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FRAGMENTS
OF
OCCULT TRUTH.

No. I.

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(An answer by the "Occultists" of The Theosophical Society, to a letter from a prominent Fellow of the Society—a Spiritualist—Mr. W. Terry, Editor of HARBINGER OF LIGHT, Melbourne, Australia.)

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We have received from our esteemed Australian Brother Theosophist, W. H. Terry, Esq., the following interesting and temperate note on some supposed errors of Occultists when dealing with the phenomena of Spiritualism. The subject is one of universal interest, and we shall require, therefore, no apology, either for reproducing our good brother's communication *in extenso*, or for appending thereto some few fragments of the lessons taught us in the Occult schools, which may possibly both help to remove his personal difficulties and tend to convey to Spiritualists generally, a clearer conception of the causes of many of the phenomena of which they have had experience. Mr. Terry writes upon—

Spirits Embodied and Disembodied.

“Aiming at the resuscitation of old truths, or truths long since known but lost sight of, and the evolution of new truths, or truths not yet unfolded to the comprehension of humanity, the elucidation and beneficent application of the innate powers of the human spirit and the encouragement of harmonious thought, the Theosophical Society occupies an elevated and commanding position ; but to maintain and strengthen that position it is essential that the public utterances of its prominent representatives should be strictly philosophical and capable of standing the test of critical analysis. Most of the writings and reported addresses emanating from my brother Theosophists that have come under my notice have in their main features complied with this condition, but I have observed in not a few of them a feature that to me appears to deviate from it, and that is the ignoring of disembodied human spirits as factors in the production of occult mental and physical phenomena.

“Asserting that ‘man is a spirit’ and that WILL is a function of the spirit, in fact, its executive, (and most of those who have not had personal experience of the wonderful physical phenomena producible at will by many Indian Yogis and adepts, will on account of the clear evidence of their occurrence give credence to them,) it cannot be assumed that the physical body has anything to do with the production of these phenomena. They are undoubtedly the result of spiritual forces, and, as they come in response to the desire of the persons who have acquired or are gifted with the occult power to produce them, they are evidently the result of invisible forces, guided by the human will, and, unless the physical body can be shown to be a necessary fulcrum, there is no valid reason why the disembodied spirit should not be able to produce similar phenomena.

"Twenty years of investigation of the phenomena of Spiritualism, Psychology, Mesmerism, and Clairvoyance, although it has served to show me how little I know of the mysteries of nature, has afforded me conclusive evidence that disembodied spirits can and do produce physical and mental phenomena on the surface of this world and of the independent action of their intelligence at least, so far as the influence of the embodied spirits of those in communication was concerned. For instance, A. B., a sensitive, passes into a trance: A voice differing from his normal one speaks through his lips and says he is C. D. who died in a neighbouring colony some years previous, and is anxious to send a message to his friends there. The message is written as dictated by him, none present having either heard of him or the persons whose names he gives; all that is stated by him proves correct; the names of his friends, the address,—the fact of his passing away as specified. Again, a materialized form appears and asks for a person known to the writer, but who resides some five hundred miles away; this form which professes to be identical with one that has appeared in London and has since given many evidences of identity of both form and intelligence, avers that he has met the gentleman whose name he mentioned in London and that the said gentleman then spoke certain words to him. On writing to this gentleman the statement is corroborated, though none knew till then anything about it, and his name even had not been in the mind of the only person present who knew him.

"In these instances which are not at all *singular*, but rather *representative* of common occurrences in my experience, we have a manifestation of distinct intelligence claiming to be a disembodied human spirit, and giving proofs, more or less conclusive, of its identity, cumulative evidences of this generally resulting from further intercourse with the unseen intelligence. In another instance where what professes to be a disembodied human spirit produces certain physical phenomena we appeal to clairvoyance, whilst the phenomenon is taking place in another apartment, and the clairvoyant describes a spiritual form producing the phenomenon together with the *modus operandi*. Subsequently on describing the form to the only one who had known her in the body it is immediately recognised as that of a departed relative who has often written automatically through a sensitive since her departure from material life. At other times I have tested with two clairvoyants the identities of one I knew and loved in this life, and they have each minutely described the form and dress correctly, but both differing materially from the conception I had at the time in my mind, and neither of the clairvoyants having knowledge of the form described when in earth life. With innumerable experiences of this kind and constant intercourse with intelligences who consistently maintain their identity as the disembodied spirits of men and women who have lived on this earth, giving mental and physical evidences of their power over mind and matter, the

