

way, even at the present time—in which I was threatened with the exposure of some imputed official delinquency. I supposed the purpose was to extort money from me, but at this interview I made some inquiries about it, and was told, among other things, that it was of no consequence. I paid no attention to it, and it was not many days before I ascertained that it was indeed of no moment, for I received another in the same handwriting, which showed me the writer had given up all hopes of getting money out of me, and consoled himself for the disappointment by saying to me—

“That your face is the title-page to a tragedy, and that nature made you a villain, is
PUBLIC OPINION.”

Another feature was, that now for the first time in this connection I saw a clairvoyant, and our interview, which lasted nearly three hours, was conducted partly through him and partly through the rappings. And now, too, for the first time, I witnessed some of the more elevated teachings of this matter, so much of which I have since received. I do not record them here, for I have not the space, and it will suffice to say that they were such as no pure Christian could take exception to.

My next manifestation was when I was alone by myself, and it, like the previous private incident, seemed to come for the express purpose of reaching an impression of collusion that was lurking in my mind. It came when I was awake and in full possession of my senses, when I was not thinking of this subject (for I was reading one of Scott's novels), when my lamp was burning so that I could see every thing around me, and when I knew that no other person was present. I give it in the words of my journal, as I recorded it at the time:

Monday, February 17, 1851.

To-night, after I had gone to bed, and while I lay reading, according to my usual custom, I felt a touching on my left thigh, which I at first

thought was the twitching of the muscles which all will at times experience. It continued, however, so long, and with such regularity of intervals, that I began to think it could not be from that cause. I accordingly put my hand down by the side of and upon my thigh, and the touching ceased. The moment I withdrew my hand it was renewed. This I did several times, and always with the same result. I then altered the position of my hand. Formerly I had laid it flat upon the spot touched, so as completely to cover it, but now I laid it so that the edge of my hand touched my thigh and my fingers extended off laterally. The touchings on my thigh were renewed, and not only that, but there was a feeling on the top of my hand and across my fingers, as if that which touched my thigh had passed across my hand and touched each finger as it passed. It seemed like a stream of electricity passing across and touching my hand, and then touching my thigh with a spot about as large as my little finger. I placed my hand in that position and took it away again several times, and uniformly with the same result. I removed all clothes from my person, but with the same result.

This continued for twenty or twenty-five minutes, during which time I resorted to various expedients to test the reality of what I felt. I determined to ascertain whether it was intelligent. I asked a question aloud. While I was asking, the touching ceased, and when my question was put, my thigh was twice touched with distinct intervals. I repeated the question mentally with the same result, only the answer was given by three touches passing across my hand to my thigh. I asked other questions, but no attention was paid to them.

These touchings were on the outer side of my left thigh. After continuing some time, they ceased at that spot, and made their appearance on the front of my thigh more faintly, and touching a spot about the size of a penny. They continued there only a few minutes, when I was touched sharply twice on my right foot at two different places, as if by the point of a nail in the hands of a child or some feeble person.

After that there came a stream of touchings from my left big toe, all the way up my leg to the upper part of the thigh. They were very numerous, and so rapid as to form almost a stream, yet each touch was quite distinct.

This stream ran up and down my leg several times in a perfectly straight line, and then ceased.

The touchings then appeared at my left side, near my loins, very gently and at intervals until I fell asleep.

During the first part of this, I sat up in my bed, and took my lamp in my hand and held it close to my thigh, so that I could see it very distinctly, and conducted some considerable part of the inquiry with the lamp thus held.

February 23d.

Last night, between twelve and one, I again experienced these touchings. They were confined to the side of my thigh. They were less distinct, and more gentle, and continued a less time, but were accompanied by a soft breeze gently fanning my forehead.

At my next interview nothing particular occurred beyond what I have already mentioned, except these things: one was, that at one time the rappings were as if by five or six persons at once, and with different sounds, some strong and vigorous, and some faint, as if by children; and the other was, that at our request the rappings changed from the floor to the table, and to different parts of the table, as we pointed out the spot.

