



The First Twenty Years of American Spiritualism.

I.

IT may well be that the philosophic minds in each generation of men are "few and far between," and that the cares, interests, and dangers of the day are sufficient to occupy the thoughts of most of us, leaving no time for speculation even as to the nearly immediate future. If this be so in general, it is probably more true of the men of our own than of other times, on account of the multiplicity and endless variety of modern life, of which the daily newspaper, with its telegrams from all parts of the world, its advertisements, promising us a easy and cheap supply of every conceivable need, its flashy superficial articles, in which some smart young scribbler with a cigar in his mouth settles the policy of Empires, its reviews of books on all imaginable subjects which the reviewer knows nothing about, its "own correspondents" writing about what they do not understand, describing what they have not seen, and sending as valuable private information the gossip of *laquais de place* and the surmises of flunkies—may be taken as the normal and visible type and expression. There are so many things moving and buzzing so fast all around us, that it requires a strong effort, stronger than most of the poor children of Adam nowadays are equal to, to think seriously about anything—and if time hangs heavy on them at some rare intervals which may break the universal round of frivolous excitement, is there not a whole library of the lightest possible literature ready to their hands to beguile their languid leisure, without calling on them even for the very slightest amount of mental effort—which would indeed be thrown away upon such productions? But if we have any thoughtful minds among us which occupy themselves about the future, it may well be supposed that their speculations must have been long ago turned to the future of America, especially, of course, of North America, the one country in the world in which the physical advantages

which are divided among the rest seem to be assembled in larger proportions and more boundless magnificence than elsewhere, and where large streams of emigration from the older nations of Europe, streams which would have been enough ere this to have founded half a dozen kingdoms under ordinary circumstances, seem to lose themselves in swelling the mightiest political unity which history has yet seen. The power, the population, the resources, the political system, and the activity of America, when we consider how short the time is since the Union came into existence, and how much room for its expansion yet remains, form a phenomenon such as the civilized world has not yet witnessed, and it cannot but be that the ardent lover of human progress and social advancement, in the true sense of those much abused terms, must feel that sort of enthusiasm with regard to the prospects of civilization in America which more than a quarter of a century ago moved the philosophical spirit of De Tocqueville in contemplating the Union under its simply political aspect.

We have lately alluded to the many social and political elements in European society under its present conditions which may seem to direct our eyes, almost in despair of any Christian revival at home, to the as yet partially unformed world of America, as at least admitting of the possibility of better things than many are inclined to hope for on this side of the Atlantic Ocean. What meets our eye is not altogether encouraging, though America is at least free from many of the bad traditions which haunt the social and political atmosphere of Europe. How is it as to religion? If we turn to the more strictly religious prospects of America, and endeavour to give ourselves some account of the elements out of whose combination and development the religion of the great nation of the West—if as a nation, it is ever to have a religion—must be formed, we are met by two remarkable phenomena, among a crowd of other noticeable facts on which we shall have no time to linger at present. Strange indeed is the confusion of creeds in the American Union, stranger still are the wild excesses of delusion which seem natural and ordinary in that land, where everything is exaggerated beyond the sober proportions and tamer outlines with which the Old World is familiar; but amid all this wilderness of rank spiritual vegetation there are two very dissimilar landmarks which force themselves on the attention. The one is the majestic form of the ancient

Catholic Church, rising silently and tranquilly yet with a growth of singular rapidity and wonderful vigour, adding day by day shrine to shrine, congregation to congregation, bishopric to bishopric, at one with itself, at one with the Churches of the Old World under the obedience of the Vicar of Christ, at one with all history, the same to-day as in the days of the Apostles and of the Martyrs. The other is not a form, for shape and consistency it has none—

Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum,

—the mass, huge and monstrous indeed, which goes by the pilfered name of Spiritualism, whose growth has been even more rapid than that of American Catholicism itself, and which numbers as its children some eleven millions of Americans, most of whom, though not all, have probably become its converts from some form or other, however nominal, of Christianity. The eleven millions we consider to be an exaggerated estimate, formed by counting every one who has at all dabbled in Spiritualism as a disciple ; but still Spiritualism is a portentous growth. It is but little more than twenty years old, it is if not exclusively, at least preeminently, American in origin and development, it differs from all other forms of error in resting for support almost exclusively on what are deemed to be preternatural manifestations, and what in a Christian view can be considered only as the result of the letting loose upon mankind of inventions of the powers of Evil new, if not in substance, at least in the degree to which they are there permitted, and it claims—as far as it puts forward any claim at all beyond the actual phenomena which it has developed,—to be nothing less than a new religion which is to supersede all others and finally perfect mankind.

II.

It is in many respects a gain to the cause of truth and religion that American Spiritualism has found an historian whose devotion to its cause cannot be questioned, and whose honesty, industry, and accuracy in collecting and setting forth her materials are above all suspicion. We are accustomed in this country—we may almost say, in this hemisphere—to hear of Spiritualism chiefly in its isolated manifestations, or, at the best, when some very remarkable phenomena or some very decided scandals draw the attention of the public to the general question through its connection with some one prominent person.

Such was the case a year or two ago, when a jury of Englishmen had to decide on the claims of Mr. Home to a large sum of money, which had been bestowed upon him by a lady whom he had persuaded to receive through him communications which professed to come from her deceased husband. Now and then a sensational article in a newspaper or magazine revives the old question as to the reality of the phenomena on which the spiritualistic cause rests and flourishes; but we are seldom led to consider the system, or movement, or whatever else it ought to be called, as a whole. It may be said, indeed, that it is better left in obscurity, especially at moments, when, for the time, the excitement concerning the matter seems to be dying away. Unfortunately, however, the "movement" is almost always going on, though it does not court publicity, and its direct results, the bewilderment and degradation of souls, and the ruin of the faith of not a few Christians, and, we fear, of the moral sense of many more, do not abate in their influence because newspapers are silent about it.

A certain amount of good may be done by considering the subject in its history and development, and for the facts of the case we can scarcely wish for any better guide in our investigations than the late work of Miss Emma Hardinge. It is a work which on many accounts we cannot recommend to the general reader—and we have some comfort in the reflection that any reader of these pages who may be tempted to attack it simply by the fact that he is recommended not to do so, will find it, like ourselves, very heavy and tedious; partly, no doubt, on account of the author's style, which is but moderately attractive, partly on account of the lumbering and pretentious language in which it seems natural for spiritualistic writers to veil their conceptions, partly, again, from the great sameness which pervades the multitudinous manifestations which are recorded, and, once more, from the alternating monstrosity and childishness which characterize these manifestations. Still, we may take Miss Hardinge's book as a true record in the main; true, we mean, in its statements as to the rise and progress of Spiritualism, the darker side and the apparent failures of which she is too honest to conceal; true also, we may add, as to details, even with regard to the alleged facts for which a preternatural origin is claimed, with that general truth which belongs to what is witnessed to by a multitude of human witnesses, some of whom may be deceived as to particulars, and some of whom may be deceivers and

impostors, without affecting the general result of the testimony of the whole, as to which we do not intend to raise any question here. "Spiritualists" like Miss Emma Hardinge admit that there have been instances of detected and acknowledged imposture in the course of the movement, and it is but reasonable to suppose that there has been a great deal more imposture which has not been detected. But we have no intention to argue now that these admitted or suspected instances of trickery are enough to invalidate the general testimony on which rests the reality of the phenomena which have produced so mighty an effect on the minds of so many millions, including many persons of much distinction, and many whose first idea of Spiritualism was that it was imposture from beginning to end.

Miss Hardinge's book (*Modern American Spiritualism, a Twenty Years Record of the Communion between Earth and the World of Spirits*. New York, 1870. Second Edition.) is a large bulky octavo, closely printed, of more than five hundred pages, many of which, containing documents, are occupied by very small and compact type. It contains forty-nine chapters, the last of which chronicles the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of what are called the "Rochester knockings," on the 31st of March, 1868. These "knockings," then, are considered as the first dawn of the Spiritualistic movement, and certainly it is a fact of momentous significance that that movement should have grown to such great proportions between 1848 and 1868. But the record of its progress is unlike that of any other similar phenomenon in history. It has a beginning indeed, or at least, a sort of beginning, but there is little connection between that beginning and the subsequent movement. A river rises on the breast of some great mountain, and grows to be a rill, a brook, a stream, and at last, by continual onflow and the accession of kindred rivulets, it may become

The bulwark of some mighty realm,
Bear navies to and fro
With monarchs at their helm :

—you can trace its course and ascertain its continuity. It is not so with Spiritualism. A cloud rises out of the sea into a sky of unsullied blue, where a moment before there had not been the slightest streak of white to fleck the heavens from the horizon to the zenith, and by and by the whole expanse above us is covered with rainclouds, which have come we know not whence,

and of which that little fleece may have been the harbinger, but to which it certainly has not given birth. This is the history of the strange phenomena before us—the history of an overclouding sky, not of the onward march of a river from its fountainhead to its mouth. These phenomena present themselves, if not altogether simultaneously at different points in the American Union, at all events, in a great number of cases, independently and unconnectedly; and this comparative independence has been preserved throughout in the main to such a degree as to make it difficult to give to their history any connection. They have their first start, and appear at first to belong to certain places and persons, and then they rush in upon us from every side, and in helter skelter confusion. There is a certain connection, to begin with, between the “manifestations” and the earliest “mediums,” but after a time manifestations and mediums are developed everywhere and anywhere. Moreover, it is confessed by Miss Hardinge, that from the very beginning, Spiritualism has resisted every attempt at organization. It has been a very capricious power, failing its best adepts at critical times, notably when there has been some public challenge and arranged examination of its claims, and it has certainly not succeeded in uniting its votaries, except in the negation of certain divine truths.

