

No. 5.]

DR. SEXTON'S ORATIONS.

[Price 1d.]

18

A DEFENCE

OF

MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

BEING THE OPENING SPEECH OF

DR. SEXTON ^{Geo}

IN A DEBATE WITH MR. G. W. FOOTE,^{Esq}

HELD AT THE

NEW HALL OF SCIENCE, OLD STREET, LONDON,

ON

Tuesday and Thursday Evenings, March 24th and 26th, 1874.

"All newly-discovered truths have, at first, the lot of struggling against old beliefs, but, in the end, they are always victorious."—FICHTE.

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LONDON: J. BURNS, 15, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, W.C.

A DEFENCE OF SPIRITUALISM.

The Opening Speech of a Debate with MR. G. W. FOOTE, at the New Hall of Science, Old Street, London, on the evenings of Tuesday and Thursday, March 24th and 26th, 1874.

The following pages comprise the opening speech in a debate held at the Hall of Science, City Road, between Dr. SEXTON and Mr. G. W. FOOTE, on the evenings of Tuesday and Thursday, March 24th and 26th, 1874. The proposition which Dr. Sexton undertook to defend on the first evening was as follows:—"That the spiritualistic hypothesis is scientifically warranted by the phenomena, for which it undertakes to account." To substantiate this position, therefore, was the purpose of the speech that follows. As it contains a somewhat ample statement of facts upon which Modern Spiritualism is based, and the necessary conclusion to which those facts lead, it has been considered desirable to print it apart from the rest of the debate, which was given in the MEDIUM at the time.

The Doctor, commencing in his usual clear, forcible style of delivery, said:—

At the onset of our inquiry I will quote a passage from Arago, which, I think, exactly describes the position in which we, as Spiritualists, are placed. The great scientist remarks:—"Authorities, I admit, are of little weight in matters of science in the face of positive facts, but it is necessary that these facts exist, that they have been subjected to severe examination, that they have been skilfully grouped with a view to extract from them the truth they conceal. He who ventures to treat *à priori* a fact as absurd wants prudence. He has not reflected on the numerous errors he would have committed in regard to many modern discoveries." This is peculiarly applicable to modern Spiritualism. The facts upon which we base our views are numerous and well attested. They have been carefully sifted, weighed, arranged, and reasoned upon by the very strictest induction. They are opposed mainly on *à priori* grounds, and treated as impossible because they contradict some favourite preconceived views and oppose what is called the philosophy of the age. True, in this respect they do but share the fate of all new discoveries; for every scientific truth that is recog-

nised to-day as well established was, in the infancy of its existence, treated as an absurdity, and vehemently opposed. There is an extreme conservatism in science as in other matters, and they who have grown grey in the advocacy of particular opinions are always very reluctant to admit that they have been in error, and that some new truth is destined to shake their idol from its throne and establish a new dynasty of opinion in the place of that which has reigned so long and, to them, so satisfactorily. "An ounce of custom," says Hommel, "outweighs a ton of reason." This is, alas! too true, and all of us who have the misfortune to prefer truth to fashion, and are compelled consequently frequently to range ourselves on the unpopular side, are sure to have to contend not only with a large amount of prejudice, but very often with much more marked signs of the world's disapproval of our proceedings. Both Herodotus and Pindar call custom "the queen of the world," and the same idea is expressed by the adage, *Mundus regitur opinionibus*. New doctrines are, therefore, always unpalatable, and the difficulty one has to contend with in advocating them is very great. He who gives to the world new truths contradicting the opinions of the mass of mankind, and calculated to dethrone the spurious philosophy which society delights for the time to honour, and to destroy that which men have voted fashionable, must expect to meet with much opposition, ridicule, and even persecution. If he states the facts upon which his opinions are based, he is in great danger of being disbelieved, and treated either as a knave or a fool—a liar or a victim of delusion and imposture. Impartiality of judgment he can hardly expect to meet with; still, if he be a brave and conscientious man, he cares little for this, but is content to tell his story and bide his time.