The next interview had this peculiar feature. An old gentleman came into the room unexpectedly to us all, and laid upon the table a piece of paper, so folded as to conceal the writing, and asked an answer. He got one, and said it was correct, and that it related to an incident which had occurred sixty-eight years ago, and before any of the rest of those present were born, and which was known only to him.

I remark, *en passant*, that in my detail I am confining myself to an account only of the new features that were from time to time presented, purposely omitting those which were a mere repetition of what I have already mentioned, and some of which occurred at almost every interview.

About this time, as I was sitting one day alone at work in my library, the thought suddenly intruded itself upon my mind, that I must go to a person who was named and magnetize him, and I would receive a communication from a spirit in a higher condition than any who had yet communed with me. Now, as I had no acquaintance with that person, never having seen him but once, and then hardly exchanged ten words with him, and as I did not know how to magnetize him, never having seen the operation but once, I disregarded the impression. In a day or two it came again with great distinctness, and both times when I was

not thinking of the subject, but my mind was intently engaged on something else. After it had come the second time, I sought a rapping medium, and inquired about it. I was told that it was not, as I had supposed, my own imagining, but a direction that it would be well for me to heed. I accordingly sought an interview with the person named, who was a clairvoyant, a rapping medium, and a medium for physical manifestations. At the appointed time I met him, with a party of six or eight others, none of whom had I ever seen before. And much to my surprise I received a communication pointed directly to two trains of thought in my mind; one that had been there for some twenty-five years, and another that had been there some two or three months, but neither of which had I ever uttered, or even hinted at, to mortal man or woman. For some time they were spoken to as distinctly as if I had proclaimed them with a loud voice. I was startled, for here was to me evidence from which I could not escape, that my most secret thoughts were known to the intelligence that was dealing with me. There was no avoiding the conclusion. Reason upon it as I would, imagine what solution I might, there was the fact plainly before me, and I knew it. The conversation to the others present was an enigma. They did not understand it, nor could they, unless they had known the secret thoughts which furnished the text.

I confess this staggered me, and the more I thought upon it, the more inexplicable it seemed. I procured books on mesmerism, to see if I could find a solution, but still the fact—the fact was there. And, as if to confound all my speculations on the subject, on one occasion soon after that, when I was on my way to meet with a medium, I determined in my mind to ask a particular question, but I got no chance to ask it, yet it was answered by a direct communication made to me as distinctly as if I had uttered it aloud, yet no human being knew my purpose.

This, which was then so new and surprising to me, has since been of such frequent occurrence with me, and with

others, that it has become manifest as one of the strongest and most marked features of the whole matter—one which very soon becomes palpable to the inquirer.

The only thing in my next interview worthy of notice, in this connection, was this: After it was over, I was standing in the hall, near the foot of the stairs, receiving a pamphlet from one of the gentlemen. The raps came on the stairs as the medium descended, calling for the alphabet and spelling out a sentence, which directed me what to do with respect to an article in the book.

At my next interview, at which were present at least a dozen people, the communication was through a rapping and a clairvoyant medium. After it was over, there came the most remarkable physical manifestations which I had yet witnessed. I extract from my journal the account I then wrote of it, giving only the initials* of the persons present.

The scene that ensued, it is difficult for me to describe. It was new to me, and not without a sensation of awe.

The rappings directed G. and F. to stand by one door, and M. and K. by another. As soon as they had taken their stations, there was heavy pounding on the doors as if with a fist, and distant responses, as if in other parts of the house. The bell was taken out of M.'s hand and rung, and then put back again. This occurred several times in the course of the evening.