All this has made the historian's task somewhat difficult. Miss Hardinge has been obliged to adopt a geographical distribution for her chapters. After giving some space to an account of the beginning of the manifestations at Rochester, and the early history of the first “mediums,” she devotes three or four chapters to the rise of Spiritualism in Auburn, and then in New York itself; in which places the first impulse seems certainly to have been given by the presence of the heroines of the “Rochester knockings.” The next ten chapters give Miss Hardinge's account of Spiritualism in New York and the Eastern States; six more contain the history of the movement in New England. We have then a few chapters on some of the darker shades of Spiritualism, the “Mountain Cove” and “New Motor Power” phenomena, and the impostures and the recantations which have stained the history. A chapter on Pennsylvania follows, then ten or eleven on the Western States, Ohio, Indiana, Missouri (chiefly St. Louis), and the authoress then takes us into the South, the Territories, California, Canada, and South America. A few

more chapters conclude the volume. Everywhere, as a general rule, the phenomena are more or less the same, and to this, as well as to the want of coherence and method in the development of the movement, must, as we have said, be attributed a good deal of the tediousness of the volume. The general honesty of the writer, as we have hinted, cannot be doubted, though we shall have to point to instances in which she is, we conceive, unfair and illogical. Moreover, the reader who seeks in her pages for anything that might be called the philosophy or theory of Spiritualism, will be disappointed. It is a shallow as well as a patchy book; and we must confess that it gives us the impression that there are blacker and fouler things which fairly belong to the history of Spiritualism which the author might have told us if she had dared.

III.

It is obvious that so shapeless a mass of materials does not admit of being described succinctly by its salient points and vital elements, and that so unconnected a story cannot be abridged. We must content ourselves with casual selections, which may show the character of the phenomena. In the first place, the remark will occur to any one familiar with the literature of ancient or mediæval *diablerie*, that the thing itself which goes by the name of Spiritualism is nothing new. What is new, is the abundance and continuance of the manifestations, which appear to have been let loose in America from the restraining bonds which have held them in check in the old world and in earlier times; new also is the readiness of a large number of persons calling themselves Christians to look upon them as the evidences of a fresh and saving revelation, rather than as the struggles of Satan and his emissaries to perplex, harass, and delude mankind. The first "knockings" which disturbed the Fox family at Rochester after the disappearance of the mysterious pedlar in 1848, are very much like the old story of the "rapping spirit" at Tedworth in the reign of Charles the Second, a full account of which has been given by Görres.* In general the same may be said of the other manifestations. We may fairly doubt whether any of them have not been anticipated in earlier times. Any one glancing even slightly at the evidence accumulated in vast quantities in regard to the exorcisms of possessed or obsessed persons, will be struck by

* *Mystik*. We may quote the French Translation by M. C. de Ste. Foi, t. iii., l. v., ch. 21.

the similarity of the facts mentioned in these trials or causes to the facts of the Spiritualist movement. This holds true of the sounds of knocking, rapping, throwing down heavy weights, and the rush, as if of a multitude of bodies, whereas nothing is seen; of the sudden attacks made (in obsession) upon certain persons, who are lifted, thrown, or held by some unseen power, and whose limbs are sometimes suddenly and violently contorted; of the oaths, blasphemies, and vile language used by the persons under such influences, who are either not conscious of so speaking, or who do so under force and against efforts of their own.

The apparently most marvellous results of Spiritualism, such as the knowledge of things at a distance, the display of other knowledge which the "medium" had previously no means of acquiring, such as of foreign or ancient languages, the production of beautiful sounds, the bringing of birds or flowers to places where they could not have been expected naturally, and a number of other manifestations of the same character, remind us of a whole class of similar facts connected with obsession and possession, or with those unlawful dealings with the unseen world which are so often denounced in Scripture, and which are forbidden by the Church. It is clear on the face of the history of Spiritualism, when we read it in the light of Scripture and Church history, that it is the human side of this double movement which has the clearest marks of novelty about it, and that if in the manifestations themselves there appears to be anything unprecedented, we are still not justified in concluding that what is thus novel is the consequence of any change that has been permitted in the relations between the seen and the unseen world, while the more natural and obvious explanation remains that the frivolous laxity and childishness of our time makes men more ready than of old to play irreverently with phenomena of this kind, and that the level of belief and right feeling among many who call themselves Christians, has sunk low enough to make them accept without repugnance an influence which has so direct a tendency to undermine, not only the positive doctrines of Christianity, but also much of the moral foundation on which all pure and severe virtue must rest. We have no grounds for supposing that the whole development of Spiritualism, as it has manifested itself in the last twenty years in America, is unprecedented—except in its adaptation to the notions and tastes of the Americans of the nineteenth century—or that it is in principle

different from what has existed—unchronicled in the main—in ancient times among the heathen, or what exists at the present day, in unchristianized countries where the powers of Evil have never been cast out by the presence of the living Church of God. If we add to the novelty of the welcome reception of spiritualism the other novelty of its publicity, and of its immense and rapid diffusion in consequence, we have probably nearly reached the limits of what is really new in the whole movement.

As we may well believe that the presence of the Church in her full growth curbs and subdues the powers of Evil in any part of the world, so it is also natural to suppose that the conditions of the regenerate life begun in holy Baptism, and the other privileges of a Christian soul, especially the possession of the gift of faith, calm down and keep under many instincts of our fallen nature which are fostered by an unchristian atmosphere, and especially the craving after unlawful communications with the unseen world, and the disposition to yield to the fascination of such communications if they should present themselves. Such, at all events, is the effect produced on the mind by a perusal of the history of the earliest mediums, the daughters of a Mr. Fox at Rochester. The knockings and other noises which were first heard are exactly what are related in many other instances of "haunted houses," especially after murder has been committed; though it is fair to say that in the case in question there was no satisfactory evidence to prove the fact of the supposed murder when investigation was at last made by digging at the spot indicated. The children got so familiar with the knocks as to have no fear of them, and after a time the youngest discovered that "it" (the spirit) "could see as well as hear," by snapping her fingers and making other motions in the air without noise, calling out, "*Here, Mr. Splitfoot, do as I do.*" A more significant and characteristic invocation could hardly be imagined. It was some time after this that they hit on the plan of making the "rappers" answer questions by the alphabet, and began to hold communications with spirits of all sorts.

Sentences [says Miss Hardinge] were spelled out by which were learned the astounding facts that not only Charles Rosna, the supposed murdered pedlar, but hosts of spirits, good and bad, high and low, could, under certain conditions not understood, and impossible for mortals yet to comprehend, communicate with earth; that such communication was produced through the force of spiritual and human magnetism in chemical affinity; that the varieties of magnetism in different individuals afforded "medium power" to some, and denied it

to others . . . that the spirits chiefly concerned in the inauguration of this telegraphy were philosophic and scientific minds, many of whom had made the study of electricity and other imponderables a speciality in their earth life, and prominent among them the name of Benjamin Franklin was frequently given. . . . Numerous spirit friends of the family, and those who joined in their investigations, gladdened the hearts of their astonished relatives by direct and unlooked for tests of their presence. They came spelling out their names, ages, and various tokens of identity correctly, and proclaiming the joyful tidings that they all "still lived," "still loved," and with the tenderness of human affection, and the wisdom of a higher sphere of existence, watched over and guarded the beloved ones who had mourned them as dead, with all the gracious ministry of Guardian Angels. The spirits recommended the assembling of the friends of the family together in harmonious meetings, which have since obtained the name of "spirit circles," and at these the practice of animal magnetism to some of the parties present was suggested, as a means of evoking the phenomenon of clairvoyance (p. 39).

All this, however, did not at first go down with the Fox family. The movement began in trouble and perplexity. "Fanatical religionists of different sorts had forced themselves into the family gatherings, and the wildest scenes of rant, cant, and absurdity often ensued. Opinions of the most astounding nature were hazarded concerning the object of this movement, some determining that it was a "millennium," and looking for the speedy reign of a personal Messiah and the equally speedy destruction of the wicked. Boisterous sounds accompanied the fervent prayers of the ranters, and wild confusion, in which invisible actors played their weird parts, added to the distraction of the already tortured mediums." This is the account of the historian herself. There could be no mistake, then, about the character of the manifestations—at least, there would have been no mistake to a sound Christian mind; but though the Fox family "constantly prayed that this great bitterness might pass from them," though "they did not wish to be mediums, and abhorred the notoriety, scandal, and persecution which this fatal gift had brought upon them, and when warned that the spirits would leave them, they protested their delight at the announcement, and expressed their earnest desire that it might be fulfilled"—still their reluctance seems to have been on account of the trouble which their connection with the "spirits" brought them into at a time when the public mind was not yet familiarized with the movement, and so was instinctively given to question and even oppose it, rather than on account of religious

principle and sober reverent Christian feeling. And so it came about that when their wish was granted, they almost at once began to be sorry that it had been expressed. The condition insisted on by the "spirits," was that the girls should challenge a public investigation into the truth of the manifestations.

The spirits announced that in twenty minutes they would depart, and exactly as that time expired they spelled out, "We will now bid you all farewell," when the raps entirely ceased. The family expressed themselves "glad to be rid of them." The friends present vainly tried to obtain by solicitations, made, as it would seem, to empty air, some demonstration that this beneficent and wonderful visitation had not indeed wholly ceased. All was useless. A mournful silence filled the apartment which had but a few minutes before been tenanted with angels, sounding out their dear messages of undying affection, tender counsel, wise instruction, and prescient warning.