In bringing before you the facts upon which the spiritual hypothesis is based, I have simply to ask that they be dealt with in the same way precisely as are the facts in connection with any other branch of science. I am content to take my stand on Spiritualism as a science, and only ask that its facts may be dealt with as such. I maintain that the spiritual theory is a perfect induction from the phenomena, and that, therefore, we have the same evidence of its truth that we have of the truth of the Copernican system of astronomy, or of any other well-known natural law. It is the only theory that will cover the ground occupied by all the facts; and it does this most satisfactorily. It is capable of accounting for every one of the phenomena which no other theory is, and consequently it is philosophically true. I hold, therefore, that in accepting the spirit-hypothesis we are following out the strictest Baconian induction; and that Spiritualism is as much a matter of certainty as are the laws of astronomy, of optics, or of chemistry. Nor does it avail for any one to say I have not seen the facts, and, therefore, I have had no evidence that they occur, since the same mode of reasoning should lead him to reject the best established scientific truths. He has in all probability never seen the experiments conducted upon

which the theories of magnetism and electricity are based, and yet he never thinks of calling in question the opinions of those who have made these subjects their especial study. He deems it sufficient that other men, with time, opportunity, and capacity to have looked thoroughly into the subject, have made the facts a matter of careful experiment and observation, and the theories arising out of them a matter of demonstration or induction; and so far from his even thinking of disputing their conclusions, he would hold himself incapable of judging accurately of the question. His safeguard against being misled is in the circumstance that the facts are open to his inspection should he desire to devote his time to the purpose, and if he does not he has no one to blame but himself. The fact that he will not do so, however, is a sufficient reason why his opinion on the subject is worthless, and this is equally true of Spiritualism. The facts are there for anyone to see who may take the trouble to seek them, and they who will not do so are clearly in no position to form any opinion as to the truth or falsehood of the theory that is held to account for them.

In describing the phenomena I shall not on this occasion quote from the thousands of facts that are to be found described in works on Spiritualism, and which are as conclusively established as the facts in any other branch of science, or the most common circumstances that happen in every-day life, and to dispute which is to set at defiance all the rules of evidence that are allowed to govern us in every other matter. Nor do I intend to enter into details regarding the phenomena which every Spiritualist has seen hundreds of times, and with which he is therefore as familiar as with the circumstances that occur in the business in which he may happen to be engaged. To most of these, my opponent would probably take exception, since it is singular how applicable are the remarks of Sir Chas. Bell to this subject, when he says, "Facts have been denied with a heat and pertinacity which I can never understand." I shall therefore quote only from a few authorities, and these of such a character that their testimony cannot be lightly set aside.

Dr. Hare of Philadelphia, one of the most eminent scientific men in the world, and justly called the Faraday of America, and withal a materialist, set himself to work to investigate these phenomena, firmly believing that he would soon be enabled to discover the secret by which they were produced, and explain them all upon principles that should prove in strict accordance with natural law. The result was, as most persons know, that, after much study, the most elaborate investigation, and a series of extensive experiments, conducted with the very greatest care, he became a Spiritualist. Now mark, I do not quote Dr. Hare as an authority—I want there to be no mistake on that point—I do not consider that the practice of quoting great names on the side of a question proves anything whatever in its favour; my only object in referring to him is to point out to you briefly the course that he adopted

and the process of investigation that he pursued, and which led him in the end to become a believer in the spiritual hypothesis.

In a lecture which he gave on this subject in New York nearly twenty years ago, he remarks, in reference to the views he entertained before he commenced his investigation into the phenomena:—

