

can read the thoughts of others in their minds. One is an artist of this city of high reputation, and the other the editor of a newspaper in a neighboring city. The latter wrote me, that in company with three friends he had tried the experiment, and for over forty successive attempts found he could read the secret thoughts of his companions as soon as they were formed, and without their being uttered. So, too, there is the instance of two persons, one of them also resident in this city, who can give a faithful delineation of the character, and even the prevailing mood of mind, of any person, however unknown to them, upon whom they fix their attention.

These are not apocryphal cases. The parties are at hand, and in our very midst, and any person that pleases may make the investigation, as I have, and satisfy himself.

But all this, and much, very much more of a kindred nature, went to show me that there was a high order of intelligence involved in this new phenomenon—an intelligence outside of, and beyond, mere mortal agency; for there was no other hypothesis which I could devise or hear of that could at all explain that, whose reality is established by the testimony of tens of thousands, and can easily be ascertained by any one who will take the trouble to inquire.

If these two points were established—and there are now in these United States hundreds of thousands of sentient beings who have investigated and believe they are—then came this important question, *Cui bono?* To what end is it all? For what purpose? With what object?

To that inquiry I have directed my earnest attention, devoting to the task for over two years all the leisure I could command, and increasing that leisure as far as I could by withdrawing myself from all my former recreations. I have gone from circle to circle, from medium to medium, seeking knowledge on the subject wherever I could obtain it, either from books or from observation, and bringing to bear upon it whatever of intelligence I have been gifted with by nature, sharpened and improved by over thirty years' practice at the bar, in the legislature, and on the bench.

I found there were very many ways in which this unseen intelligence communed with us, besides the rappings and table tippings, and that through those other modes there came very many communications distinguished for their eloquence, their high order of

intellect, and their pure and lofty moral tone; at the same time I discovered many inconsistencies and contradictions that were calculated to mislead. I saw many puerile and some very absurd statements, and many that were admirably calculated to make man better and happier, and I set to work to see if I could not out of this chaos gather something that might be valuable.

I was satisfied that something more was intended than the gratification of an idle curiosity; something more than pandering to a diseased appetite for the marvelous; something more than the promulgation of oracular platitudes; something more than upsetting material objects to the admiration of the wonder-lover; something more than telling the age of the living or the dead, etc.

For that something I have industriously searched. I thought that was wiser than to condemn without investigation, and denounce without knowledge. What I have discovered in that regard I have intended to give to the world, that all may judge for themselves whether there is any thing in it worthy the attention of intelligent beings. It would have been done ere this if my leisure would have allowed me time to prepare my manuscript for the press. Now I expect that my book will be published by the first of September, and to that I refer, as I have already said, for particulars.

In the mean time, it is due to myself and to others to say, that our faith, as growing out of these researches, is not "at irreconcilable variance with revelation." How little do they, who make such charges, know of this matter! Misled by the crudities which alone are seen in the newspapers of the day, because the graver matters can not find admission there, the idea is, I am aware, entertained by some that this new philosophy is at variance with the revelation through Christ, the Redeemer. This is indeed a sad mistake, and one that believers would be too happy to correct, if only the opportunity could be afforded them.

So, too, is it a grievous error to suppose that it "constitutes an abandonment of all self-control, and a surrender of the supremacy of reason, as informed and enlightened by the senses." There was never yet, I venture to say, a religious creed promulgated among men, which so entirely eschewed blind faith, and so fully and always demanded the exercise of the judgment and the supremacy of the reason.

Hence it is that we are taught that none of these extraordinary

things which are witnessed by so many, are miraculous, or flow from any suspension of nature's laws, but are, on the other hand, in conformity with, and in execution of, those laws; that like the steam-engine and the magnetic telegraph, they are marvelous only to those who do not understand them or are not familiar with them; that those laws, and the means by which they produce such results, are as capable of being found out by human research; that the knowledge is not confined to a few, but is open to all, rich or poor, high or low, wise or ignorant, who will wisely and patiently search for it, and that when it is attained it can not but work in the heart "a closer walk with God," and an intercourse with our fellow-men of a more elevated character, void of selfishness, and devoted to their absolute advancement in all knowledge and goodness, both in this world and in the world to come.

This is a part of the something which I have found in my researches. But there is more yet. There is that which comforts the mourner and binds up the broken-hearted; that which smooths the passage to the grave and robs death of its terrors; that which enlightens the Atheist, and can not but reform the vicious; that which cheers and encourages the virtuous amid all the trials and vicissitudes of life, and that which demonstrates to man his duty and his destiny, leaving it no longer vague and uncertain. What that is, I can not in the limits of this letter explain, but in due time it will be forthcoming, and each one can judge for himself.