Then came the reaction. When the Fox family were asked whether the spirits had returned,

On the first few days a stoical negative was their only reply: after this, they began more and more fully to recognize the loss they had sustained. The wise counsellors were gone; the sources of strange strength and superhuman consolation were cut off; the tender, loving, wonderful presence no more flitted around their steps, cheered their senses, encouraged them in their human weakness, or guided them in their blindness. And these most wonderful and providential beings their own waywardness had driven from them. At last, then, they met their inquiring friends with showers of tears, choking sobs, and expressions of the bitterest self-reproach and regret. On the twelfth day of this great heart dearth Mr. Edward Capron . . . on receiving the usual sorrowful reply "that the spirits had left them," said, "Perhaps they will rap for us if not for you." They then entered the hall, and put the usual questions, if the spirits would rap for them, in answer to which, and to the unspeakable joy and delight of all present, they were greeted with a perfect shower of the much lamented sounds. Mrs. Fish (an elder sister), now Mrs. Underhill, often declares to this day, that if suddenly, fortune, friends, and all they had ever loved, had been snatched from them, and as suddenly returned in an hour of despair and agony, their emotions could scarcely have equalled the ecstasy with which they once more greeted those precious returning proofs that their spirit friends had not deserted them. In fact, in the enthusiasm of that returning morning of long quenched spiritual light, they knelt down and kissed the ground made sacred by the electric tones of the heavenly telegraph. And now once more the spirits urged them to make the manifestations public (p. 42).

There is certainly something very significant about this early history of the movement. The "spirits" would doubtless have tried other "mediums" to obtain that publicity which they

craved for the propagation of the delusion, if the Fox family had remained firm: but we may take the history as embodying the truth that willingness on the part of men to lend themselves to such a movement is a condition of its being let loose on the earth. The American public in general was well represented by these young ladies, and a right standard of faith and religious feeling would have kept the tide back. Of course the Fox family made no further resistance, and the public inquiry followed in Corinthian Hall, Rochester, where the rappings were heard, and the appointed Committee could find no natural cause for their existence.

The results of the inquiry were credibly attested by a number of the chief professional men in Rochester, and a curious letter from a minister, Mr. Hammond, relates that on his spending an evening with Mrs. Fox and her daughters, the room was soon filled with noises; knocks, raps, the sounds of sawing boards, spinning and ruling flax, &c. The tables, chairs, and sofas swung and vibrated, and substances moved rapidly before him, so as to produce strong currents of air. A transparent, shadowlike hand touched his face and hair, while words which he had secretly written and folded up in his pocket before he left his own house, were spelt out by the disjointed alphabets which, according to the common custom at these meetings, were laid on the table. In consequence of attesting that the "Rochester knockers" were not impostors, Mr. Hammond forfeited his name, position, and preferment as a minister in that city.

IV.

The Spiritualist movement now began to spread through the State of New York, and thence to Boston. At Auburn meetings were organized by Katie Fox, in which music was heard, and spirit hands were seen, felt, and clasped, as they melted into the air. Crowds of people soon developed as "mediums," and obtained the faculty of healing diseases and discerning future events by clairvoyance in mesmeric trances. Children and many grown persons are said to have spoken several languages. These marvels, all partaking of an agreeable and somewhat elevated character, began to create a great excitement and interest, while the more fanatically disposed were inclined to believe that the prophetic age, foreshowing the approach of the millennium, as Christ's reign on earth, was dawning upon the world.

The beginnings of such a movement as that of which we are speaking are more interesting in an inquiry as to its origin than its subsequent developments, and we cannot attempt to follow Miss Hardinge through her large and crowded assortment of facts. Very early what we may consider the more serious features of the movement began to unfold, and the spirit seekers found that they had been playing with edge tools. At the sittings or circles spirits of manifestly evil origin began to "obsess" the mediums, to frequent the sittings when not evoked, and when exorcised and implored, they would not cease from frightening, and even injuring, those who had evoked other spirits of the departed. It seemed, too, that audacity grew with the danger, and mediums, either in a state of clairvoyance or not, began to summon Prophets and Apostles to the circles, to play with the most sacred names. Far worse things, however, were to follow as the movement went on. In New York a minister of some note, named Britain, was thrown into a trance for twelve days, and on his revival gave himself up entirely to the study of magnetism, clairvoyance, and the "philosophy of spiritualism." At a subsequent noted circle in New York, in 1850, Fenimore Cooper, Willis, Bancroft, Bigelow, Bryant, and other men well known in literary and scientific society, were present, having been formally invited to discuss and examine the subject. The result of this and other serious and searching inquiries was a settled concurrent opinion that the phenomena witnessed, besides being divested of all approach to imposture, were not the physical consequences of clairvoyant or mesmeric conditions, but were direct communications with the unseen world.

In 1851, Judge Edmonds and Mr. Partridge, a well known New York merchant, opened "circles" at their own houses, where a noted medium, Mr. Fowler, developed many new phenomena. Spiritist writings on scientific subjects, and in various languages, some of them Oriental, were then first seen, and the feat of floating in the air, so often since repeated by Mr. Home, was first witnessed. The variety and interest of these phenomena determined the circle to summon a conference to organize the spirit evidence so as to confront the materialism and disbelief in a future state so rampant in America. The conference was held at Mr. Partridge's house, and in the nineteenth century of Christianity and of revealed truth to the Church, we read with sorrowful amazement these first paragraphs of the circular afterwards issued—

1. That the Divine Author of the universe is a conscious spiritual being.
2. That He has revealed somewhat of the spiritual world in ages long since past, and especially that the Jewish people were a medium of such revelation.
3. That in our own day and through our own American people, manifestations are being made from the spiritual into the natural world, whereby the immortality and unbroken continuity of the personal existence of all men is being daily demonstrated.

At this conference the power of exactly imitating the handwriting of the departed persons was first shown, and odyllic, or spirit lights, were first noticed round the table at which the circle sat.

The spread of Spiritualism naturally created a corresponding enmity and repulsion among the sober American congregation-ists, and Mr. Partridge, Judge Edmonds, Mr. Fowler, and the Fox girls were assailed by every kind of attack and abuse. But curiosity, irreverence, and the immense fascination of unlawful communication with the unseen world prevailed, in the absence of sound faith and sacramental grace. In 1853 we find the practice of calling up the departed by name fully established, and an ex-Governor of Wisconsin, Tallmadge, records his evidence of a sitting at Washington, in which Mr. Calhoun was cited to the circle. The first communication was certainly in character with the fiery Carolinian, whom Miss Martineau well describes as "the cast iron man who looks as if he had never been born, and could never die," for it was stormy and tumultuous enough; but at a subsequent circle, bells and a guitar played soft music. In the end, however, the bells rang so violently as to lift up the table and the candlesticks on it, while a strong hand grasped Governor Tallmadge by the knee and ankle. These words were then telegraphed or rapped out: "It was my hand that touched you and the guitar.—CALHOUN."

Between 1853 and 1855 Mr. Willis computes the Spiritists in New York at forty thousand, the magnetic circles commonly held at three hundred, and the medical mediums and clairvoyants at more than four hundred. Besides these, the semi-mediums, or persons partially capable of conferring with spirits, amounted to several thousands. Some of them, as a daughter of Judge Edmonds, and Mr. Fowler, when acting under influence,* spoke and wrote fluently Greek, Latin, Italian,

* This must be understood as signifying the state of trance, magnetic sleep, or mesmeric *rapport*.

Portuguese, Polish, Hindostanee, Chinese, Hebrew, and Sanskrit. The Oriental writings were tested and verified by Professor Bush of New York.

Another development was the colouring of water, tightly corked in phials, and left standing on a detached table in sight of all; the appearance of magnetic drawings and paintings; while in Buffalo, Miss Brooks became celebrated as a musical medium. When the piano was turned with its keys to the wall, she had only to be "put under influence," resting lightly upon the instrument, when the most beautiful pieces of music were played by an invisible hand. These spirit hands, however, were not now always invisible. In 1853, in a sitting when Daniel Home was present, the circle was breaking up, when the spirits present begged the members to remain, and seat themselves round the table again. They were then asked how many hands were on the table? and as there were six persons still remaining, they answered, "Twelve." The instant reply was, "There are thirteen;" when at a vacant space on the table a *thirteenth* shadowy hand and arm were plainly visible. It had the appearance of silver, and was half luminous. The hand moved backwards and forwards, took up a bell and rang it, and was finally seized by the writer of the description, when it melted in his grasp.

At Cleveland, dancing mediums are first heard of, who were forced to dance for some time whether they liked it or not, and could neither stand still nor throw themselves down, while under the magnetic influence. Mr. Hammond records of this uncomfortable feature, that he thinks it might be a kind of preparation for mediumship. At Washington, a daughter of Mrs. Laurie was put under spirit influence, and made to drop a gold ring on a piano, and then to raise her hand, when the ring slowly followed it, floated over her head, and hung in the air. The ring was raised and lowered slowly several times, to show that no magnetic influence was possible, and was then struck against the wall, when it rang like a bell. This took place in broad daylight, in the presence of several persons.