position of those Theosophists who deny to disembodied spirits a legitimate share in the marvellous phenomena that are agitating the minds of all civilized nations, at the present time, seems eminently unphilosophical. I am not so unreasonable as to assume my personal experiences a demonstration to others. They are merely given to justify my position. I rely upon my *a priori* argument that the phenomena are admittedly producible by the human spirit, and that there is no evidence forthcoming to show that the said spirit loses its power in this direction when finally separated from the physical form. If my Oriental brothers can point out anything illogical in my argument or furnish a rational theory to account for the phenomena I attribute to disembodied human spirits, it will receive from me all the consideration it demands from one whose aim is to gain and give as much light as possible, not only to our Brotherhood, but to that larger brotherhood of humanity who have less facilities for acquiring it than those within our ranks, for this, in my estimation, is the essence of Theosophy."

It is but fair that we should meet the charge brought, and in the same friendly and frank spirit shown in his letter by our esteemed Australian brother Theosophist. Until some one more competent, enters the arena of discussion to pick up the glove flung by Spiritualism to Theosophy across the oceans, we will take the liberty of saying a few words—not in our defence—but as a matter of courtesy to our correspondent.

"Those Theosophists who deny to disembodied spirits a legitimate share in the marvellous phenomena" are few, indeed, for the great majority of Theosophists concern themselves with Spiritualism very little,—if at all. Indeed, our members may be divided into five principal classes and described as follows:—

(1) Men profoundly concerned in the revival of their respective religious philosophies in all their pristine purity—Buddhist devotees outnumbering all others. These neither know of, nor do they care for, Spiritualism.

(2) Students of various philosophies, searchers after truth, whencesoever it may come. They neither believe nor disbelieve in spirits. They are open to conviction in any way, but will accept nothing on second-hand testimony.

(3) Materialists, Freethinkers, Agnostics, who care as little for Occultism as they do for Spiritualism. Their only concern is to free the masses from the fetters of ignorance and superstition, and educate them. Many, indeed most of them, are philanthropists who hold it more expedient to devote their energies to the assistance of the living, than to occupy their time in conversations with the dead.

(4) Spiritualists and Spiritists who could not well be accused of any such "heresy". And finally,

(5) Occultists, who do not number half a per cent. in the Theosophical Society.

These latter are the only "Theosophists" who are really open to our correspondent's accusation and even these, if we look beyond the veil of words which more or less conceals the ideas of both Spiritualists and Occultists, will prove to differ less widely on these points from our correspondent than he seems to suppose. For, in this as in so many other cases, it is in a great measure to the different significations attached to the same terms by the two parties, that their apparent irreconcilable divergence is due. "Words" as Bacon, we think, says, "mightily perplex the wisdom of the wisest, and like a Tartar's bow, shoot backwards into the minds of those that follow them," and so here the conflict of opinions between Spiritualists and Occultists is solely due to the fact that the former (who overrate their quality and character) dignify by the name of "spirits" certain *reliquiæ* of deceased human beings, while the Occultists reserve the name of Spirit for the highest principle of human nature and treat these *reliquiæ* as mere *eidolons*, or astral *simulacra*, of the real spirit.

In order to understand clearly the view of the Occultists, it is necessary to glance at the constitution of the living human being. Even the spiritual theory teaches that man is a trinity, composed of (1) a higher spirit, or the "Spiritual Soul" as ancient philosophers designated it; (2) its envelope—the etherial form or shadow of the body—called by the Neoplatonists the "animal soul"; and (3) the physical body.

Although from one point of view this is broadly correct, yet according to Occultists, to render our conceptions of this truth clearer and follow successfully the course of man after death, it is necessary to subdivide further these three entities and resolve them into their constituent principles. This analysis being almost wholly unknown to Western nations, it is difficult in some cases to find any English words by which to represent the Occult sub-divisions, but we give them in the least obscure phraseology that we can command.

Divisions of the
Spiritualists.

Subdivisions of the
Occultists.

