which we as Spiritualists have upreared our beautiful temple of faith, so fraught with hope in eternal progression, eternal love, individuality, and self-consciousness. It is with him alone, Mr. Editor, that I shall ask leave to offer a few more arguments on this subject in a future paper.

Written expressly for the Spiritual Scientist.  
A TEST.

BY C. A. CORSON.

The extreme caution practised of late by investigators against imposition in spiritual manifestations seems almost to have overleapt itself and fallen on the other side. It were perhaps well if a portion of the attention could be directed to the communications themselves rather than to their *modus operandi*. Communications may sometimes appear very trifling when well weighed and considered under their various phases. They might present truths unsuspected before, and well worthy of study. In our eagerness to get the house clean we sometimes sweep clean out of doors with the rubbish, pearls which often are discovered and forthwith appropriated by the meanest passer-by.

Apparent trifles become often the most significant facts in supplying the link to a chain of evidence; thus a message like the following for example, which was given sometime last winter at a seance at Cascade, and through the mediumship of Mrs. Mary Andrews, brings with itself such incontrovertible proof of spirit-life and continued activity of memory after death, that we hardly need further assurance of genuineness,—the thing speaking so absolutely for itself.

Among the usual manifestations that generally take place in Mrs. Andrews' dark circles—spirit lights, voices, raps touches, etc a voice was heard, addressing a member of the circle, and purporting to come from a lately deceased relative, saying: "tell—that peddlers are not as troublesome here as they are with you." The message was at first a perfect riddle, both to the medium and the party addressed, and was allowed to pass by almost unheeded. The person in charge of it delivered it however to the absent one to whom it was sent and the mystery was explained. It seems that between the deceased relative and that member of the family whom the message concerned there had been a short time before his death a discussion about the annoyance peddlers occasioned and by what means they might be got rid of. "They come so often," was the complaint, and are so persistent in obtruding themselves with their sundry wares, that I don't know what to do. "Why—" was the reply, "just ask them if they have a license, and you will see how fast they will make off." The advice was followed and with signal success; the whole circumstance meanwhile causing but a moment's merriment at the expense of discomfited and unlicensed peddlers. In fact the occurrence seemed of such little import that no farther mention was made of it, and it would probably have been entirely forgotten but for the subsequent communication reverting to it again.

Here then we have a case wholly unknown to the medium through whom it became manifest, and to the party in whose charge the message was given, and which can be laid neither at the door of mind-reading, doppelganger power, odic force or confederate help. It illustrates moreover the more serene view Spiritualism takes of after-life, namely that the human soul is merely translated from the realm of the visible to the realm of the invisible with unimpaired memory and all its mortal and mental faculties. Viewed rightly, this apparently trifling occurrence, which sceptics might sneer at as too unimportant to occupy the attention or memory of an immortal spirit, becomes of great moment when we consider that the deceased relative could not have chosen a more convincing proof of his after-life-interest in the welfare of those he loved on earth, than just that seemingly trivial fact known only to him and to her to whose mind he wished to recall it. Ponderous truths pompously delivered and generalities which can be made to fit almost any case are alike suspicious; they may be spirit-messages or not: there is nothing to assure us of it whilst a simple incident like the above, carries conviction with its self-evidence.

In all warfare a change of tactics becomes sometimes advisable: if instead of gadding, tying, caging, mediums which of itself must be a hindrance to pleasant conditions, we would let them alone and give them free play, relying a little more upon their honor, wishing to accept the heap of sand the gold mine must of necessity give out, for the sake of the small parcel of pure metal it may contain, and from cavilous investigators become silent and careful observers, watching attentively all the peculiarities of a seance, we might perhaps glean truths which from mere sparks might become stars and grow a world to us.

What we just now stand in particular need of, is a little less

WRITTEN FOR THE SCIENTIST.

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**I**N MY last article I gave a surface view of the necessity, if not the actual duty, imposed upon Spiritualists to investigate, and *prove* either the truth or falsity of the doctrine of Re-incarnation, if they would have acceptance from the world, as teachers of those principles of spiritual existence, which so pre-eminently distinguish the philosophy of Spiritualism from the dogmas of Theology.

The very corner-stone of Spiritualism is FACT, or the substitution of knowledge for faith. We who are Spiritualists do not surely believe, but absolutely *know* that the spirits of men once embodied on earth, live and communicate. We know this, first: from a set of sensuous demonstrations for which no earthly cause can be assigned, but for which the demonstrations themselves render us good and sufficient reason to attribute to spiritual beings. Next: because an immense mass of intelligence has been given through modes which mortals could not themselves have originated; and finally: because the intelligence so rendered has been identified with certain individuals once embodied upon earth and proving their claims to be acknowledged as its authors by the tests of special individuality which mark the communications.