But we find ourselves bewildered in attempting to give an account in a few paragraphs of these multitudinous phenomena, though we would not willingly omit enough, at least, to give our readers a fair idea of the facts of Spiritualism. The circle of "phenomena" seemed almost bound to range between what was horrible and repulsive and what was enticing and

agreeable to the senses. In Boston thirteen spiritualists were presented with a pretty white dove, which suddenly appeared in the hands of one of the party; and the same appearance of a white doves, perfectly tame, was found in a room hermetically sealed for the purpose of test. Mediums now began to find that they could stand the action of fire without harm; and others were marked with signs, writings, and drawings on the arm, standing out in deep red lines. Some of these drawings are represented as being beautifully executed, and as delicate as the finest etchings. Still, many of the results are simple puerile. It is difficult to imagine a constant succession of "circles" of grown men and women meeting night after night to see tables slide from their hands, to spell out unimportant sentences with the help of a child's ivory alphabet and raps, and to hear the creaking and whirling of invisible masts and wheels. Meanwhile, there was another side of the matter, and a darker side—the persistent march of irreverence, the scoffing undermining of revelation, and the alternate depreciation or assumption of divine power. Throughout it takes the character of a game; luring hither and thither with grotesque, frolicsome, or impish antics, alternating with uproarious audacity and fun; but always drawing the play-fellow victims engaged in it further and further towards the pit. The lights from this pit soon began to flash more vividly forth. In a discourse or lecture given by Mr. Harris we find these words—

Christianity needs not the sanction of authority. It sits in the sun, and says to all men: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." It may be objected that we are to try the spirits, and believe only those that teach that Christ was to come in the flesh. This passage of St. John has no certainty as a test. I believed it in my early experience as a medium, and acted on it. However valued it may have been in the period for which it was written, it is useless now.

The tide set in with an irresistible impetus, but always with the same double aspect of depreciating authority and arrogating it, and thus by both means undermining whatever faith remained. And with regard to the old Scriptures, there was scarcely a "circle" that did not advert to their history, probability, or the evidence of their divine origin, in the profanest manner. One spiritist proposed that Balaam should be called upon to appear and to lend his ass; another says that "Moses' account of his personal communications with God, to say the least, savoured of audacity;" a third sneers at the notion of "a

Deity Who could order bears to devour forty-two innocent children for calling a prophet 'Baldhead;,' another sets aside the authority of St. Paul's writings.

It was in Boston that the first spirit experiment is noted of turning water into wine. The owner of the "spirit-room," who opened free circles to the public, describes the event, and states that a phial of pure water was changed into sweet wine, of a dark red colour. The inference drawn from this fact by those who had now embarked upon the sea of misbelief can easily be imagined, and the Scriptural miracles generally came to be spoken of as the simple operations of nature, scientifically handled. At a revival in Pennsylvania, "as a minister of Brookfield, named Crapsey, was holding forth, when he quoted the words of our Lord on the Cross, *Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani!* five pillars of smoke and luminous vapour rose up in the midst of the crowded meeting, when men, women, and children began to prophesy, and speak various languages." This happened more than once, "when angelic forms and appearances of many people long dead were seen floating in the air." This was regarded as "a special Pentecostal outpouring, predicting the speedy approach of the Millennium."

In the far West, Spiritualism manifested itself very much according to the vast proportions and the enthusiastic temperament of the country and population. In a "spirit-room" in Ohio, fitted up with all manner of strange appliances, drums and trumpets were played, and spirit figures and filmy hands were seen moving here and there, carrying the instruments or playing upon them. After this, luminous hands were suddenly placed in those of different members of the circle, when they immediately melted in their grasp. Hundreds of credible witnesses attested having seen and felt this phenomenon, and were certain of the presence of crowds of their own departed friends, of whose existence no one else present was aware. Some spirits of this circle called themselves "the primal order of man, and spoke of the race known in the Bible by the generic title of 'Adam' as mortals of a comparatively modern date." They represented their leaders as "most ancient angels," . . . "rulers of different spiritual tribes"—and spoke of "bands of dark undeveloped spirits" . . . "enabled, through the strong corporeity of their spiritual bodies," to exhibit the strangest and most portentous feats of strength. Mr. Koons, the builder and owner of the spirit-room, relates in his account of himself, that

finding no comfort "in the mystical doctrines of orthodoxy," and not being able to believe in "eternal punishment, election, infant damnation, &c., as irreconcilable with the idea of a merciful Father," he at length became a confirmed sceptic; but after living for some time in that state, he was directed by "influence" to build a spirit room, and provide certain described instruments and appliances. Having minutely fulfilled these orders, and then closed, locked, and sealed the room for a specified time, on returning to it, he found on the table a number of written papers, which entered into a long explanation of the spiritist mode of action, and then propounded the now commonly known theory of belief. This laid down that the spiritual life of man consisted in "ceaseless progression," by which "every living soul becomes a participant in the divine glory." A chart of the grades and formation of heaven was drawn by one of Koon's family under clairvoyance, in which the centre is described as "the ancient pit or hell, the place of second death, the lowest and darkest sphere of probation, but by no means a final state. Indeed, the whole spiritual theory of a future life emphatically denies any finality, but asserts an eternal and ever ascending scale of progress, whose conditions are wholly dependent on the moral refinement and elevation of the pilgrim souls that tread them." The region called "the 'Star of Light and Beauty' signifies the unpenetrable, the inconceivable, the source, fountain, and centre of all light, heat, life, force, gravitation, and attraction, . . . in a word, the profound mystery . . . summed up in the grand, solvent name of God." Altogether, the chapter about Mr. Koon's revelations is a very extraordinary part of the book.

v.

In 1853, Professor Hare, known in his own country as the American Faraday, entered a very strong protest against "the trickery and delusions of spiritism," which he ingeniously attempted to prove were achieved by machinery previously prepared, and hidden behind the walls. But during the next year Dr. Hare was entirely shaken from his ground, and after many laborious and persistent experiments, he came forward at a New York conference to relate his own spirit experience, and to declare that if the evidence upon which spirit power rested was to be set aside, all scientific testimony must be also discarded. In 1854 a memorial signed by fifteen thousand persons was

presented to Congress, praying for a commission to investigate "modern spiritualism." This curious petition presents four subjects for consideration: (1.) The occult force exhibited in raising, arresting, holding, and disturbing ponderable bodies. (2.) The appearance of lights where neither chemical nor phosphorescent action was present. (3.) Unexplained sounds of rapping, knocking, creaking, and grinding, accompanied by concussions and oscillation, or vibratory trembling of strong and fixed structures; as well as by music or melodious intonations. (4.) The suspension of the normal state of the bodily and mental condition of persons acted upon by occult agency, which suspension was sometimes followed by permanent derangement, and sometimes by the removal of all disease. Two opposing solutions of these phenomena being held by responsible, instructed, and influential persons—one, that they are produced by the agency of departed spirits; the other, by mechanical and scientific natural forces—an inquiry was respectfully prayed, that the public mind might be set at rest. The petition, not unnaturally, was received in Congress much as if it were an excellent joke; one member proposing to refer it to a committee of three thousand clergymen, and another to the Committee on Foreign Relations, and it was finally ordered to "lie on the table."

In 1855, Miss Hardinge, an actress, left England for America, where she soon afterwards attended at a circle in New York, where, as she herself reports, her attention was drawn to the irreverent way in which the unknown speakers treated the Bible, and ridiculed its records as myths and absurdities. In her own words: "Let any of my readers recall their early opinions concerning ghosts, death, resurrection, heaven, hell, spirits, and angels, and even then they will form but a faint conception of a rather piously inclined young English girl's horror when informed that souls in bliss descended from their bright abodes to make tables dance, and that angels left the throne of God to say their alphabets to earth, and tell its inhabitants the price of stocks and the best time to buy and sell." The English girl's instinct, that traditional faith and reverence which we so often find among those not of the Church, was, however, insufficient to stem the tide. Emma Hardinge was soon swept away by the now fast swelling tide of excitement. She was taken to the house of the most eminent New York medium, Mrs. Kellogg, with whom she was put in mesmeric communication by rapid

rubbing with the hands. Mrs. Kellogg complained that the communication was interrupted by Emma Hardinge's wearing a silk gown, but at length she fell into a clairvoyant sleep, and on coming out of it, found that her mesmeric powers were thoroughly developed. That same day the *Pacific* steam-ship was due from England, and Emma Hardinge went to the wharf expecting to receive a parcel from England, but found that the steamer had not come in. At night, when she was going to bed, a strange, misty, cold sensation swept over her, she seemed to be floating in water, and a sense of the presence of some preternatural being could not be shaken off. Miss Hardinge's mother suggested trying the alphabet; and immediately and involuntarily her fingers spelt out, "Philip Smith, ship *Pacific*." An ice cold hand was laid on her arm, and something visibly pulled her hair—"my own convulsed hand was moved tremblingly but very rapidly to spell out, 'My dear Emma, I have come to tell you I am dead. The ship *Pacific* is lost, and all on board have perished.'" Philip Smith was the storekeeper of the ship, and a friend of Miss Hardinge and her mother. It is certain that neither the *Pacific* nor Philip Smith were ever heard of again.