Viewing the manifestations as owing to a mechanical cause, they were inexplicable by any known law of physical science, unless viewed as the action of the human beings with whom they had been associated. Nothing is better established than that weight is necessary to move weight. Archimedes said, "Give me where to stand, and I will move the world." It was necessary to have a place to stand; and so in all my experience, whether as a chemist or as a natural philosopher, I found it was necessary, in order that weight should be removed that weight should react with it. An isolated body will not budge in obedience to any imponderable influence, whether of electricity or heat. If the imponderable cause of these affections be generated within a body, an explosion may result from the reaction among themselves of the constituent particles of the body; but according to the laws of *mundane* nature, *action* cannot exist without *reaction*. Pursuant to these views, I sanctioned the opinion of Faraday, that if there was a table moved when a human being was present, since the table was an inanimate body, incapable of self-motion, it was of necessity to be inferred that the human being moved the table, unconsciously, if not wilfully. I did not take this opinion from Faraday, I formed it independently, as every man must who endeavours to explain the phenomena in question by the physical laws universally admitted by men of science. Accordingly I published my opinions as coincident with those of Faraday. From my long acquaintance with the laws of motion and with the chemical and electrical reaction I was confident that the result could not arise from any of these causes; that there was no physical cause, under the name of electricity or odic force, or anything of the kind, which could account for these motions.

Every person who knows anything about science will see at once the force of these remarks. The question with Dr. Hare was—Did the phenomena occur, and, if so, were they produced by the direct action of those persons in whose presence they took place? The nonsensical notions mooted by unscientific opponents, and which are still urged with as much gravity as though they had been made the subject of mathematical demonstration, that electricity, magnetism, odic or psychic forces are the agents by which the manifestations are produced, he knew well enough could not bear a moment's investigation. Electricity cannot move tables, nor in fact act at all without cumbrous apparatus. Magnetism cannot give intelligent responses to questions, and odic force or its twin brother psychic are probably as imaginary as the philosopher's stone; and even if their existence could be proved beyond the shadow of a doubt, they could not in the slightest degree help us to the solution of the great problem of the cause of the phenomena designated spiritual. Dr. Hare therefore proceeded to ascertain

whether, in connection with what was called Spiritualism, there was in operation any force capable of accomplishing the physical phenomena then so much talked of, and if so, whether it was governed by intelligence. To this end he constructed several kinds of apparatus of the most valuable character. One instrument was invented for the express purpose of ascertaining whether any change was really made in the weight of bodies by this new power, whatever it might be. And the result was that he saw clearly that some force was in operation, which not only did not spring from any of the human beings concerned in the experiment, but frequently acted in direct antagonism to both their mental expectations and their physical powers.

He now asked himself a very important question. What was the nature of this force? Science could give no information respecting it; it did not belong to any of the known forces of nature; it needed no apparatus to evolve it, and it appeared to set at defiance all the generally recognised laws of matter. It was not electricity, for there was no battery used, neither did it follow the laws of that so-called imponderable agent. It was not magnetism, for no magnet was employed. Heat, light, and the rest of the forces of nature had no hand in it. What then was it? Aye! that was the question, and to answer this became now the object and end of Dr. Hare's further experiments. He therefore contrived a machine which is still occasionally employed for the purpose of preventing the mind of the medium from influencing in the slightest degree the replies obtained to the questions. This consisted of a disc, around which were placed the letters of the alphabet, entirely out of alphabetical order, and which, being fixed on the side of the table, revolved as the table moved. An index was placed on the face of the disc, so that when the disc moved, certain letters of the alphabet were pointed to, and the disc was so placed that the medium could not see the letters, consequently the answers obtained to questions by spelling out words could in no way be influenced by anyone at the table. I had intended bringing one of these Indicators with me for the purpose of showing how they work, but I found if I did its operation could only be seen by those near the platform. Any Spiritualist will however give you information respecting it if you desire to know more about its construction. A large number of experiments were now conducted by Dr. Hare with the strictest accuracy and the most extreme care, and withal under the judgment of a man of science second to none in the world, and the result was that Dr. Hare, the materialist, became, as many have done since, a firm believer in Spiritualism.

It was indeed quite impossible that he could come to any other conclusion, since the answers that he obtained to his questions were of such a character as showed unmistakably that they originated in the source that they professed. I would recommend all of you to read Dr. Hare's book—a new edition of which I am

just now engaged in editing—I assure you that it will well repay you for the trouble. It contains great scientific research, much erudition, careful thought, and such conclusive facts in connection with this subject as are hardly to be found elsewhere.