M. and K. were then slapped as with a hand on the shoulders. This extended then to others at that end of the room.

Those four persons were then directed through the rappings to return to the table. They did so, standing two on each side of it. The table, which was a long dining-table, then moved backward and forward several times. I had my arm resting upon it, and I could not be mistaken. Those four were then directed to get together in one part of the room, and several things were then done to their persons. Pins were taken out of the girl's hands, their hands were lifted and placed together, etc.

* I regret to be obliged to withhold the whole names, but I can not ask the parties to allow me to give them in full, for right well do I know how much obloquy, reproach, and perhaps injury they might be subjected to. By-and-by, when the world will consent that this, as well as any other matter of science, may be fairly investigated, this difficulty will be obviated.

They then returned to the table and passed around it, the rappings telling them when to stop and when to go on.

The slappings on the shoulders then resumed. The bell was again rung. Mrs. R.'s comb was taken out of her hair, and the hair suffered to fall on her shoulders.

I was touched a number of times, first in my neck, by a gentle push, as with the ends of the fingers. This was repeatedly done. I was patted on the head many times, as if by a gentle female hand. As I sat by the table, I felt a hand gently laid on my head and moved around and the last touch was several gentle taps on my arm.

These touchings of me were different from those experienced by the others. To me, they were very gentle, and imperceptible to others, while the others were loud and perceptible to all in the room.

The clothes of G. and K. and M. were pinned together in several places, and K. and M. were tied together by the arms with a pocket-handkerchief.

And now what shall I do? I have occupied a good deal of this paper—as much as I can well spare—with the details of my personal experience, and yet I have not advanced through the first two months of my investigations. Shall I give more of it, and where shall I stop? The ensuing twelve months were full of the same things, often repeating what I had already witnessed, and nearly always displaying some new feature. Can it be necessary that I should detail them all, or indeed any more of them? Things of the same character have happened to others—and some far more extraordinary than any thing I have witnessed. Many of them have already been given to the public in various forms; and there is not a neighborhood in the United States where any attention has been paid to the subject, where similar things have not occurred, and can be testified to by persons whose testimony would be received in any human transaction, so that nothing short of willful blindness can prevent their being seen and recognized.

It can not be necessary or wise that I should occupy much more time on this part of the subject. I will, therefore, give only one or two instances more, and pass to what I regard as far more important.

On the 28th of March, 1851, I was one of a party of ten

who were directed, through the rappings, to stand up in a circle in the middle of the room, and every one present was touched by this unseen power. Some were pulled down upon the sofa; one was pulled nearly on to the floor; one had her feet shoved from under her so that she nearly fell; a shawl was snatched from a lady's shoulders and thrown on to the floor; I was repeatedly touched on different parts of my person; chairs were pulled about, and a small table slid along of itself several feet on the carpet.

On the 23d of April, 1851, I was one of a party of nine who sat around a center-table, on which a lamp with glass pendants, was burning, and another lamp was burning on the mantelpiece. And there, in plain sight of us all, that table was lifted at least a foot from the floor, and shaken backward and forward as easy as I could shake a goblet in my hands. Some of the party tried to stop it by the exercise of their strength, but in vain, so we all drew back from the table, and by the light of those two burning lamps, we saw that heavy mahogany table suspended in the air. There was no mistake about it, and there were those present who were then, and are yet, unbelievers in spiritual intercourse.*

On the 7th of May, 1851, I was present with eight or ten others, when the loose pieces of paper on the table were taken from it, thrown into our faces, and on to the floor, and once, during the silence of one of the pauses, we distinctly heard the sound as of a pen writing on paper. We gathered up carefully all the pieces of paper, and examined to see if there was any writing on them. But we found none. Then it was spelled out to us through the rappings, "Look under the table." We did so, and there found a small piece of cartridge-paper, on which had been recently

* I appeal thus to the testimony of those unbelievers, not because I think it adds any weight to mine, but because I am aware that there are very many who seem to think that belief in the matter utterly disqualifies one from giving reliable evidence, and that it is utter disbelief alone that renders one worthy of credit, and that his testimony is the stronger and the better, that the disbelief is entertained in defiance of his senses.

written some hieroglyphic characters, unintelligible to us, and a remarkable feature of the transaction was, that there was no pen or ink in the room, yet the characters were written in ink and evidently recently.