But now may I not ask if I overrate the importance of the subject of my inquiries? Scarcely more than four years have elapsed since the "Rochester Knockings" were first known among us. Then mediums could be counted by units, but now by thousands—then believers could be numbered by hundreds, now by tens of thousands. It is believed by the best informed, that the whole number in the United States must be several hundred thousands, and that in this city and its vicinity there must be from twenty-five to thirty thousand. There are ten or twelve newspapers and periodicals devoted to the cause, and the Spiritual Library embraces more than one hundred different publications, some of which have already attained a circulation of more than ten thousand copies. Besides the undistinguished multitude, there are many men of high standing and talent ranked among them, doctors, lawyers, and clergymen in great numbers, a Protestant bishop, the learned and rev-

erend president of a college, judges of our higher courts, members of Congress, foreign ambassadors, and ex-members of the National Senate.

That which has thus spread with such marvelous celerity in spite of the ridicule which has deterred so many from an open avowal, and which has attracted the attention of so many of the best minds among us, can not be unworthy of my investigation, or that of persons far wiser and more reliable than I am.

It is now more than a year that my peculiar faith has been the subject of public comment. During it all I have been silent as to those attacks, content steadily to pursue my investigations until I could arrive at satisfactory results. Perhaps I have been silent too long, for, in the mean time, very erroneous notions as to that faith have been allowed to spring up. But I was unwilling to speak until I was as sure as I could be, that I was right, lest I might utter some crudity which, by-and-by, I might regret—commit some error which I might find it difficult to correct, or, in fine, unhappily mislead in my ignorance, rather than wisely guide by my knowledge.

I went into the investigation originally thinking it a deception, and intending to make public my exposure of it. Having, from my researches, come to a different conclusion, I feel that the obligation to make known the result is just as strong. Therefore it is, mainly, that I give the result to the world. I say mainly, because there is another consideration which influences me, and that is the desire to extend to others a knowledge which I am conscious can not but make them happier and better.

If those who doubt this could but spend a few days with me in my library, and witness the calls I have from strangers from all parts of the country; if they could but look over my portfolio, and read the letters which pour in upon me from all sections, and from persons whom I have never seen and never may see, they would be able, from the evidence thus furnished of the good that has been done, to form some idea of what may yet be accomplished, and they would not wonder that I find a compensation for the obloquy that is so freely heaped upon me by the ignorant, in the grateful outpourings of hearts which have, by my means, been relieved. One of them says (and it is a fair specimen of the whole), "You have acted the part of the good Samaritan, and poured oil into the wound of one like to die, and you will have rendered a death-bed,

sooner or later, calm and hopeful, which might have been disturbed by doubts."

This, then, is the offense for which I have been arraigned at the bar of the public with so unsparing a condemnation, declared unworthy of my high office, falsely accused of consulting aught else than the law of the land and my own reason in the judgments which I officially pronounce, and have had invoked against me "the fires of Smithfield and the hangings of Salem." From such a condemnation it is that I appeal to the calm, unbiased judgment of my countrymen, with a firm reliance upon its justice.

J. W. EDMONDS.

NEW YORK, August 1, 1853.

DR. DEXTER'S INTRODUCTION.

It is scarcely worth the while, perhaps, that I should make public the causes and influences which have directed my investigation to the subject of "Spiritual Manifestations," or why that investigation has resulted in a sincere belief that spirits who have left the form hold daily and hourly intercourse with man.

But professing as I do to be the medium through which certain spirits have written what may be found in the following pages of this work, there seems to be a propriety in giving to the public, in connection with the spirit-teachings written through my hand, some of the evidences of the truth of spirit-intercourse, which have satisfied my mind, as well as how I am acted upon when under direction of the spirits, and the manner in which they influence me.

And it should be understood that I was not only conservative in regard to this question of spirit-communication when it was first presented to my consideration, but I was positively opposed, and regarded the whole matter as either a foolish delusion or an absolute, outrageous deception, and that this opposition continued long after such proof had been offered, both to my reason and physical consciousness, as would have removed all doubts in reference to the truth of any other subject under heaven.

I also wish to be understood as declining to argue the question, whether it be possible for spirits to leave their own homes and visit this earth. It is sufficient for my belief that I have had such proof, and have so carefully examined the evidence offered to me of the fact that they can do so, that I am without a doubt of its truth; and I present the brief history of my experience, only from