Those who will take the trouble to read Serjeant Cox's little book, entitled, "Spiritualism Answered by Science," will find a number of startling facts described which can in no way be accounted for on any of the theories which suppose that the phenomena are produced either by trickery and collusion or by any of the known forces of nature. Now, bear in mind that Serjeant Cox simply describes what he himself saw, and that under circumstances which do not admit of the possibility of mistake, and as he is not a Spiritualist, he is not likely to be biassed in favour of the spirit hypothesis. He describes many cases of the movement of heavy articles of furniture in his own house, and in the houses of other persons who were equally sceptical with himself of the truth of Spiritualism—and that without any contact whatever on the part of those present with the objects moved. One case related by him is worth quoting. It occurred, Serjeant Cox tells us, "in the house of Dr. Edmonds," a sceptic, and in the presence of other sceptics; "a dining-table of unusual weight and size" was moved most palpably, when no person touched it, all present kneeling on the chairs, the backs of which were turned to the table. "In that position," he says, "of the entire party, a heavy dining-table moved six times—once over a space of eight inches at a swing. Then all the party, holding hands, stood in a circle round the table at the distance from it, first of two feet, and then of three feet; so that contact by any person present was physically impossible. In this position the table lurched four times; once over a space of more than two feet, and with great force. The extent of these movements, without contact, will be understood when I state that, in the course of them, this ponderous table turned completely round; that is to say, the end that was at the top of the room when the experiment began was at the bottom of the room when it concluded. The most remarkable part of this experiment was the *finale*. The table had been turned to within about two feet of a complete reversal of its first position, and was standing out of square with the room. The party had broken up, and were gathered in groups about the room. Suddenly the table was swung violently over the two feet of distance between its then position and its proper place, and set exactly square with the room, literally knocking down a lady who was standing in the way in the act of putting on her shawl for departure. At that time nobody was touching the table, nor even within reach of it, except the young lady who was knocked down by it."

On another occasion, in a different house, with other persons present, he informs us that whilst he and some friends were looking at the pictures, "very loud sounds, as of violent blows, came from a large loo-table which stood alone in the centre of the room,

nobody being near it. We turned to look at the table, and, untouched, it tilted up almost to an angle of forty-five degrees, and continued in that position for nearly a minute; then it fell back; then it repeated the movement on the other side. None of us were standing within five feet of it at that time. The room was well lighted with gas. There was no cloth upon the table, and all beneath it was distinctly visible. Only four persons were in the room, and no one touched it, nor was near enough to touch it had he tried."

Now, as I have elsewhere remarked, in my small book on "Spirit Mediums and Conjurers," in reference to these facts, "such manifestations as these could not possibly have resulted from trickery, since, in the first place, there was no one present to play the tricks; and if there had been, detection would have been inevitable. These tables, you must bear in mind, were not touched by mortal hands, and therefore there could not have been muscular motion."

Now, whatever may be the theory that my antagonist may favour us with to explain these facts—for I presume he will hardly have the temerity to dispute them—he must clearly give up the generally entertained opinion that they resulted from the action of the muscles of the medium, and the still more preposterous notion that they were produced by anything at all analagous to the tricks of conjurers.

It is too late in the day to sneer at this matter with a sort of self-complacency, which seems to say you are a poor deluded creature, behold my superior wisdom; I don't believe in such nonsense. Here are the facts, and we demand in the true spirit of science to know what is to be done with them. If you have any theory by which they can be explained, let us hear it, in order that we may judge of its merits; if you have not, we are all the more justified in clinging to our own.

Then take the experiments of Mr. Crookes. Here we have a gentleman who occupies the very highest position in the scientific world; a Fellow of the Royal Society, the discoverer of a new metal, and a man whose fame is world-wide. He determined to examine this matter thoroughly, in the same method that he was in the habit of employing in his investigations into any other branch of science, and to conduct his experiments in the same spirit that he brought to bear upon his other researches. He was not a Spiritualist, and did not believe that the spirit hypothesis was in any way necessary to account for the phenomena with which it professed to deal. He thought it extremely probable that even if the facts were genuine they could be explained by some natural law, and that therefore the Spiritualists were in error as to the theory they had invented, which on the face of it appeared both unnecessary and extravagant. For some years he pursued his investigations, always taking great care that the circumstances should be such as to render deception impossible. In his own house, with his own scientific appliances, and under

the experienced eye of the strict Scientist did he go to work to look into this mysterious matter. The result he has just given to the world in an article in the *Quarterly Journal of Science*, one of the leading scientific magazines in the world. A few extracts from this valuable paper I will read to you.