In the year 1857, many well disposed denominational ministers were preaching vigorously against the "demoniac movement" of Spiritualism, and a New York minister named Harvey proposed to give a series of lectures at the Stuyvesant Institute, in defence of the divine authenticity of the Bible, which Spiritualism always impugned. As Mr. Harvey was beginning his first lecture, he was suddenly struck down as by a heavy blow, and after many attempts to revive him, a physician present pronounced that life was extinct. A spiritist, who was also present, then went to the spot. On his making some mesmeric passes over the apparently lifeless body, Mr. Harvey sat up, and declared that he was quite well, and that it was the devil who had struck him down. Order being restored, Mr. Harvey resumed his lecture, but was again stopped. A great struggle for mastery seemed to take place between himself and some unseen power; and at length Mr. Harvey ordered the door-keeper to return the money to his audience, and abruptly closed the meeting. This case, naturally enough, furnishes matter of triumph to the Spiritualist historian. Mr. Harvey had some time before, however, been a spiritualist, and had even written a pamphlet in defence of the manifestations. For this he had been suspended from his functions as a minister in the

Methodist Episcopal Church. He was, therefore, a renegade Spiritualist. Miss Hardinge censures him for having attempted "to vindicate the claims of revealed religion at the expense of Spiritualism," and remarks, "How far spirits may have been justified in silencing his erroneous doctrines by using his mediumistic organization in the manner above described, we do not pretend to decide. . . . This influence was obviously exerted to give Mr. Harvey a powerful warning, and the world an evidence that our perversions of divine truth do not always pass unnoticed by invisible powers" (p. 145). We must confess that the narrative brings to our memory the instance related in the Acts of the Apostles, when the Jewish exorcist attempted to invoke over them that had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus—and "the wicked spirit answering said to them, Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?"*

These must suffice as instances of conversion to "Spiritualism," the honesty of which, in point of conviction, cannot fairly be questioned. But while they seem to establish the reality of the phenomena—a point on which it appears to us, in general, idle to dispute—they do not at all meet the argument that a certain uncatholic state of mind and religious feeling seems to be the required condition for the successful manifestation of the spiritualistic influences. Another feature in the movement, which we have already hinted at, is its great capriciousness. The "influence" has more than once left its possessors in the lurch at times of trial. Thus, when Mr. Willis, a theological student at Harvard College, became a medium, and was ordered to attempt to prove the reality of his powers, the result was at least a partial failure, and he was suspended from his studies on investigation. More notable was the failure at Cambridge in 1857, when Dr. Gardner, the conductor of the Spiritualist meetings at Boston, accepted the challenge of the editor of the *Boston Courier*, who offered five hundred dollars if the manifestations could be proved to the satisfaction of a Committee of scientific men. Some of the most famous "mediums" were engaged, but "the result of these meetings," says Miss Hardinge, "whether we take the acknowledgments of the Spiritualists, or the *pro tem* report of the professors themselves, was a decided failure" (p. 186).

* Acts xix. 14.

VI.

We soon find ourselves approaching a darker class of manifestations. Dr. Larkin, a Massachusetts physician, having studied Spiritualism as a means of bodily cure, magnetized one of his maidservants for fits; and while she was in the mesmeric sleep loud knocks and raps were heard in different parts of the room. The girl, named Mary Jane, became gradually violent and profane, and complained of being annoyed in her "sleep" by a drunken sailor, who taught her to swear and blaspheme. Through Mary Jane, the "sailor" also recounted everything that occurred to Dr. Larkin when he was on his visits to the sick. Finally, the same "sailor" brought to the house a number of other spirits, who related their own stories, with which Dr. Larkin was so struck that he wrote them down in a thick blank book, and afterwards verified them as facts by the names, places, and dates given. Mary Jane was at last subjected to such treatment by an invisible force, as strongly to bring before us the description of the possessed in the Scriptures. She was thrown down, her limbs contorted and dislocated, and during these attacks the girl foamed, cried out, and swore and blasphemed with loud bursts of laughter and ribald scoffing. There is a long story in this part of Miss Hardinge's book about a handkerchief which was snatched out of a Mr. Thatcher's hand, and disappeared, and was brought back again at an appointed hour of the night in an unaccountable way, which reads like a mediæval tale of *diablic*, and nothing else. An investigation was made, after which the wretched servant was sentenced to sixty days' imprisonment in Dedham gaol as a witch; and Dr. Larkin was obliged to sign a paper, which he afterwards acknowledged to be false, declaring the whole thing to be an imposture. He was forced to do this, on pain of exclusion from the "Church." "Dr. Larkin," says Miss Hardinge, "signed his name, handed the report to Mr. James, and declaring that it was the greatest lie that ever was written, and that he (Mr. James), as a Christian minister, ought to be ashamed to admit such a liar into his Church, burst into a passion of tears" (p. 163).

This mention of an enforced recantation which was protested against at the time by the very person who made it, may serve to introduce another class of phenomena connected with American Spiritualism, from which Miss Hardinge, with creditable honesty,

does not shrink. We mean what is called the "recantation movement," which seems to have reigned principally between the years 1858 and 1862. A number of "spiritual mountebanks" and "dishonest mediums" came forward, some to confess that they had been deliberately practising on the incredulity of their fellowcountrymen, and some to expose the frauds which, as they alleged, others were in the habit of practising. Miss Hardinge, though she does not blink these facts, speaks of the persons concerned somewhat too cavalierly. They must at all events be taken to have established beyond a doubt, not indeed the falsehood of the general phenomena of Spiritualism, or the individual imposture of others besides themselves, but the very great temptations to which men and women who were not mediums were exposed, of counterfeiting the performances of real mediums, or again, which might urge persons possessing one class of what are called mediumistic powers to pretend to the possession of other and higher classes, or again, to claim as permanent and at their own command what was only contingent on certain very precarious and capricious conditions. Sometimes machinery was discovered, by means of which the phenomena were produced—at other times the tricks were exposed by such a device as throwing a powerful unexpected light upon the medium while the phenomena were going on in arranged darkness. This was done at Cardington in Ohio, where a Methodist preacher and a girl "medium" were the real performers on drums and tambourines hung up in the hall, on which the spirits were supposed to beat an accompaniment to a tune on a violin. "During the exhibition of the third evening, two persons in different parts of the hall suddenly and simultaneously opened upon them the glare from dark lanterns, which disclosed the fact that the players on the drums and tambourines were none other than the Methodist preacher and the young girl" (p. 246).

It is clear that whatever may be thought of individual "recanters" and exposures, the simple believers in Spiritualism must have the uncomfortable conviction that they do not know who to trust. Miss Hardinge sneers at Bly, Von Vleck—"a little man, whose hardihood was displayed in continual alternations between the assumption of genuine mediumship and audacious acknowledgment of deception"—Melville Fay, Randolph, and others. Bly's "principle aim," she tells us, "was to procure notoriety and full audiences;" but what are we to think of Dr. Gardner, the leader of the Spiritualists at Boston,

who, after Randolph's recantation—of which Miss Hardinge says that it was the occasion of "great jubilee" in Boston, "proclaimed by the *societies of Christendom*"—got this very renegade to show off at his own public hall?

Randolph [says Miss Hardinge] was induced for a "consideration" to appear on the Spiritualists' platform at the Melodeon under the management of Dr. Gardner, for the sake of making his "recantation" more public, and proclaiming it in the very heart of the Spiritualistic ranks. Many of the sterner believers in the faith [she adds] highly censured Dr. Gardner for parading this unworthy subject on the Spiritual platform, and various motives have been assigned for the Doctor's conduct. *Some declared that he only desired to fill the hall*; others, that he was just then destitute of a sensation, and was glad to accept of anything short of negro minstrelsy (p. 243).

Miss Hardinge's remarks on the result of the confession of imposture are worth quoting. After repudiating the idea "that mediumship implies or creates a tendency to deception" as "wholly unphilosophical," she proceeds—

Highly refined and tenderly conscientious minds are to be found in the mediumistic ranks, while persons of *unmistakeably vicious proclivities* are equally susceptible of the spiritual afflatus. We can but record the fact, without at present attempting to theorize upon its character. The whole difficulty which it presents to the mind of the observer ceases, however, when we banish our preconceived and utterly erroneous opinions of what a medium between the two worlds ought to be, and simply acknowledge that which seems patent to the communion, namely, that it depends upon some electrical properties evolved from the physical organization of favourably endowed individuals. We must all admit that special temptations to practise deception, at times, overshadow the position of a medium. The scornful incredulity which defies them to produce phenomena; the intense and sometimes painfully exigent desire of others to witness it (?); their own professional pride, or the necessity which urges them to render the service promised, all these, together *with other sources of influence peculiar to the position of a medium*, are amply sufficient to account for fraud, without resorting to the farfetched and wholly undemonstrated theory that "tricky spirits" prompt the imposition (p. 247).

We, perhaps, hardly understand the theory of "tricky spirits," but we may surely consider it to be a well admitted fact—admitted, we mean, by Spiritualists themselves—that some "spirits" lie and deceive recklessly and portentously. But here Miss Hardinge is dealing with the fact which she acknowledges, that

The most severe blows that Spiritualism has sustained have been those aimed by unprincipled and avaricious mediums, who, when the

manifestations failed to come as freely as the circumstances required, practised imposition to supply the deficiency. The detection of this lamentable species of fraud [as to which, we may remark in passing, Miss Hardinge, though she confesses its existence, seems rather chary of giving us chapter and verse, names and places, as if such exposure might reflect on certain distinguished mediums] gave occasion to the opposition to charge an universal system of trickery upon the Spiritual ranks, while not a few of the most staunch believers themselves alleged that *nearly all the mediums* might be taxed with similar dishonest practices (p. 247).

A little further on, she confesses that "an opinion unfavourable to the genuine character of all the manifestations at one time gained ground amongst the highminded portion of the Spiritualists, producing a most patient revulsion to their feelings." We cannot be reasonably surprised at it. What security does Spiritualism give for the honesty and moral integrity of those through whom its communications are made? None whatever, on Miss Hardinge's own showing. It is confessed that the spirits themselves lie, and it is confessed that the "mediums" are strongly tempted by avarice and other even more detestable motives. The system, if it is so to be called, takes away most of the great sanctions of morality and conscience. Its God, if it has one, is not holy, or He would not sanction such lying as that with which Spiritualism is rife. Its moral code, its doctrines of retribution and judgment, what are they? We are but touching on a topic which might be worked out far more fully, and we content ourselves with inquiring, not of the "high minded" portion of the Spiritualists only, but of those like Miss Hardinge, who know its workings most universally and thoroughly, whether lying and avarice are the only forms of gross immorality with which mediums and "circles" have been from time to time connected? It requires very little knowledge of mankind to be aware that among the "unmistakeably vicious proclivities" by which our poor nature is beset, there are, others even more mischievous, more shameful, more degrading, more destructive of moral purity and social and domestic virtue, than those two which we have named. And it is our firm belief that where those are found, the others also will be found, and that over the scenes of many a "circle" might be truly written the burning words of St. Paul, "*Quæ in occulto fiunt ab ipsis turpe est et dicere.*"*

* Eph. v. 12.