Now if the mere philosophy of Spiritualism were to be arrayed against that of Christianity, Buddhism, or any other form of theologic faith, it would have to depend for its acceptance on the reasonableness of its theory or the credibility of its authors: but Spiritualism cannot thus be pitted against faiths whose existence is dependent upon a past record. The very lynch-pin of Spiritualism is its ability to supply those sensuous, demonstrable, and ever present facts, in which every form of mere credal belief is wanting, and for the lack of which they are crumbling into dust, and losing the adherence of the most analytical minds of the age. When therefore a mere theory is propounded from the very camp of Spiritualism, and those whom the world has been accustomed to look to as the apostles of a doctrine based upon facts, and presented with demonstrable evidences of its truth, undertake to use their facts as a cloak to cover their theories—Spiritualism retrogrades into the same realms of shadowy belief which enshroud so many forms of sectarian faith, and presents no more claims of acceptance from the reasoning mass of investigators than Christianity or Buddhism.

If Spiritualism is to advance beyond its phenomenal facts to the dignity of a philosophy, or the inspiration of a religion, it must not lose sight of its harmonious relation to its phenomena, nor descend from its lofty vantage ground of knowledge, into the vale of misty theory. Allan Kardec, the great apostle of the doctrine of Re-incarnation, while giving some of his opinions upon the authority of spirits, does not hesitate to base his central idea of Re-incarnation upon theories, which he commends to his readers' acceptance, because he deems them reasonable, and assumes that they alone can account for the order of creation. His devoted follower, Miss Blackwell, no less than his sympathizers in America (few though their numbers be), are for the most part mediums, and propound their Re-incarnation theory upon the authority of what they claim to be spirit teachings. The chief, in fact the only difficulty in this case, is this: Those who have been accustomed to find in the plain, demonstrable facts of spirit communion a complete solution to all their theologic problems, and an anchor of assurance on which to rest their hopes of immortal progress and happiness, find themselves again entangled in the mazes of contradictory theory by this new feature of spiritualistic revelation, and as remarked in my former paper, must either discredit the media whom they have been accustomed to rely upon as heaven-inspired messengers of truth, or question the worth of spirit communion as a source of information at all.

It is in answer to very many earnest souls, faithfully seeking for the truth and nothing but the truth, that I have been induced to call attention to the groundless character of the testimony which the apostles of the Re-incarnation theory rely upon, not one item of which affords the profound analyst a shadow of evidence that their theories are correct.

The few mediums through which this doctrine is now communicated, have been many years before the public, and their

earliest utterances imply a faith wholly at variance with their present creed. They used to teach the souls' progress in the spheres and not on earth. They used to teach, that knowledge came through inspiration from spirits—not that spirits were obliged to come to earth to gain knowledge. These, and various other items of a similar kind, should induce those who insist upon pinning their faith upon mediumistic utterances, to inquire which, is the most reliable,—the inspirations of young, untutored minds, which like tablets of virgin wax, are free from the lines of previous impressions, and ready to receive whatever the new and original ideality of the spirit would care to communicate: or the vague opinions which float in the air around the atmosphere of every new reform, and from time to time find lodgment in the minds of those psychologic subjects who are susceptible of impressions from any source—mundane or spiritual.

Again: which should the seekers for truth rely on,—the fantastic theories of a few, whose present teachings are antagonistic to their former utterances, or the world-wide realm of intelligence which has distinguished and characterized the communications of tens of thousands of spirits during the earlier years of the great American outpouring? What one can make out from the vague, incoherent, and inconsistent theories of the Re-incarnationists, is not very likely to make many converts to their doctrines, nor to embarrass, for any great length of time, the unity and proficiency of the spiritual movement; still most propagandists of an idea are enthusiasts, whom it may not be possible, even if it were necessary, to convert from error. Such was Allan Kardec; such do I firmly believe to be Miss Anna Blackwell. Both undoubtedly were, and are sincere; and all who are candid seekers for truth are not only justified in analyzing their doctrines, but in doing so, set an example which not a few of the fossils of conservatism would do well to imitate.