Knowing what opposition he would have to contend with, and the spirit in which his conclusions were likely to be received, he remarks:—

“The phenomena I am prepared to attest are so extraordinary and so directly oppose the most firmly-rooted articles of scientific belief—amongst others, the ubiquity and invariable action of the law of gravitation—that, even now, on recalling the details of what I witnessed, there is an antagonism in my mind between *reason*, which pronounces it to be scientifically impossible, and the consciousness that my senses, both of touch and sight—and these corroborated, as they were, by the senses of all who were present—are not lying witnesses when they testify against my preconceptions. But the supposition that there is a sort of mania or delusion which suddenly attacks a whole roomful of intelligent persons who are quite sane elsewhere, and that they all concur to the minutest particulars, in the details of the occurrences of which they suppose themselves to be witnesses, seems to my mind more incredible than even the facts they attest.”

The spirit theory is extravagant, no doubt, but then the facts upon which it is based are extraordinary in a startling degree. Marvellous facts may need a marvellous theory to explain them. Besides, every hypothesis which to-day is recognised as well established was once deemed as extravagant as is Spiritualism now. The principle is as true to-day as it was 300 years ago, when Shakespeare enunciated it that

“There are more things in heaven and earth
Than are dreamt of in our philosophy.”

Mr. Crookes next proceeds to deal with the phenomena. These he classified and described under different heads. Only a few of them, however, can be dealt with on this occasion. Under the head of “The Phenomena of Percussive and other Allied Sounds,” he alludes to raps of various kinds occurring in all sorts of different places, “in a living tree, on a sheet of glass, on a stretched iron wire, on a stretched membrane, a tambourine, on the roof of a cab, and on the floor of a theatre,” and under every variety of circumstance, and in all cases where neither trickery nor natural law could afford the slightest clue to their cause.

He next proceeds to discuss the question which is in truth the question of questions in connection with this subject, viz., Whether the sounds thus heard are the result of some blind, unreasoning, occult, material force obeying laws of nature, whose *modus operandi*, although, perchance, lying beyond the present scope of our knowledge may yet be quite in harmony with purely material causation. To this point he devoted no

small amount of attention. Well, what was the result? Why, the same in his case as in that of every other man who has persevered in the examination of this important topic. He came to the irresistible conclusion that the phenomena were governed by intelligence, and that therefore a thinking being must have been concerned in their origination. "The intelligence," he says, "is sometimes of such a character as to lead to the belief that it does not emanate from any person present." The movement of heavy substances at a distance from the medium is next dealt with, under which head he remarks:—

"On three successive evenings a small table moved slowly across the room, under conditions which I had specially pre-arranged, so as to answer any objection which might be raised to the evidence."

Then, to show that articles of furniture are not simply moved from one place to another without the operation of any material force on the part of those present, he tells us that he saw tables raised completely from the floor under circumstances which admit of no mistake.

"On five separate occasions, a heavy dining-table rose between a few inches and $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet off the floor, under special circumstances which rendered trickery impossible. On another occasion, a heavy table rose from the floor in full light, while I was holding the medium's hands and feet. On another occasion the table rose from the floor, not only when no person was touching it, but under conditions which I had pre-arranged so as to assure unquestionable proof of the fact."