VII.

It is to speak of a kindred topic to add that Spiritualism has had what, if it could be called a doctrinal religion, would be termed its "heresies."

A fresh blow was levelled at it [says Miss Hardinge] from its own ranks, which threatened to destroy even its foundation and corner stone, the cherished philosophy on which its religious superstructure was based. This *coup d'état* originated with a Professor and Mrs. Spence, both distinguished members of the spiritual ranks, and persons whose influence was marked and diffusive. . . . About the time when "zeal waxed cold" and "the faith of many was shaken," from the causes above detailed, Mrs. Spence and her talented husband promulgated the strange theory that a large proportion of the human race did not attain to the glory of immortality, and that only certain souls, under conditions which seemed terribly vague and unsatisfactory, survived the shock of death as individualized entities, their spiritual essence being entirely absorbed in the great ocean of being, or reincarnated in some subsequent state of higher development. . . . Their doctrines were received with profound dismay, and in some instances with agonizing despair, . . . in fact, the promulgation of this repulsive theory, . . . coming as it did just when the cherished facts on which the whole spiritual superstructure was founded had to undergo the severe trial which a tide of recantations and exposures necessarily put upon it, seemed to fill the cup of feverish doubt and incertitude to the very brim (p. 248).

Miss Hardinge meets the authority of Dr. and Mrs. Spence by an appeal to experience. She says that so many thousands of Spiritualists have held communications with deceased children—for it appears that the Spence theory denied immortality to all who had not survived on earth to the age of seventy—and that, in fact, such spirits were among her own most frequent visitors. Then a celebrated medium through whom "spirit pictures" were produced, had furnished likenesses of several children of one family, including "a pair of twins represented in the pride of youthful adolescence, but who never showed signs of life, and in giving birth to which the mother died." They were represented as "growing girls, in age corresponding to what they might have been had they lived on earth." She mentions in the same way likenesses of still born children, and the like—likenesses as of what they might have been. Sons and daughters manifest themselves to people who say they never knew them, and then remind them that they gave birth to infants which never lived here. It strikes us that this argument from *recognition* is somewhat feminine—but we must not be too

hard on Miss Hardinge. What we may observe, however, is, that one Spiritualistic assertion is exactly as good and as bad as another, and that at least we fail to find in the system any test of the truth of one rather than another—more especially as it is confessed that what the “spirits” say is by no means to be taken for Gospel on all occasions.

But there have been far worse things in the Spiritualistic annals than this annihilation theory of Dr. Spence. Miss Hardinge herself seems rather to quail before the dark phenomena of what was called the “Mountain Cove” movement, of the Kiantone movement, and the “New Motive” power, with all the details of which we could hardly sully our pages, and as to which, indeed, the historian of Spiritualism seems herself to speak with studied ambiguity and reserve.

The “Mountain Cove” movement was the offspring of the union of religious fanaticism and personal ambition with Spiritualism, and, without charging all who maintain the latter with the full responsibility of the extravagances to which the movement led, we may yet fairly assume that the mere possibility of such extravagances, together with the absolute absence of any power in the Spiritual system to disclaim or put a stop to them, must be considered in all reason as an evidence against the claims of that system to any but an evil origin. Our historian confesses more than once, as we have seen, that the powers of Spiritualism are as open to bad as to good. “It will be seen,” she says, “that vicious persons hitherto deemed irreclaimable, have been led into the paths of virtue and goodness by the angelic ministrations of guardian spirits; on the other hand, it is certain *that latent evil tendencies are not unfrequently matured into ugly prominence* by the effects of magnetism, especially in its indiscriminate use or in heterogeneous circles” (p. 208).

In the case of the “Mountain Cove” movement, the leaders, Messrs. Scott and Harris, were declared by the mediums to be the “two perfect prophets,” “chosen mediums,” “perfect mediums,” and (in 1852) the two witnesses named in the tenth chapter of the Revelation, possessed “of the powers, to their fullest extent, spoken of therein.”* The communications professed to come from a circle of prophets and Apostles, who derived in their turn plenary inspiration from the “Lord

* “In one of his prayers, uttered about this time, Harris said, ‘O Lord, thou knowest we do not wish to destroy man with fire from our mouths!’” (p. 212.)

Supreme." "It was claimed through Mr. Harris that his interior revelations were dictated by Paul, John, Daniel, and other distinguished Biblical personages, whilst the poetry which enlivened the columns of the 'Disclosures' was the spiritual lucubrations of none less than Coleridge, Shelley, Pollok, and a few of the higher geniuses of modern times." Mountain Cove was a real settlement, a New Jerusalem, the Gate of Heaven, where the redemption of man would commence, "and all who opposed the two 'perfect prophets' would be driven from the mountain, from which there would be no redemption." It is not surprising to find, either that, with all the intolerable assumption of infallibility and personal inspiration on the part of the leaders, families enough were found to migrate to "Mountain Cove" for the formation of the settlement, or that the settlement was soon dissolved on account of quarrels, the cause of which is stated to have been licentiousness on the part of one of the chosen organs of celestial truth—charges which were never fully investigated, for, as soon as a meeting called for the purpose was organized, "he professed to pass into the 'superior or clairvoyant state,' and said, 'We'—himself and his particular friends—"must stand firm and say nothing unless the enemy make the attack.'"

In the case of the "Kiantone movement," another attempt to establish a little "kingdom of heaven" on the earth, Miss Hardinge tells us—

It has become a matter of too much public notoriety to veil or gloss over, that some of the inspired party who had assembled at Kiantone Springs, claimed to be the organs or human mouthpieces not only for spirits of an adventurous and scientific turn of mind, but also for others, who proposed to establish a new social order upon earth, in which the marriage obligations were not treated with any great amount of reverence or conventional respect (p. 231).

In her treatment of this detestable movement Miss Hardinge betrays the weakness of her logic as well as the badness of her cause. She complains, so far with reason, of the slur cast upon all Spiritualists by the disclosure of the hateful doctrines taught at Kiantone, as if they were each and all "Free-loveists," and as if "Freeloveism" was an essential part of the Spiritualist creed. She tells us that good and bad, robbers and murderers as well as saints and angels, have accepted the evidence of the fact on which Spiritualism rests. "It can be no matter of surprise that persons who profess the broadest license on the marriage question, should have accepted the demonstrations of spiritual

communion." She complains that "a few individuals, who desired to make the broad white standard of Spiritualism float over all the little hobbies which they thought proper to harness to its triumphant car, gave out as veritable communications from 'archangelic spheres,' 'spirit messages' endorsing, nay, enjoining, the practices and doctrines of 'free love.'" But why are we not to believe the spiritual phenomena in one case as well as in another? These people did more than accept the evidence: they were gifted mediums themselves. Why is Miss Hardinge a medium for true "spirit" communications, on whose authority we are to accept the fact that still born children grow in the unseen world to the stature, mental and bodily, which they would have had if they had lived eighteen or nineteen years on earth, so that their portraits can be taken by "drawing mediums" and sent to their mothers, who have never known them; and why is some one else at Kiantone, who tells us that the "spirits" enjoin the most abominable immorality in the world, to be held to be a false medium? In the case of Mr. Harris, whom we just now mentioned, Miss Hardinge confesses that "the improvisation of his wonderful poems" manifested brilliant evidence of "spirit power;" that when he claimed that the spirits of Byron, Keats, Shelley, Coleridge, and others, were his inspiring genii, he "compelled from the grudging pens of his critics unqualified admissions of the striking similarity of style observed in the poems to their renowned spiritual authors;" that "these poetical marvels were acknowledged to be fully worthy of any names, however illustrious;" that "these efforts of genius were poured forth, wholly impromptu, in the presence of many witnesses, and under circumstances that could leave no doubt of their supramundane origin;" that he "frequently acted as a test medium, giving communications to strangers, and describing spirits with an accuracy which left no doubt of their identity." Why then is Mr. Harris to be believed as no impostor when he claims to be inspired by Byron or Shelley, and yet be disbelieved as an impostor when he claims to be guided by Daniel or St. Paul?

If there are any clear distinctive intrinsic marks of truth or falsehood in the phenomena or communications in each case, at least we must say that the faithful historian of American Spiritualism has not mentioned them. If there are none, then we arrive at the conclusion that Spiritualism must be responsible for all its manifestations, and that Spiritualists ought to trust all

or none; that it is arbitrary to limit its responsibility to the truths which Miss Hardinge seems to tell us make up its creed—"the soul's immortality, the unity of spirit, and individual responsibility." We hardly understand how this last is an essential result of the manifestations spoken of, but let that pass. Again, we may forbear to urge on Miss Hardinge that she has already told us that the soul's immortality, as regards the larger portion of the human race, is denied by some Spiritualists whose "gifts" are unquestioned. But any how, Spiritualists can only fairly question the doctrines taught by the Kiantone spirits and those who "inspired" Messrs. Scott and Harris, on the ground that they were truly spirits indeed, but that they lied in what they said. Well, then, and what is to prevent us from urging, in all reason, on any Spiritualist who knows what reason is, that they may lie just as much in representing themselves to be these or those persons, even "with an accuracy which leaves no doubt of their identity"—if only they are spirits who have the power and intelligence to deceive successfully?