1. The Body.

2. The Animal Soul
or
Perisprit.

1. The Physical body, composed wholly of matter in its grossest and most tangible form.
2. The Vital principle—(or *Jiv-atma*)—, a form of force, indestructible and when disconnected with one set of atoms, becoming attracted immediately by others.
3. The Astral body (*Linga Sharira*) composed of highly etherialized matter ; in its habitual passive state, the perfect but very shadowy duplicate of the body ; its activity, consolidation and form depending entirely on the *kama rupa*.
4. The Astral shape (*kama rupa*) or body of desire, a principle defining the configuration of—
5. The animal or physical intelligence or consciousness or Ego, analogous to, though proportionally higher in degree than, the reason, instinct, memory, imagination, &c., existing* in the higher animals.

* Western Science, of course, as a rule, holds that animals have no conscious Ego, but this we know to be erroneous ; they possess no spiritual, but they *do* possess an animal, consciousness. Could men communicate with them, they would discover not only this, but also that many of the anthropoid apes possess an intelligence, consciousness &c., little inferior to that of lunatics and madmen, and some desperately wicked and depraved men who have, in fact, become animals, through the loss, temporary or permanent, of their sixth and seventh principles, even while the combination of the other five principles is still intact, *i. e.*, even during life.

Was it some hazy tradition of the truth handed down through the Romish Church, which has ever possessed some secret knowledge of the teachings of the ancient mysteries, or was it the great Poet Soul's own glimpses into the Astral Light, that made Dante represent the souls of several of his enemies as already in the "Inferno" though the men themselves still lived upon earth ? Of course, the fragment of truth thus embodied, was utterly distorted by the malign influence of the then prevalent material Hell superstition—but it was quite possible, as the Modern West has still to realize that the souls of some of these evil men might have already passed away (though not to the fabled Inferno), whilst the men themselves still lived.

3. The Spiritual Soul or Spirit.

- 6. The Higher or Spiritual intelligence or consciousness, or spiritual Ego, in which mainly resides the sense of consciousness in the *perfect* man, though the lower dimmer animal consciousness co-exists in No. 5
- 7. The Spirit—an emanation from the ABSOLUTE ; uncreated ; eternal ; a state rather than a being.

Now the change that we call death, only immediately affects the first three constituents ; the body decomposes to enter into new combinations, the vital force is dissipated to help to animate new organisms, and the astral human form (Linga Sharira) dies with the body.

There remain four principles. As a rule (we except the cases of the higher adepts) one of two things occurs in accordance with the Universal Law of Affinity. If the spiritual EGO has been in life, material in its tendencies, placing its main enjoyment in, and centering its desires on, material objects and the gratification of earthly desires, then, at death, it continues to cling blindly to the lower elements of its late combination, and the true spirit severs itself from these and passes away elsewhere. To follow its course is beside the present question since the remaining principles in which personal or animal consciousness remains have parted with it for ever, and it would require a complete exposition of the entire philosophy of Occultism to explain fully *its* course ; suffice it to say, now, that it passes away (taking with it no fragment of the individual consciousness of the man with which it was temporarily associated) to fulfil its mission, still guided and governed by the irresistible cyclic impulse which first projected it through the veil of primitive kosmic matter.

But if, on the other hand, the tendencies of the EGO have been towards things spiritual, if its aspirations have been heaven-wards (we use a conventional term), if it have, when weighed as it were in the balance, a greater affinity for the spiritual than for the earthly constituents (with their accompanying desires) of the combination in which it recently took part, then will it cling to the spirit, and with this pass into the adjoining so-called world of effects, (in reality, a state, and not a place), and there purified of much of its still remaining material taints, evolve out of itself by the spirit's aid a new Ego, to be reborn (after a brief period of freedom and enjoyment) in the next higher world of causes, an objective world

similar to this present globe of ours, but higher in the spiritual scale, where matter and material tendencies and desires play a far less important part than here.