Having done so myself and found the theory of Re-incarnation, to my apprehension, as well as that of hundreds perhaps thousands of others, a doctrine more loathsome, horrible, and repulsive than even annihilation itself, I, and those who think with me naturally begin to sift the evidences of its truth, and finding them theoretical merely, would gladly dismiss them all together as the quiet dream of a fevered sleep, did we not find the hateful shadow thrown across the very path whose radiance has so lately beamed out upon our darkened way, from the sun of spiritual revelation. To disprove the doctrine of Re-incarnation, however, it does not seem necessary to sound its shallows, nor analyze its fallacies. Its chief enemy is Spiritualism—that is, Spiritualism properly understood, and its facts carefully separated from the theories of its adherents.

Before I close I shall ask permission to add a few citations from some of those records which, as being the first we have received from the spirit world in this generation, and coming when our minds were utterly unbiassed, in fact, in total ignorance of the spirit world altogether, or even what a spirit truly was, may be taken as of far more value than our present heterogeneous mass of revelation given on the authority of "thus saith the spirit" and uttered by those, who having grown familiar with spiritual things, think they can venture to interpolate where once they feared to tread.

In 1838, M. Alphonse Cahagnet published a work entitled "The Celestial Telegraph, or Secrets of the Life to Come," being a series of revelations given through several excellent somnambulists, whom M. Cahagnet magnetized for medical purposes, but with no view of obtaining the wonderful and startling intelligence which his subjects in the magnetic state volunteered.

M. Cahagnet's testimony is all the more reliable as he entered upon his work as a magnetizer with no preconceived ideas of spiritual existence, nor the slightest expectation of receiving the astounding views of spirit life which his "Ecstasies" communicated. All was new to him, and original with them. They often manifested in the presence of the most distinguished and learned visitors. They were tested severely, far more than any of our media in the present day, and while describing the spirits of deceased persons in such vivid terms and with such correct minutæ, as to convince every investigator of the truth of what they discredited, they also gave an abundance of detail concerning the life of the spirit, the

spheres of spirit—existence, the scenery, houses, occupation, and destiny of the human soul, the nature of God, &c.

In all these descriptions, not one word of Re-incarnation is ever hinted at; on the contrary, when believers, or possibly mere questioners on that subject, asked the communicating spirits whether it was a truth, or if the soul was ever again reborn in mortal clay, the answer of EVERY SPIRIT through every somnambulist, was invariably and emphatically in the negative. Some spirits, and especially those who had been for centuries in the spheres, or "in Heaven," as the phrase went, laughed at the idea of Re-incarnation, argued against its possibility, and wondered why mortals would cherish such a ridiculous and unnatural theory. Like the great majority of the spirits who have subsequently communicated in the American outpouring, the intelligence, through Cabagnets' Ecstasies, taught that all knowledge *came from* the spheres of spirit life through inspiration: that progress was amply provided for in the spheres, and could be far better ulminated there, than on earth.

Not to elaborate farther on this one point of testimony, let us recall the teachings of Dr. Justinus Kerner's Ecstasies and we shall find them exactly to the same purpose. Similar views are propounded through the inspirations of Malame Hauffe, the celebrated Seeress of Prevorst, and lastly, when the spirits in America gave their first communications, and that to the most receptive, unbiased, and therefore reliable media of the day,—they taught universally, one mortal life and death for all; progress through the spirit spheres even for the very lowest and most degraded of souls. They frequently brought spirits to circles for teaching, and with a view of aiding them to progress. They constantly related the results of these progressions, and gladdened our hearts with narratives of progressive lives in which the spirits were represented as having undergone ages of experience in the spirit spheres, before the consummation of purification and happiness could be attained.

Let it be remembered that in our first communications with spirits ~~we were~~ far more critical in demanding tests and analyzing evidence than we are at present. Without citing farther authority, therefore, we who are Spiritualists, have the right to assume that Modern Spiritualism in its purest, most demonstrable and reliable phases, is a complete refutation of the assumptions of the Re-incarnationists, and without applying the scalpel knife of criticism to the many fallacies they teach, it is enough to say they pretend that the spirits know nothing and can learn nothing in the spheres, and have to be born again on earth, to gain knowledge no less than to achieve happiness, that their temporary residences in spirit life are passed in spheres of erraticity or wandering, where *they only know enough to learn they must be born again before they can advance one step farther*. Comment on such a theory as this, in the light of our modern spiritual revelation is unnecessary.

It is almost humiliating to think that such stuff shall be put forth among our spiritual literature, enunciated from spiritual rostrums, and remain uncontradicted by writers on the spiritual philosophy, for fear of offending somebody, or stepping on some eminent Spiritualist's favorite corn. The history of civilization is the history of INSPIRATION. Poetry, painting, music, sculpture, the martyrs of religious history, the heroes of national history, all providential lives owe their genius, beauty, and strength to the light of inspiration; and when inspiration comes from the earth to the spirit world, instead of from the spirit world to the earth, we may believe that the sun of our solar system derives his resplendent beams from the shimmer of our street gas lamps, and borrows the flicker of earth's tallow candles to feed the immensity of his realms of flaming glory!