One more instance and I have done with my detail of mere physical manifestations. I had been told through a medium to publish a statement of what I had witnessed; I declined to do so until I had more evidence, because I should thus pledge my character to the truth of this thing, and that I could not do until I was perfectly satisfied myself. I was asked what would satisfy me? I said, Evidence that this was not the product of mortal agency, evidence of the identity of those who professed to be dealing with me, and evidence that it was for a good and not an evil purpose. I was asked what evidence I would have? I replied, I can not say, for if I do, I tell you what to do. The answer was, You shall have evidence that shall satisfy you.

It was on the 21st May, 1851, that the evidence came, and in such form as to leave no doubt on my mind as to two of the points of my inquiries. It is impossible for me to give an adequate conception of what I then witnessed. But as before said, as I am not aiming to convince others, and merely relating how I was convinced, I regret my inability the less. Yet what I can do to describe the scene, I will.

It was on an evening when the circle to which I belonged was to meet. As I was going toward the house in the east part of the town, I met the medium, his sister, and two or three others going toward the west part of the town. He told me that he had received instructions through the rappings to go to Mr. Partridge's, and he was accordingly on his way. He told me also, that when he had got ready to go, he had been told to wait fifteen minutes, and he had done so. I perceived that if it had not been for those directions I should have missed him, and should not have known where he was. And inasmuch as I was on my way to his house

at the time he received those directions, neither he nor I could imagine any other reason for them than to have him meet me. I accordingly determined to go with him. We found there a party of at least twenty persons, among whom were five mediums. We were surprised to meet each other; for we met without preconcert, and found upon inquiry, that we had been assembled by directions given to different persons in like manner with those given to the medium whom I accompanied. For three hours I there witnessed physical manifestations which demonstrated to me beyond all doubt that they were not produced by mortal hands, and were governed by an intelligence out of and beyond those present. It is vain for any one to say we were deceived. I knew that I was not, and so did every one of that large party. So is it vain to say the mediums did it, for they were actually more frightened at what occurred than we were, who were spectators, and essayed in vain to stop it. Then it was that the chair ran back and forth on the floor, the bell was rung over our heads, and one of the party was forcibly torn by an invisible power from my grasp, in spite alike of his strength and mine. Through one of the mediums we were told, "Go to the front door and let them in," and when the door was opened an unexpected addition to the party, not one of whom was known to the medium, was found ascending the steps, but had not reached the bell. As I stood in a corner where no one could reach my pocket, I felt a hand thrust into it, and found afterward that six knots had been tied in my handkerchief. A bass viol was put into my hand and rested on my foot, and then was played upon. A violin was placed in my other hand and likewise played upon. Another violin was hung around my neck by one of its strings, and I was struck frequently with a fiddle-bow. My person was repeatedly touched, and a chair pulled out from under me. I felt on one of my arms what seemed to be the grip of an iron hand. I felt distinctly the thumb and fingers, the palm of the hand, and the ball of the

thumb, and it held me fast by a power which I struggled to escape from in vain. With my other hand I felt all around the spot where the pressure was, and satisfied myself that it was no earthly hand that was thus holding me fast, nor, indeed, could it be. No earthly hand could thus hold me, for I was as powerless in that grip as a fly would be in the grasp of my hand. And it continued with me until I had tried every means I could devise to get rid of it, and not until I thoroughly felt how powerless I was, did it leave me.