In either case, it is not a matter of Judgment, of Salvation and Damnation, of Heaven and Hell, but solely the operation of the Universal Law of Affinity or Attraction, which makes the EGO cling in one case to the more material, in the other to the spiritual components of the late, now death-parted, aggregation. Now neither during its gestation in the subjective world of effects, nor during its temporary period of the enjoyment in its newly evolved Ego-hood of the fruits of its good deeds, its *Karma* on earth, nor after its entry on rebirth into the higher objective world of causes can the Ego re-enter this present world. During the first period it is, so to speak, dormant, and can no more issue from the state in which it is developing than a child can come out of its mother's womb to pay a visit before the period of pregnancy concludes. During the second period, however etherial and purified of gross matter the regenerated Ego may be, it is still subject to the physical and universal laws of matter. It *cannot*, even if it would, span the abyss that separates its state from ours. It can be visited in spirit by men, it cannot descend into our grosser atmosphere and reach us. It attracts, it cannot be attracted, its spiritual polarity presenting an insuperable obstacle. Once reborn into the higher world and (independent of the physical impossibility of any communication between its world and ours, to all but the very highest adepts) the new Ego has become a new person; it has lost its old consciousness linked with earthly experiences and has acquired a new consciousness which, as time rolls on, will be interpenetrated by its experiences in that higher sphere. The time will come, no doubt, but many steps higher on the ladder, when the Ego will regain its consciousness of all its past stages of existence, but in the next higher world of causes, or activity, to our own, the new Ego has no more remembrance of its earthly career than we here have of the life that preceded this present one.

Therefore it is that the Occultists maintain that no SPIRITS of the departed can appear or take part in the phenomena of séance-rooms. To what *can* appear and take part in these, the Occultists refuse the name of spirits.

But it may be said what is that that *can* appear?

We reply—merely the animal souls or perispirits of the deceased. It might appear from what we have said that while this, according to our previous exposition, would be true in

the case of the spiritually-minded, in that of the materially-minded we should have these *plus* the spiritual Ego or consciousness. But such is not the case. Immediately on the severance of the spirit, whether at death, or (as, we have already hinted, is sometimes the case) before death, the spiritual Ego is dissipated and ceases to exist. It is the result of the action of spirit on matter, and it might, to render the matter more clear, be described as a combination of spirit and matter, just as flame is the result of the combination of oxygen with the substance being oxygenized and might loosely be described as the combination of the two. Withdraw the oxygen and the flame ceases, withdraw the spirit, and the spiritual Ego disappears. The sense of individuality in spirit cannot exist without combination with matter. Thus the pure planetary spirits, when first propelled into the circle of necessity, have no individual consciousness, only the absolute consciousness which they share with all fragments of the spirit hitherto entirely uncombined with matter. As they, entering into generation, descend the ladder and grow gradually more and more hemmed in by matter and isolated from the universal spirit, so the sense of individuality, the spiritual Egoship, grows. How finally on re-ascending the circle, step by step, they regain on reunion with the universal, the absolute consciousness, and simultaneously all the individual consciousnesses which they have developed at each stage of their descending and ascending progress, is one of the highest mysteries.

But to return to the spiritual Egoship developed on this earth ; if too tainted to follow the spirit in its upward course, it is, as it were, forthwith torn asunder from it. Left in the terrestrial atmosphere without the sustaining spirit that gave it existence, it has to disappear as the flame does when the oxygen is exhausted. All the material elements which in combination with the spirit gave it a consistency, fly by the Law of Affinity to join the two other principles that remain of the perispirit or animal soul, and the spiritual Ego ceases to exist.

Thus alike in all cases all that remain, all that can appear, are the shells of the deceased, the two principles which we call the animal or surviving astral souls, or animal Ego.

But there is this to be noted. As the clay, as Saadi says, long retains traces of the perfume of the roses, which once honoured it with their companionship, so the etherialized matter which has been in combination with spirit, long retains a power of resisting disintegration. The more pure the spiritual Ego,

the less of the matter which in combination with the spirit went to form it, does it leave behind clinging to the two principles ; the more impure, the greater the mass of such spirit-vitalized matter which remains to invigorate the *reliquiæ*.

Thus it follows that in the case of the pure and good, the shells rapidly disintegrate, and the animal soul having ever been kept in subjection is feeble and will-less, and it can very rarely, if ever, happen that such should voluntarily appear or manifest themselves—their vitality, desires and aspirations almost exclusively existed in what has passed away. No doubt a power exists which can compel even these to appear, a power taught by the evil science of necromancy, rightly denounced by all good men of old. But why evil it may be asked ? Because until these shells have dissipated, a certain sympathy exists between them and the departed spiritual Ego which is gestating in the fathomless womb of the adjoining world of effects, and to disturb the shells by necromantic sorcery is at the same time to disturb the foetal spiritual Ego.