As for the New Motive Power, which was embodied in a machine broken to pieces by an indignant mob in New York, Miss Hardinge's account of it is veiled in obscurity of language which we see no reason for wishing less obscure than it is. We shall only say that no one persuaded of the true origin of all this movement will be surprised at the announcement of a sort of parody on the divine birth of our Blessed Lord; or, as it was then given out to the world, "1. That spirits have revealed a wholly new motive power, to take the place of all other motive powers. 2. That the revelation has been embodied in a model machine *by human cooperation with the powers above,*" &c. Only, we feel bound to add, that whatever the more respectable Spiritualists may say of Mr. Spear, who thus announced the birth of what was called the "electrical infant," we find no reasonable argument in Miss Hardinge's pages for thinking that he was a jot less of a real "medium," or that he had less real communication with "the spirits," than the most virtuous and decorous person who ever exercised "mediumistic" gifts. And we may say the same in favour of the secret organization which guided the wires of the "Sacred Order of Unionists," which Miss Hardinge also repudiates, or again of the Spiritualists who initiated the "Order of the Patriarchs" in Cincinnati, which got into trouble for the same reason with the Kiantone movement—the open teaching of profligacy as to marriage; or again, of Dr.

and Mrs. Spencer—singularly like in their teaching to the Dr. and Mrs. Spence of a former page—who established the “Harmonist Society,” or the “Angelites,” in a sort of community in Arkansas, whose doctrines on the same crucial point, if we understand them, went somewhat even beyond the most detestable Freeloivism. All that Miss Hardinge and others like her believe as ascertained truth in consequence of “Spiritualist” communications rests on the same evidence as the enormities taught by these fanatics, and has no more claim to be considered as true, on account of the medium through which it reaches us, than the wildest and most loathsome of the revelations of those whom she considers as disgraces to the Spiritualist cause.

VIII.

We shall add another and a still wider consideration, for we believe that the true way of arriving at a right conclusion concerning the phenomena on which Spiritualism is founded is to compare them in their most varied developments and class them with all such other manifestations as may fairly be attributed to kindred sources and powers. We believe that many of the adepts of European “spiritualism,” far on the road of evil and monstrosity as we fear it has already advanced, will have been shocked by learning the existence of some even of the facts which we have selected in this article, and we can assure our readers that we have not selected the most startling. In the same way as American developments seem more fearful by the side of European experiences, so there is a gradation to be observed, unless we are mistaken, in the American developments themselves: the wildest and most terrible meet us as we leave the comparatively civilized and sober East for the halfsettled Western States, as we touch on the Territories, and cross over to the Pacific seaboard in California. Indeed, the Californian phenomena are singularly terrible and diabolical. Here, for instance, is an incident which occurred in California in 1856, and was made fully public in 1863 by an eminent lawyer in Nevada, who, after this lapse of seven years, could not speak of the occurrence without the most painful emotion. He and a friend, an eminent banker and man of science, and a sceptic, were visiting the house of a wealthy Californian merchant, where they summoned a murdered friend, Mr. King, to the mesmeric circle. He appeared “precisely as in life, and in his usual attire,” and raised his arms in turn, and made other motions as suggested

to him. But when his living friend darted forward, as he said, "to grab him," "every article in the house seemed to be set in motion at once, as if by the shock of an earthquake," and the figure melted out instantly. Another time, after Mr. King's presence was made known, a certain new influence was detected by the whole circle, and in the usual manner it was asked, "Who was present?" The answer was, "Capitana." This name was recognized by some present as that of an old Kanaka woman who had died some years ago. She was then asked if she would materially appear, and if so, would she give a sign? The spirit answered that she would ring the door bell.

It was scarcely twenty seconds after the raps had ended spelling out their message, when the bell again rung furiously, and at the same time a bush, growing within a few feet of the window, was shaken so violently as to fix all our attention on it in the fear that it would be torn up by the roots. Then we [having our attention fixed upon the bush] distinctly and all together saw a gigantic human figure apparently rising and emerging from the bush, issue out into the broad moonlight, pass within two feet of the window before our eyes, and glide off towards the kitchen. By a common impulse we all rose and rushed to the window, but only in time to see the figure melt out, and another rise up, as it were, out of the ground, and immediately seat itself upon a bench before the kitchen door, and full in the glare of the moonlight.

And here I would fain pause, for I have no words adequate to describe what I then saw; and though its memory will be for ever engraven on my brain, I can neither communicate in words the least reality of it, nor yet attempt its description, without subjecting myself to the charge of the wildest exaggeration. . . . It certainly bore the human form, though in distorted and frightful disproportion. It was of gigantic height, and frightfully lean. Its face was hideously long, thin, and distorted, blacker than any idea of blackness I have ever seen before; but its expression I never can pourtray. I can only say it was an appalling mixture of rage, hate, and despair, so shocking that I cannot at any time attempt to recall it without a sickening sensation of horror. It was terrible to look at, horrible to think of, and I hope my mortal eyes will never again be blighted by so hideous a spectre. He wore a large white robe thrown fully around him, and partly covering his immense long lean head: and there he sat, reclining on the bench, full in the moonlight, silent, still, and ghastly in all his appalling ugliness. The face was turned to us somewhat in profile. . . . After looking on the goblin—for human I can never think it—till the sight overpowered me, I rushed to the piazza door, feeling the necessity for air. I was followed by the ladies, who were almost fainting; but on attempting to unfasten the door, which Mr. J. P. had opened with perfect ease but a few moments before, we found it barricaded. Mr. B., the bravest among us save Mr. J. P., remained watching the goblin, as did the family upstairs, till they saw it gradually and slowly melt out. They never lost sight of it till it disappeared. As we retreated, the sofas, chairs, tables, cushions,

globes, and mathematical instruments were hurled about in every direction with great violence. I was severely struck with a book, and one of the ladies had a cushion dashed on her face, the dust from which blinded her eyes for several minutes. Mr. J. P. and his wife now joined me at the door, and after great exertion we succeeded in forcing it partly open, when we found that the heavy iron gate at the entrance of the grounds had been literally torn up out of its sockets, and placed bodily against the piazza door. This must have been done in a few minutes, since one of the servants had just passed through and fastened it. It must have been accomplished without noise, though it would have taken several men to achieve such a feat, and we had sat opposite it, with the moon shining full on it, the whole period of the circle. . . . [As for the disappearance of the spectre] Mr. B. stood within eight feet of it, and just as we approached the kitchen door, he saw, as did those above, the creature rise with slow deliberation, standing a moment still, as if to display its enormous height, then, lightly lifting its robe, it seemed to float off a little way, and then instantly, in the clear space, became invisible. There were four witnesses of this scene, and each gave a precisely similar account when questioned separately. . . . We agreed to bend our minds and aspirations on the attempt to call around us kind, genial, and more human beings, and conjured some bright and happy spirits to visit us, and aid in dispelling the horrors of the last apparition. We had not taken our places five minutes before, nervous and distrustful as we still were, we were convinced our petitions were answered. Cool balmy breezes played around us, soft caressing hands stroked our cheeks and heads, more than a dozen small white human hands gleamed around the room, at first shadowy and like thin vapour, at last palpable, opaque, and seemingly as firm in sight and touch as our own hands (pp. 448, 449).

In a second account, the same writer says that his friend the sceptic, was afterwards taken up and thrown with such violence into a corner of the room, that if he had not been lifted or held by invisible force, he must have been killed. The house of this same Californian merchant continued, in spite of the shock he had received, to be the haunt and stronghold of spirit noises, meetings, and apparitions, during which hundreds of the townspeople collected nightly on Russian Hill, where it lay, to see what was going on in the "haunted house." He was obliged, in consequence, to procure a number of fierce watchdogs and a staff of watchmen, to guard his property. The circles continued until, as he told an intimate friend, there was not a single breakable article left whole in the house, and once, when in a mood of reckless daring, he "challenged the spirits to bring him what they could lay their hands upon," fifty dollars worth of the most valuable cut glass and porcelain was laid in fragments at his feet. It is, in short, confessed that on

Californian soil the "communications" took a very dark form indeed. A very handsome girl, of bad character, supposed to have been accessory to the murder of several of her accomplices in crime, became subject to violent attacks from spirits, who burst into loud fits of laughter, caused the miserable girl to fall into long swoons, and while she was insensible, stained her dress and face with clots of fresh blood. There are other similar horrors recorded in the same chapter of Miss Hardinge's book.

It is also allowed that the Indians of America have frequent communications with the unseen world of practically the same character with those of which we have been speaking all through, and Miss Hardinge dwells with much apparent delight upon the forgiveness and benignity of some of the Indian spirits who attend on white "mediums," minister to their comforts, and warn them of danger. But it is only one half of the subject, and the least important, to tell us about the manifestations of Indian "spirits;" and why does not Miss Hardinge tell us more distinctly that the Indian "mediums" professedly hold communications with evil spirits? She does not hide this altogether from those who know it already, for she confesses that "there is a still wider field of Indian spiritualism, occupied by beings of an unknown and doubtful character, and mixed up with rites and phenomena of a strange, occult, and repulsive character," and so on.* She gives a really striking account of the description of his power by an old Ches-a-kee (clairvoyant), which quite bears out her own remark—"The red Indian can do what we can neither explain nor imitate." The results are very singular, for this Ches-a-kee could tell his tribe where their enemies were, where game was to be found, or, again, could inform the men of a halfstarved American garrison at Detroit where the ship was which was to bring them supplies. But the spirits which visited him were "animals, some of frightful shape and size, monstrous snakes, serpents, and birds of a great variety," addressing him in human language, and offering to be his guardian spirits. He chose "one of the bird species spirits, resembling a kite in look and form." The Indians also invoke

* In another place Miss Hardinge says of the North American Indians—"The clairvoyant faculties, prescient powers, and general results obtained through their Spiritualism, correspond closely with that of their civilized neighbours; but the modes of invocation differ essentially, and the characteristics which seem to mark the communicating intelligences are equally repulsive and incomprehensible to the American Spiritualist" (p. 489).

devils, as Miss Hardinge seems to know. The explanation of all these phenomena is certainly not lucid.