But enough of this in all conscience; I have said sufficient to give an idea of the general character of what I was witnessing two or three times a week, with only occasional interruptions, for more than a year. And how could I help believing that what I saw was not the product of mortal agency? I was not a believer seeking confirmation of my own notions. I was struggling against conviction. I have not stopped to detail the precautions which I took to guard against deception, self or otherwise. Suffice it to say, that in that respect I omitted nothing which my ingenuity could devise. There was no cavil too captious for me to resort to, no scrutiny too rigid or impertinent for me to institute, no inquiry too intrusive for me to make. So much so, that it was not unfrequently that believers were unwilling to meet with me, because of my querulousness.

These things did not all occur in the presence of the same medium or the same party of investigators, but often in the presence of mediums and others whom I had never met before, and who did not and could not know what I had witnessed.

At the same time, I was seeing in the newspapers and hearing from others, whose testimony I could not, as a rational man, disregard, accounts of transactions in various parts of the country, of similar general character, differing only in detail.

To make "assurance doubly sure," I instituted the scientific inquiries mentioned in my published address. The

gentleman whose aid I had on that occasion, was an officer of rank in the army, a graduate at West Point, and at one time an assistant professor there. He was one of high attainments and character, affording then to me, as they would now to others, if I could venture to name him, most satisfactory evidence of skill and integrity in our researches.

Now, under all these circumstances, what was I, as an honest man, blessed with common sense, to do? Had I a right to disregard the evidence of my own senses, enlightened by patient inquiry and the deductions of my own deliberate judgment drawn from that evidence? Aware as I was of the state of feeling which would make the reality of this thing so acceptable to me, and thus guarded against self-delusion, could I rationally overlook the fact that the same deductions flowed from the same facts in minds not liable to such a bias? Could I reject a weight of evidence that was allowed to prevail in all human transactions, and without which the earth would be a bedlam? If I did, on what was I to rest my judgment? What, indeed, but caprice, or arbitrary will, or the opinion of others! No, I could not thus trifle with my reason. The responsibility was too great, and I therefore brought to bear on this subject the same faculties which were daily at work within me, in passing judgment on the life, liberty, or property of my fellow-men, and the result at which I arrived was an inevitable one. And I venture to say, from all my observation in this matter, that such must be, as such has been, the result in every candid mind that will give the subject an impartial examination. It is this which daily causes hundreds who are convinced against their will, and in defiance of all preconceived opinions, to wheel into the spiritual column. It is this which causes the tide of spiritualism, fed from these thousand rills, to swell rapidly against the barriers of error and superstition. It is this, among other things, which tells me to beware lest these revelations be of God, and it be impiety to doubt them.

There was, however, another element in the phenomenon

which had immense influence with me, and that was the intelligence displayed by this unseen power. That was almost always manifested at every interview, and the question that obviously presented itself on the very outset was, whether that was from the mind of any mortal present, or from some other source? So that, even if it had been established that the sounds and physical manifestations of which I have been speaking were produced by mortal agency, still the question remained, whence came the intelligence that was displayed? For instance: What was the power that read the thoughts which I had buried for a quarter of a century in the depths of my heart? What the power that knew my interrogatory the instant it was formed in my mind? What the power that read the questions which I had written in the solitude of my study? What the power that revealed my secret purposes to the bystanders, and the purposes of others to me?

Before those questions could be answered satisfactorily, to me at least, the whole character of that intelligence, and all the phases and forms in which it displayed itself, must be understood. It seemed to me that it would have been rash indeed to have attempted to pronounce a judgment on one or two or a few exhibitions of it only. Nor did I; but carefully for months, aye! and now for years, have I watched it, and there is no possible solution of it that I can imagine that can bring it to any other complexion than that it is out of and beyond mere mundane existence—in other words, that it is super-terrestrial.

To enable others to judge, however, whether my conclusion was right, I must, even at the hazard of being tedious, detail some more instances of its manifestation.

The answering of mental questions and the statement of facts, which, there is every probability, are known only to the interrogator, are, and for four or five years have been, of such frequent occurrence, and have been witnessed by so many thousands and tens of thousands, that it is idle to dwell upon those topics, especially when the opportunity