Very much ridicule has been heaped upon the heads of Spiritualists in consequence of their belief in what is called the "Levitation of Human Beings." This class of phenomena has been looked upon as being of so extravagant a character that it can only be given credence to by lunatics or idiots, and that in no possible case can it be accomplished except as the result of the grossest imposition and the most outrageous trickery. Mr. Crookes, however, in language of the most unmistakable nature, testifies to it as a fact. His words are:—

On one occasion I witnessed a chair, with a lady sitting on it, rise several inches from the ground. On another occasion, to avoid the suspicion of this being in some way performed by herself, the lady knelt on the chair in such manner that its four feet were visible to us. It then rose about three inches, remained suspended for about ten seconds, and then slowly descended. At another time two children, on separate occasions, rose from the floor with their chairs, in full daylight, under (to me) most satisfactory conditions; for I was kneeling and keeping close watch upon the feet of the chair, and observing that no one might touch them.

Pass we now to a class of phenomena of a still more conclusive character, and which, if they are established, should end all discussion of the question, since no psychic, odic, mesmeric, or other

blind force of nature can by any possibility give us a clue to their cause. These do not simply appeal to the sense of hearing, and make visible their effects to the sense of sight, but bring into the direct field of vision the agencies at work in the production of the manifestations. Mr. Crookes, in speaking of "Luminous Appearances,"—a class of phenomena that have been seen scores of times by the merest tyro in the study of Spiritualism—says:—

Under the strictest test conditions I have seen a solid self-luminous body, the size and nearly the shape of a turkey's egg, float noiselessly about the room, at one time higher than any one present could reach standing on tip-toe, and then gently descend to the floor. It was visible for more than ten minutes, and before it faded away, it struck the table three times, with a sound like that of a hard, solid body. During this time the medium was lying back, apparently insensible, in an easy chair. I have seen luminous points of light darting about and settling on the heads of different persons; I have had questions answered by the flashing of a bright light a desired number of times in front of my face. I have seen sparks of light rising from the table to the ceiling, and again falling upon the table, striking it with an audible sound. I have had an alphabetic communication given by luminous flashes occurring before me in the air, whilst my hand was moving about amongst them. I have seen a luminous cloud floating upwards to a picture. Under the strictest test conditions, I have more than once had a solid, self-luminous crystalline body placed in my hand by a hand which did not belong to any person in the room. In the light, I have seen a luminous cloud hover over a heliotrope on a side table, break a sprig off, and carry the sprig to a lady; and on some occasions, I have seen a similar luminous cloud visibly condense to the form of a hand, and carry small objects about.

Of these phenomena we may say in the language of Shakespeare:

"'Tis strange, but true; for truth is always strange,
Stranger than fiction."

Sometimes the luminous appearances assumed the form of hands, which were employed for the purpose of manipulation, as the material hands of the human being would have been under similar circumstances. Mr. Crookes remarks:—

"I will here give no instances in which the phenomenon has occurred in darkness, but will simply select a few of the luminous instances in which I have seen the hands in the light. A beautifully-formed small hand rose up from an opening in a dining-table, and gave me a flower; it appeared and then disappeared three times at intervals, affording me ample opportunity of satisfying myself that it was as real in appearance as my own. This occurred in the light in my own room whilst I was holding the medium's hands and feet. On another occasion a small hand and arm, like a baby's, appeared playing about a lady who was sitting next to me. It then passed to me and patted my arm, and pulled my coat several times."

What is called direct spirit-writing, *i.e.*, writing without the

hand of a medium being employed, also fell within the experience of Mr. Crookes, and his testimony to the reality of this class of phenomena is exceedingly valuable. No unconscious cerebration, ideo-motor motion, or psychic force can be of any avail in affording an explanation of facts of this character. Spiritualism, and that alone can solve the problem. He remarks:—

“I was sitting next to the medium, Miss Fox, the only other persons present being my wife and a lady relative, and I was holding the medium's two hands in one of mine, whilst her feet were resting on my feet. Paper was on the table before us, and my disengaged hand was holding a pencil. A luminous hand came down from the upper part of the room, and after hovering near me for a few seconds, took the pencil from my hand, rapidly wrote on a sheet of paper, threw the pencil down, and then rose up over our heads, gradually fading into darkness.”