Whether the red man succeeds in evoking and controlling to his service a race of beings hovering on the precincts of a submundane sphere, or his exercises predispose him to those ecstatic conditions in which the spiritual vision is broken and refracted, and he actually communicates with undeveloped human spirits, *but amidst the fumes of tobacco with which his system is poisoned*, he mistakes them for animals, birds, &c., we do not pretend to decide (p. 489).

We venture to think that in all reason the "bird species spirit, resembling a kite," which communicated with the old Ches-a-kee, must be taken to have been as truly what it represented itself to be as any of the numerous "developed" or "undeveloped" spirits which have held communication with Miss Hardinge herself; and although we must not suspect her, as a lady, of smoking, there are probably many white mediums of the masculine gender who would be surprised to hear that the fumes of tobacco were likely to poison their system. But it cannot be denied that the Indian Spiritualism is older, more serious, more simple—we had almost said, more respectable, because less frivolous and less afraid to call itself by its right name—than that of the white man in America. It has no need for concealment as to its diabolical character among the simple children of the prairies. On no ground of reason or fair argument can Miss Hardinge repudiate the connection between the two, or rather the identity of their substance and principle under the diversity of their manifestations. Nor, though she evidently labours to do so, can she with more justice free the "Spiritualism" in which she believes from the charge of practical identity in principle with the hideous and portentous practices of magical art which meet us in various parts of the heathen world. Miss Hardinge acknowledges that she lays herself

Open to challenge from the historians of Asiatic and East Indian Spiritualism or magic, whose narratives of marvels performed by fakeers, botke, dervishes, and other wonderworkers, would unquestionably throw all the occult performances of Western "spirits" into the shade, and make them appear, by comparison, as the sports of children pitted against the deeds of the Greek Hercules (p. 487).

But when she comes to try to defend her position, that she "fails to perceive any analogy between the two," she is singularly weak and hesitating. In fact, reasoning and argument do not seem to be strong points with spiritualists, if we may judge

from the historian of Spiritualism. She acknowledges the inferiority of the results, in point of marvel, of Western Spiritualism, and she tries to account for it by the difference of the means used in each case. In the case of the Eastern Spiritualists, she tells us there is "no evidence of the interposition of spirits at all." If this be so, we should have imagined that the results would have been inferior in power to those produced by the Western spirits, instead of superior.

But [says Miss Hardinge] the Easterns affirm that their powers are derived from a state induced in their own bodies, . . . that [under certain circumstances] their bodies are as naught, or entirely under their own control, . . . that by the superior power of their spirits, when completely exalted above natural laws, they can control the elements with the same ease that electricity, airs, and other imponderables, pierce and control the imponderables.

That is, as it appears reasonable to conclude, the Eastern Spiritualists try to place themselves as nearly as possible in the position of the "spirits" themselves, who act through Western mediums. How does this account for the inferiority of the results in the latter case? And how does this distinction, if it be one, suffice to draw any practical line of demarcation between Spiritualism and Asiatic devilry?

But it is time to make an end of these considerations. We believe that, though it may seem a long way from the raps which startled Mr. Fox and his family at Rochester in 1848 to the undisguised dealings with Evil Powers which prevail among Indian and Asiatic magicians, no honest Spiritualist in America or England is able to point to the spot where the links of the chain which connects the two extremes can be severed. No doubt, any survey, however partial, of the various manifestations of the Kingdom of Satan in the world, will surprise many a thinker of the nineteenth century by the vast extent and multitudinous developments which it reveals. And we would fain hope that some of those idle and curious beings who may be tempted to *séances* by the hope of having pretty flowers put into their hands and hearing soft sweet musical strains, or, as it is put in a passage we have already quoted, "cool balmy breezes" playing around them, and "caressing hands" stroking their cheeks and heads, and who cannot possibly imagine that the powers of Evil lurk behind all this seductive playfulness, may be induced to pause when they learn, even very imperfectly, whither Spiritualism may lead them, and what are its manifestations

elsewhere. We have not taken the line of questioning the reality of these manifestations themselves. No Spiritualist will deny that there have been actual impostures and delusions, nor will any most devoted disciple of the spirits assert that there is any certain safeguard against such imposture, or any security at all for the reality of anything beyond the actual sensible phenomena themselves. The error, and, as it appears to us, the wilful error, of Spiritualists, lies in going beyond the phenomena themselves and putting any kind of faith at all in conclusions drawn from them or assertions made in connection with them. What is certain—granting, as we have said, the reality of the phenomena—what is certain is, that we find ourselves in the presence of powers capable of producing them. But that these powers are what they represent themselves to be, that they tell the truth, that they are benevolent rather than malevolent—this is a step in the argument for which there is no possible reasonable justification in the phenomena before us, and which, we will add, no one who considers them as a whole, as a system, and taking into consideration all that may fairly be counted as furnishing the elements from which their character ought to be judged, can find himself able to make without doing violence to the instincts of his own moral nature and the voice of his own conscience. Nor is it any answer to this to say, that the three articles of the Spiritualist creed on which Miss Hardinge insists—“the immortality of the soul, the unity of spirit, and individual responsibility”—are undoubted truths; because, putting aside the fact that these truths are not proved by Spiritualism, unless we assume that gratuitous step in the argument of which we have just spoken, it is certain that every form of error that ever issued from the pit of Hell has fastened upon a certain kernel of truth round which to cling, in order to give itself any reality or chance of life and influence, just as Mahometanism itself fastened upon the doctrine of the Unity of God.

Of course, when we look at these phenomena from the Christian point of view, they appear portentous indeed, but there is nothing in them for which our faith has not an answer and an explanation. It is astounding, especially in times when so many are induced to catch from the shallow philosophies of the day a practical scepticism as to the activity, malignity, and nearness to us of the powers of Evil, when men are inclined to think of Evil more in the abstract than in the concrete, and to forget what St. Paul has taught us, that “our wrestling is not

against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places"*—to be suddenly confronted with multitudinous phenomena, which disturb our security, and reveal to us that the veil between the unseen world and ourselves is very thin, and may be continually pierced. No doubt, there are many questions suggested by these phenomena to the Catholic mind which may seem to point to new and strange answers, widening, at all events, indefinitely, within the limits of a true faith, our conceptions as to what may pass in that unseen world on which we so nearly border. The meaning of St. Paul's words in the passage just quoted and elsewhere, about the "rulers of the world of this darkness," the dominion of evil spirits over the world, the extent of their intelligence and of their power, the extreme subtlety of their deceptiveness, or, again, the relations which may possibly exist between them and souls in which their dominion has never been broken by the exorcisms of the Church in holy Baptism, or again, souls that have departed from this world in a state of wilful sin and are to be their slaves and companions for ever, or, again, even to other souls than those—these are among the points over which the Christian student may well bend in prayer, wondering at the marvellous dispensations and permissions which belong to the Divine Government of the universe. But no Christian can really doubt either as to the origin of the phenomena, or as to the power which God has put into the world to quell and cast out the forces which produce them. "For this purpose the Son of God appeared, that He might destroy the works of the devil."† "When a strong man armed keepeth his court, those things are at peace which he possesseth. But if a stronger than he come upon him and overcome him, He will take away all his armour wherein he trusted, and will distribute his spoils."‡ So it was when our Lord came into the world, so it was when His Church first went forth from the Coenaculum to subdue the Roman empire, so, we doubt not, it will be, as she spreads herself over the length and breadth of the vast continent of America, exorcising by her presence and her breath the New World which she has only begun to conquer. Around her is worse than Egyptian darkness, in which the foulest and most frightful spiritual powers roam and prowl. Within the dwellings of her

* Eph. vi. 12.

† 1 John iii. 8.

‡ St. Luke xi. 21—23.

children there is light and peace. Every onward step made by her in the frontier land of America is like the planting of an outpost before which the powers of Evil must recoil. Every day that she stretches further or deeper her influence upon the multitudinous and heterogeneous masses of which American society is made up, brings nearer the discomfiture and flight of the agencies which work behind the transparent mask of Spiritualism. Every Catholic altar that is raised becomes the dwelling place of One Who is stronger than the "strong man armed"—One of Whom it was believed of old that His presence even as a Babe in His Mother's arms cast down the idols of Egypt and silenced the demons in the temples—

The oracles are dumb,
No voice or hideous hum
 Runs through the arched roof in words deceiving.
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
 With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
No nightly trance, or breathed spell
Inspires the pale-ey'd priest from the prophetic cell.*

Such, we firmly trust, is to be the future of American Spiritualism, It may bring home to many Christian minds outside the Church the realities of the unseen world and the extent of the activity of the powers of Evil in a new and unthought of degree. It may run its course of mischief among those who choose to believe in it as a true revelation, until it makes them lay aside the obligations of morality as well as the doctrines of religion. But as we have no reason for thinking that its presence and influence in America is anything unprecedented and unparalleled in the history of countries which have never been occupied and subdued by the Catholic Church, so we may confidently reckon that it will recede and fade away as her powers become more fully manifested, and that after having tested her divine mission by opposing her, it will bear witness to her supernatural might by being trampled down and cast out thereby.

* Milton, *Hymn on the Nativity*.