In some future article I shall revert to this subject as an additional evidence of the folly—nay, the manifest injury—which Spiritualists perpetrate when they surfer their great and glorious revelation to be drifted about by the winds of idle, theoretical speculation; and that for fear the sovereign individuality of some great I, should be hurt by the presumption that Spiritualism needs any other definition or limit than his or her opinion. Already we have seen every folly under the sun, even vice and rude obscenity, thrust before the community under the garb of that Spiritualism which should be synonymous with purity; and now we are to see it mistaken

for a mass of stuff more abhorrent in many of its teachings than the diemonic theories of Calvinism. Is it not time that we should begin to understand what Spiritualism is not, as well as what it is? Hasten true Spiritualists to the rescue, if you would be found worthy of the high and exalted privilege of ranking as soldiers in that army which does battle against folly, fanaticism, vice, and error, with the sword of Truth forged in Heaven, and lent by angels to mortals in the shape of Spiritualism.

## PHENOMENAL

### A SITTING WITH MRS. THAYER.

MR. ANTHONY HIGGINS, JR., of whose ability and sincerity as an investigator Spiritualists need no assurance, has made the *amende honorable* in the cause of Mrs. Thayer, the "flower-medium." About a year ago he threw discredit on her manifestations, but recently "the severe logic of the birch-rod of facts" has convinced him that in this he did her injustice. On the 9th instant he attended a sitting of the results of which he says:

Flowers, roots, mosses, mould mixed with cray, angle-worms and insects came upon the table; and said table was literally covered with fresh and dewy products of Flora, among them being many rarities. They seemed thrown from all directions, and struck the table with considerable force. One branch of *nr* struck me *a la* Donnybrook. It weighed at least between two and three pounds. My mental order for a rose-bush and roots was responded to by the mysterious agent at work. The amount of material on the table at the end of the sitting caused Mrs. Thayer to exclaim: "That's quite a load for one woman."

Whoever or whatever it is that commits petty larceny on the florists of Boston and suburbs, I am satisfied—though not applying the crucial-test of Storer, Wetherbee *et al*—that Mrs. Thayer does not either through herself or co-tenderates introduce or in anyway assist, save as a medium, in the production of flowers and plants at her remarkable seances.

Having doubted the lady's honesty I take this method of apologizing for an error of judgment and thank her for her courtesy, forbearance, and unexpected kindness.

### THE NEW SOUTHERN MEDIUM.

DR. BENJ. F. SHEPARD, a native of Savannah and belonging to one of the best known families of Georgia, is the gentleman of whose "impromptu mediumship" we recently gave some account. A correspondent of the Banner gives the following account of a sitting with the medium on the evening of April 4th.

The cabinet was examined by the audience, who pronounced it to be all right. The Doctor was then bound with ropes, his wrists were tied behind his back, and his arms also tied firmly. The gentleman who tied the Doctor is an old sailor, having followed the sea for fifteen years. He consumed twenty-two minutes in tying. The door of the cabinet was then closed, and in fifty-eight seconds the ropes were thrown out of the cabinet, and the medium walked out free.

The ropes were put back into the cabinet, the cabinet door closed, and in the short time of ten seconds—the door being reopened—we found the medium firmly tied, hands under the chair, and feet to the spokes of the chair. The door was again closed, and the medium walked out free in the remarkable time of seven seconds. He returned into the cabinet and was tied in at least twenty different positions in about two minutes. The medium was tied down to a chair and the knots sealed with the private signet of one of the audience, your correspondent was requested to go into the cabinet, when I did, when to my great surprise, the medium's coat was immediately placed on me and mine on him.

My right wrist was now handcuffed to the medium's left, and my left to his right; we then entered the cabinet together, and in about ten seconds the handcuffs fell off the medium, and yet he did not move, neither did I hear a sound.

Chains were next placed on the medium, locked with seven padlocks, and the handcuffs ran through the chains, and both of his hands were handcuffed. We then searched the medium at his own request, but not a key could we find. We then formed a circle around him, but did not have to sit long, for in one minute we heard handcuffs, locks, and chains fall upon the floor. We carefully examined them all, but they were all unlocked and the medium free. I brought with me a solid iron ring, which I proposed for the medium to ask the spirits to place on his arm while I held his hand. He consented to make the trial, and in two minutes from the time I