From luminous hands the transition is easy to the appearances of entire forms of spirit-personages, and this latter manifestation Mr. Crookes had also an opportunity of seeing:—

In the dusk of the evening during a seance with Mr. Home at my house, the curtains of a window about eight feet from Mr. Home were seen to move. A dark, shadowy, semi-transparent form like that of a man, was then seen by all present standing near the window, waving the curtain with his hand: As we looked, the form faded away and the curtain ceased to move. *The following is a still more striking instance.* As in the former case, Mr. Home was the medium. A phantom form came from a corner of the room, took an accordion in its hand, and then glided about the room playing the instrument. The form was visible to all present for many minutes, Mr. Home also being seen at the same time. Coming rather close to a lady who was sitting apart from the rest of the company, she gave a slight cry, upon which it vanished.

Time will not permit me to go over all the phenomena to which he has given his valuable testimony, nor in fact is it desirable that I should do so on an occasion of this kind; my only object has been to bring before you some few of those marvellous manifestations the reality of which is established by irrefragable evidence, and which form the basis of the spiritual hypothesis.

In these cases there can be no deception, since most of the investigations were made by Mr. Crookes in his own house, under circumstances which he himself had selected as being most favourable for his purpose, and where no opportunity occurred for playing tricks had there been anyone to make the attempt, which there was not. It is sometimes objected that these manifestations can only take place in the dark, and hence they become suspicious. To this I reply that were it so it would be suspicious. But the objection is urged only by those who know nothing whatever of the matter, or who from prejudice or some other cause delight in misrepresenting the facts. For myself, the phenomena that I have seen and which served to convince me of the truth of Spiritualism, mostly took place in the full flare of the light; and this I expect has

happened in the case of everyone who has come to accept these new truths in opposition to old and long-cherished convictions.

Now what have our opponents to urge against the evidence springing from these overwhelming facts? Simply some pre-conceived notion of the impossibility of spiritual existences, the immutability of Nature's laws, the *ipse dixit* of authority, the inutility of the whole thing, all of which resolve themselves into this—I have been trained to believe differently, and I don't intend to change my opinion. Well, be it so, we have no objection; you are welcome to your prejudices, your pre-conceived notions, and your speculations about the possible and the impossible. We say with Dr. Chalmers, "We learn by descending to the sober work of seeing and feeling and experimenting. I prefer what has been seen by one pair of eyes to all reasoning and guessing."

The facts I have quoted are no doubt novel and very startling; but what of that? The only question that we have to deal with is—Are they facts? Sir Humphrey Davy very wisely remarks, "Concerning the publication of novel facts, there can be but one judgment, for facts are independent of fashion, taste, and caprice, and are subject to no code of criticism. They are more useful, perhaps, even when they contradict, than when they support received doctrines; for our theories are only imperfect approximations to the real knowledge of things." Now the question that arises here, and one which we have a right to demand to have answered, is this—What is the theory by which these and kindred phenomena are to be explained? Here are the facts, let them be accounted for on any principle but that of Spiritualism. This is the task which my opponent has to accomplish, and I will listen anxiously to hear how he proposes to set about his work.

The mode in which the spiritual hypothesis is arrived at can only be very briefly indicated here, but it is sufficient to say that it is the only theory that can cover the ground occupied by the facts, and as such is philosophically true. I defy anyone to show a flaw in the induction by which we establish the truth of the spiritual hypothesis. There is no fact in connection with this subject which it is not capable of explaining, and by which all the *disjecta membra* of the phenomena occurring under every variety of circumstance, amongst all sorts of people, in dissimilar circles, with different media, and in various places, are all consolidated into one grand whole, firm as a rock, and everlasting as truth.

I will now submit the following propositions based upon the phenomena, and shall be glad to hear what my opponent has to say to them, and to which of them he takes exception.

I.—The phenomena cannot result from the blind forces of Nature, because they are unmistakably controlled by intelligence.

II.—The intelligence is not that of the medium, nor of any person in the circle, since it is frequently given through agencies which they have no means of controlling, and has, in thousands

of cases evinced a knowledge not possessed by any of them, often giving replies to questions directly in opposition to the current of all their thoughts.

III.—There can be no source of intelligence but that of conscious thinking beings.