We said that these shells in such cases rapidly decay, the rapidity being exactly proportional to the purity of the departed spiritual Ego, and we may add that similarly the rapidity of gestation of the new Ego is proportional to the purity of the old Ego out of which it is evolved. Happily necromancy is unknown to modern Spiritualists, so that it is next to impossible that the *reliquiæ* of the good and pure should ever appear in the séance-room. No doubt, the *simulacra* of some spiritual Egos whose fate trembled in the balance, whose affinities, earthwards and heaven-wards, to use the popular phraseology, were nearly equal, who have left too much of the matter behind that has been in combination to form them, who will lie long in foetal bonds before being able to develop the new Ego-hood ; no doubt, we say such *simulacra* may survive longer and may occasionally appear under exceptional conditions in séance rooms, with a dim-dazed consciousness of their past lives. But even this, owing to the conditions of the case, will be rare, and they will never be active or intelligent, as the stronger portions of their wills—the higher portions of their intelligence—have gone elsewhere.

Nature draws no hard and fast lines though in the balance of forces very slight differences in opposing energies may produce the most divergent results. All entities shade off from one end to the other of the chain by imperceptible degrees, and it is impossible for man to gauge the exact degree of purity of the deceased at which the re-appearance voluntarily of

his *reliquiæ* through the agency of mediumship becomes impossible, but it is absolutely true that, broadly speaking, as a law, it is only the *reliquiæ* of non-spiritually-minded men, whose spiritual Egos have perished, that appear in séance-rooms and are dignified by Spiritualists with the title of "spirits of the departed."

These shells, these animal souls, in whom still survive the major portions of the intelligence, will-power, and knowledge that they posssssed when incorporated in the human combination, invigorated too by the re-assimilation of the spirit-vitalized matter that once combined with the spirit to compose their spiritual Ego, are often powerful and highly intelligent and continue to survive for lengthened periods, their intense desire for earthly life enabling them to seize from the decaying *simulacra* of the good and feeble the material for prolonged existence.

To these *eidolons*, Occultists are used to give the name of elementaries, and these it is that by the aid of the half-intelligent forces of nature which are attracted to them, perform most of the wonders of the séance-rooms. If to these shells, these *eidolons*, which have lost their immortality and whence the divine essence has for ever departed, our brothers, the Spiritualists, insist on applying the title of "spirits of the dead"—well and good—they are not spirits at all, they are of the earth, earthy, all that remains of the dead when their spirits have flown—but if this be understood, and it be nevertheless considered desirable to call them that to which they are the precise antitheses—it is after all merely a case of misnomer.

But let there be no mistake as to what they *are*; hundreds and thousands of lost and ruined men and women all over the globe attest the degradation to which constant subjection to their influence in mediumship, &c., too generally leads, and we who know the truth should ill discharge our duty if we did not warn all Spiritualists in the strongest terms possible, against allowing this misuse of terms to mislead them as to the real nature and character of the disembodied entities with which they so constantly and confidingly deal.

Now probably Spiritualists will admit that our views would explain the vast mass of trash, frivolous nonsense and falsehood communicated through mediums, as also the manner in which so many of these, good and honest to begin with, gradually grow into immoral impostors. But many objections will be raised. One man will say—"I have repeatedly conversed with

my late father—a better, kinder-hearted, more spiritual-minded man never lived—and on one occasion he told me a fact, unknown to me, and, I believe, to every one living, which I subsequently verified.”

Nothing is simpler—the father’s image was in the son’s mind—thus put *en rapport*, the disembodied elementary which, if of one of the more intelligent classes, has glimpses of things in the astral light, and can here and there dimly distinguish the pictures which record every deed, word and thought, (pictures which we are all unconsciously incessantly evolving, pictures which survive long after those who originated them have passed away) the elementary, we say, scanning these easily picks up sufficient facts for its purpose, and by its will materializes itself, partly out of matter drawn from the medium’s body, partly out of inert kosmic matter drawn to it by the help of the elementals or half-blind forces of nature which it, and probably the medium also, has attracted and stands forth the counterpart of the dead father and talks of things known only to that dead father. Of course, if the matter talked of were known to any present, both elementary and medium, if in a trance, could equally know it, but we have purposely supposed one of those rare cases which are considered to be the strongest proofs of “spirit identity,” as it is called. Of course, too, every thing that has once passed before that son’s mind, intonation of voice, tricks of manner, infirmities of temper, though apparently forgotten at the moment, are really indelibly recorded in his memory, as is proved by their immediate recognition when reproduced by the elementary who has fished them out of those dormant records.

And it must be remembered that these apparently strong and perfect cases are very rare, and that the elementaries who come as A. or B., usually, if they personate people of any note, make gross blunders and almost without exception betray their falsehood in one way or another, Shakespeare and Milton dictating trash, Newton grossly ignorant of his own *Principia*, and Plato teaching a washed-out Neoplatonic sentimental Christian philosophy and so on. At the same time undoubtedly in rare cases the ghostly relics of very clever, very bad and very determined men constitute disembodied entities of high intelligence, which survive for a lengthened period, and the wickeder and more material they are in all their tendencies, the longer do they escape disintegration.

The Orthodox Church is much nearer the truth when it calls the entities that are mostly dealt with in séance-rooms "devils", than are the Spiritualists who call them *Spirits*. We do not mean that they are at all generally actively malevolent, but their magnetic attractions are evil, and they incline and lead those with whom they have much to do to the same evil, material passions, which have been their own ruin.

Naturally now some Spiritualists will object that this cannot be true since, despite the mass of folly and gibberish, or worse, often heard in séance-rooms, the purest sentiments and really lofty ideas and teachings are not so very rarely expressed through mediums.

Several points have, however, to be borne in mind. In the first place, though proved unfit for further development, and, therefore, doomed in most cases by the eternal law of the survival of the fittest to be disintegrated and, losing personal consciousness, to be worked up again in the lower worlds into new combinations, all elementaries are by no means actively wicked all round. On the balance, their whole natures proved to have a greater affinity to matter than to spirit, and they are, therefore, incapable of further progress, but when dealing with a pure circle and speaking through a still pure medium (very few mediums, indeed, continue thus after a long course of mediumship) the better and less degraded side of their nature comes out, and it is quite possible for elementaries to have a perfect intellectual knowledge and appreciation of virtue and purity and enlightened conceptions of truth, and yet be innately vicious in their tendencies. We meet plenty of men who have a sentimental love for virtue, and yet whose lives are one unbroken course of lust and self-indulgence and as the men were, so are the elementaries, their *reliquiæ*. If we at times speak bitterly of popular modern Christianity, it is because we know that with all its other ennobling and saving tendencies, just on this all important point it leads to the destruction of myriads of souls. For it leads to the belief that it signifies little what a man does, if he only finally believes that his sins are forgiven him, and that by relying on the merits of Jesus Christ he may escape the vengeance of the Lord. But there is no anthropomorphic Lord, no vengeance, no forgiveness; there is simply the action of a natural law impressed on the universe by the Absolute—simply a question of balance of affinities, and they, whose deeds and general tendencies are earthly, go down in the scale, rarely, very rarely, to rise again in their own identi-

ties, and those in whom these tendencies are spiritual pass upwards.

It is not, however, possible here to enter into the great questions thus glanced at, and we return to the subject of high, or comparatively high, teachings through mediums.

Now it must not for a moment be supposed that all we hear from these latter comes from elementaries. In the first place, a great many well-known mediums are clever impostors. There are notorious trance mediums, especially women, who steadily work up for their so-called trance orations, and these being really clever and working at good books, deliver essays of a respectable and at times almost first-class character. There is no spiritual influence at work here, the only apparently abnormal feature in these cases is that persons possessing such fair abilities should be willing thus to prostitute them, and that people who can talk so well and touchingly of truth and purity, should yet live such lives of falsehood and immorality. Alas! *meliora videor proboque deteriora sequor*, has ever found a response in too many human hearts and has in all ages rung the annihilation-knell of too many Egos.

In the second place, in the case of pure and genuine mediums, who in a trance pass entirely under the influence of their own seventh principle, the *augoeïdes* of the Greeks, the whole teachings come from the medium's own soul, and it is very rare to obtain thus any thing higher than the medium's own intellect, when in a state of spiritual excitement, could produce.