IV.—As the intelligence displayed in the spirit-circle springs from conscious beings, and these not forming a part of the sitters, they must either be outside the circle or present at it in some other than the ordinary material form which distinguishes the sitters.

V.—They cannot be persons in the ordinary condition of material existence outside the circle, for they hold converse with, and even read the thoughts of those who are present in it, with no means of communication beyond the walls of the house in which they may be sitting.

VI.—There must, then, be conscious, thinking, intelligent beings present in the circle who do not belong to the number of the sitters.

VII.—The sitters comprise all the persons present in the material condition in which human beings are met with here, therefore there must be intelligent existences present in some other than the ordinary material form.

VIII.—There must then be spiritual existences of some kind or other.

IX.—As they are conscious, intelligent, thinking beings, capable of holding intercourse with us, and of communicating their ideas to us, they have the power of informing us who and what they are.

X.—They all declare in unmistakable language that they are the spirits of our deceased friends and fellow-creatures who once lived here in the flesh as we do now.

XI.—Not only do they state this unanimously—for there is no difference of opinion amongst them on that score—but they give irrefragable proofs that they are what they profess to be.

XII.—The proofs are to be obtained by anyone who will take the trouble to seek for them.

These facts appear to me to prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that Spiritualism is true, and that man is the heir of immortality. Thus is the great problem solved that has forced itself in all ages and in every clime upon the attention of mankind.

“One question more than others all
From thoughtful minds implores reply,
It is, as breathed from star and pall,
What fate awaits us when we die?”

MUSIC.

(Extract from an oration delivered in the Institute, Grosvenor Street, Manchester, on Sept. 7th, 1871).

SOMEONE has said that nothing in nature is so clearly indicative of universal benevolence and goodness as the existence of music and the susceptibility of the human soul to be moved by the recondite forces of harmony and the "concord of sweet sounds." All else appears intended to serve the purpose more or less of the practical and the useful; whilst music, enrapturing the highest faculties of man's nature, seems especially intended to elevate and ennoble the being upon whom it acts, and bring him into communion with the ideal and the unseen. It can hardly be said to partake of the qualities of material things, and is only related to the real in the instruments it uses to make itself manifest; but, like the sunbeam which passes through pollution unpolluted, it is not contaminated by the grossness of the agents it employs. It fills the heart with joy and gladness when cast down and oppressed; it soothes the violent turbulence of human passion; speaks in a voice of blended sweetness and encouragement to him on whom oppression has fixed its iron heel; and by the gentle softening nature of its strains stirs the emotions of the hard-hearted and the cruel, bringing them back for a time to humanity and to love. It is intangible and invisible, but makes itself felt wherever human pulses beat; and he who does not revel in its golden delights, is destitute of one of the highest attributes of humanity. Music is by far the most perfect language of the soul; it alone can speak out from one human mind to another the deepest emotions and sympathies of the heart. The highest language of poetry may fail to express the full depths of the soul of him who penned the magic lines. Homer, and Shakspeare, and Byron, and the long roll of names that are destined to undying fame, were greater far than they appear in their mighty thoughts that have become embodied in words. Poets have ever and anon complained that the most gorgeous display of language fails to represent the bursting emotion that gives it birth. Painters tell the tale of their genius but imperfectly upon the canvas. "The best part of beauty," said Lord Bacon, "is that which a picture cannot express." But the musician expresses without difficulty the profoundest feelings, and ever finds his language adequate to the task. Music has the power of saying all that can be thought, and uttering all that can be felt, and it does this in a manner which even the idiot may appreciate. Grand thoughts flit through the mind, looking sufficiently corporeal to be taken hold of and exhibited to the world in words, till the attempt is made, when they vanish into thin air, and melt away like an unsubstantial vision. The power of harmony alone is capable of arresting and fixing them permanently within the range of human perception, and exhibiting them for the delight of others. It is in precisely those thoughts and feelings which, from their ethereal and spiritual character, the cumbrous machinery of words is unable to grapple with, that music can best take firm hold of, and vent them forth to other minds upon which they fall in soft and silvery tones, resembling the dying cadences of angel voices hymning an enchanted melody.