It may be said that in many such cases, the medium says himself or herself, that it is Judge Edmonds, or the late Bishop of——&c., that is teaching him or her, but this is merely due to the intervention of mischievous elementaries who are always crowding about every medium, and who, if he is too pure, to enable them to get command over him, yet, ever anxious to get a finger in every pie, confuse and deceive him. Only an adept can clearly and consciously place the spiritual Ego wholly under the domination of the Spirit. Mediums who in trances, unconsciously succeed in doing this, are unaware of the source whence they derive their perceptions and can be made to believe by any elementary exerting any influence over them, through any weak point in their character, that these are derived from it. The same, though in a minor degree, is the case with those rare, high, because specially pure, mediums, whose Ego and Spirit can soar together, when the rest of the combination is in a trance, into the astral light, and there can read all the highest thoughts that man has ever thought. True,

the Ego of the highest and best mediums can reproduce in this material world only in a fragmentary and confused manner what it reads in the astral light, but still even this dim reproduction is sometimes of a character far transcending the capacities alike of the medium and all those present. How it comes that the thoughts thus fished up like pearls out of the astral light come often to be attributed by the medium to spirits we have already explained.

But an even more common source of inspiration of mediums, is the mind of one or more of those present. When in a trance, the spiritual soul, (the sixth and seventh principles) can read all that is recorded in the mind or memory of those towards whom it is in any way attracted, and the medium's utterances will in such cases be quite up to the highest standard of those with whom it is thus *en rapport*, and if these are pure, highly cultivated persons, the teachings thus received will be equally pure and intellectual. But here again the unconscious medium as a whole does not know whence its perceptions are being derived. In its spiritual soul it knows no doubt, but in its combination with the other principles—a combination necessary for the writing or speaking of those perceptions,—it is quite in the dark and can be impressed by any elementary, of sufficient force, at hand, with any conception in regard to this point that it chooses to convey.

In truth, mediumship is a dangerous, too often a fatal capacity, and if we oppose Spiritualism, as we have ever consistently done, it is not because we question the reality of their phenomena, which, we know, can and do occur (despite the multitudes of fraudulent imitations) and which our adepts can reproduce at will without danger to *themselves*, but because of the irreparable spiritual injury (we say nothing of the mere physical sufferings) which the pursuit of Spiritualism inevitably entails on nine-tenths of the mediums employed. We have seen scores, nay rather hundreds of, so to say, good, pure, honest young men and women, who but for the cultivation of this evil capacity for the reception of impressions by elementaries, might, and would in all probability, have lived lives, leading to higher things, but who through the gradual pernicious influence of these low, earth-bound natures have sunk, from bad to worse, ending, often prematurely, lives that could lead but to spiritual ruin.

These are no speculations—we speak that we do know—and if one in five mediums, who habitually exercise their capacity, escape the doom that overtakes so many, these exceptions cannot justify the Spiritualists in aiding and abetting the crowd of

professional mediums who gamble away their immortality with the lower material influences. The practice of mediumship for good purposes, at rare intervals, by virtuous mediums, intermediately ever careful to strengthen their moral and spiritual natures, by pure lives and holy aspirations, is one thing, and the habitual practice, in a worldly, careless, undevout spirit, for gain is another, and this latter cannot be too strongly denounced alike in the highest interests of the mediums and of the sitters who employ them.

“ Evil communications corrupt good manners ” is an eternal truth, trite and hackneyed though it be, and no evil communications are so evil as those subtle influences, that radiate from the low, bestial elementaries who crowd the séance-rooms of immoral, or more or less demoralized, mediums, too weak and low to make themselves heard or seen, but strong enough in their intensely material tendencies, to diffuse a moral poison into the mental atmosphere of all present.

That men bewildered amidst the crumbling ruins of *effete* religions, should madly grasp at every clue by which there seems some faint hope of penetrating the cloud-shrouded labyrinth of the mystery of the universe, is neither wonderful nor reprehensible, but it is not through mediums, the prey of every idle spook and elementary that the great truth is to be reached, but by that rigorous course of study, self-discipline and self-purification which is taught in the temple of Occultism to which Theosophy is, in the present day, the high road.

But we digress. Whether he accepts our explanations or not, (and *we* KNOW that they are true) our correspondent will, we believe, admit that in what we have written we have explained according to our philosophy, not only the particular instances he quotes, but at the same time the *modus occurrendi* of most of the phenomena of the séance-room, and though in doing this we have glanced at numberless subjects of the highest importance requiring much further explanation, we have already so far exceeded the space usually allotted to such disquisitions, that we must, however unwillingly, close, for the present, this interesting discussion.

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