

Appendix—F.

It is suggested to me that I ought to be more specific in detailing the manner in which I receive the communications which are given through me. I am not certain that I can do that in a manner at all satisfactory, for the simple reason that I do not well understand it myself. I have watched and scrutinized the operation very closely, but I am not sure that I fully comprehend it yet. I will, however, explain it as far as I can.

It must be recollected that this is not peculiar to me, but the same faculty is possessed by others. The annexed letters from Mr. Wolcott, explaining the frontispiece, and the case of Mr. Hurlbut, of Auburn, whose visions were published in the "SHEKINAH," are similar instances; and I know of several others. Among some of them, it may be that we may yet get a description of the operation better than any thing I can say.

In the first place, then, I remark, that the idea is impressed upon the mind in the same manner, and with equal, if not greater vividness than any thing presented to the mind through the physical organs of sight. But how that is done is another question.

When I receive them, I am not in a trance state at all, but just as much in the full possession of all my faculties as ever I am. I sometimes, when I perceive or am told that I am to be influenced, bind a handkerchief around my eyes, to exclude external objects, but not always, for I sometimes see them with my eyes open to the full impression of external objects. But though the physical sight is thus closed, all the senses are as much in full play as ever. I detail to the bystanders what is passing before my view, as I would any object in the street which attracted my attention. I converse on that or other topics, get up and move about, preserving throughout it all the distinct vision before my mind's eye. I have tried experiments with it, and once, while one of the party was writing down what I told him I saw, I took out of my pocket an apple and

ate it, and conversed with others present on other subjects, and resumed the thread of my narrative with my amanuensis as soon as he was ready for me. I have interrupted the visions by attending to some business, and then resumed them instantly that I again gave my mind to them. I have reasoned upon them with others as they passed, and asked and received explanations. But I can not do more than repeat that the effect produced on my mind is precisely that created by external material objects seen by my physical organs of sight. So much so, that unless I look out pretty sharp, I do not observe any difference. So, when I have had some object thus presented to me, when my mind was occupied with something else, and I have not stopped to discriminate, it has seemed to me as if I had actually seen the object with my eyes. A moment's examination, however, told me I had not, and I could from this well understand how those who had not been in the habit of studying the operations of their own minds could be deceived as to the manner in which they got the sight, which they were cognizant of. The difference, however, is very marked when closely studied. I once saw the spirit of one whom I had known, sitting near me. He was just as perceptible to me as was the gentleman in mortal form who sat at my left hand, conversing with me. I looked repeatedly from one to the other, to see if there was any difference in the manner in which their presence was conveyed to my mind, but could recognize none; yet I knew that I did not see the spirit with my physical eyes, because with them I saw distinctly the material objects on which he was seated, not as through a transparent medium, but as if there was nothing between those objects and my eyes.

This has been a matter of a good deal of curious speculation with me, and I have tried to understand it; but it is not easy for one who has been in the habit of depending on the sight alone for objects of vision, to comprehend how that vision can be the same by any other means. But so it is, and I have examined it and tried all sorts of experiments with it too often, not to know by this time the reality of this thing.

It will not do for any one to say that it is my imagination that is misleading me. I have been too much in the habit of self-discipline, and have too much the control of my own mind, not to know better. In Reid "On the Mind," that philosopher says, "If we attend duly to the operation of our mind in the use of this faculty (seeing),

we shall perceive that the visible appearance of objects is hardly ever regarded by us. It is not at all made an object of thought or reflection, *but serves only as a sign to introduce to the mind something else, which may be distinctly conceived by those who never saw.*" Hence he insists that "sight discovers almost nothing which the blind may not comprehend." And he adds, "we conceive inspiration to give a man no new faculty, but to communicate to him in a new way, and by extraordinary means, what the faculties common to mankind can apprehend, and what he can communicate to others by ordinary means." Now is not this the solution of this matter? It seems to me that it is, with this single exception, that the "means" which, when he wrote, nearly a hundred years ago, were regarded as "extraordinary," are now becoming more common and ordinary. Be this as it may, it is worth thinking of; especially as the fact is here exemplified in the case of many others besides myself. It is therefore really to be hoped that the matter may receive the attention of some one more capable than I am of investigating it, unless, perchance, it ought to be referred to opium—a solution, I perceive, very much in favor with those who know as little of the whole subject as a horse does of the Heidelberg Catechism. It makes a good deal of difference, whether the obscurity which haunts us is owing to a spot on the sun or a cloud that surrounds the beholder.

But to resume my subject. There are, I perceive, when I closely scrutinize, three different modes in which I receive the ideas communicated to me. One, where they are presented to me merely as pictures, producing on my mind the same effect as looking on a painting; another, where they are presented as if a living, acting reality, producing the same effect as the moving, existing material world that surrounds me; and the third, where a train of thought is thrust upon my mind, consecutive and clear in its order and connection, producing the same effect as any process of reasoning by which I arrive at a conclusion.

The following letters from Mr. Wolcott speak of the first two species, and show that he possesses the same faculty that I do, though happily he possesses one that I do not, namely, that of preserving and delineating what he sees. The third kind is exemplified in Section Forty-nine of the foregoing work. There the thoughts were given to me as rapidly as I could utter them, and far more so than the Doctor could write them down, and I know they were not

of my own concocting, for they conveyed to me ideas which were entirely novel to me.

These remarks, with the following letters from Mr. Wolcott, are all that can be necessary on this subject.

CORRESPONDENCE.

CONCORD, N. H., Aug. 10th, 1853.

Dear Sir—Please excuse the liberty of a letter from one who is an entire stranger to you, without the formality of an introduction. I trust the nature of the subject will be sufficient apology. I have been reading with deep interest your letter on the "*Spiritual Manifestations*," and can not but rejoice that a person occupying so high a position in society has so ably, boldly, and triumphantly vindicated the claims of this phenomenon against the "small shot" of little editors, less lawyers and politicians, and diminutive clergymen, who can not or will not investigate the facts. My state of mind was similar to your own before I examined this subject, viz., a very strong doubt or total disbelief in the doctrine of man's future immortal state. All the evidence I sought on the subject tended only to confirm my doubts. A little over two years ago, by invitation, I attended a sitting which affected me considerably for a time; but subsequent meetings were so unsatisfactory, and reports were so contradictory, that I threw the whole matter aside as a barefaced imposture, and spared no words in denouncing the whole affair a stupendous fraud on the weak-minded and credulous. Last March, one evening, at a party in this place, a sitting was held, in which I joined, supposing it to be merely in sport. We had not sat five minutes before my skepticism was dumbfounded. I arose overwhelmed with shame and confusion, determined to test the matter fully. I tried many experiments of my own invention, but always with a satisfactory result. I soon became convinced that *some* intelligent agent with a will of its own, independent of all persons present, was the cause of the demonstrations. I was more surprised at these results in this place, where the people have little more spirituality than New Hampshire granite. Becoming more and more interested, I desired to witness some of the higher "*manifestations*." An opportunity soon occurred in Boston, during the month of June. At the first sitting I was presented with a view of a picture of singular beauty and composition. The impression it made upon my

mind was so strong that I obtained a canvas and painted it. Some of the party, on seeing it, so much admired it, that I resolved to reproduce it on a larger scale. During various sittings, particular directions were given for improving certain parts and altering others, which instructions I followed implicitly, and with a result which astonished me, it was so much more perfect than I thought myself capable of producing. During the painting of these pictures I felt an unusual glow of enthusiasm and most thrilling pleasure. My hand seemed to move with unusual ease and freedom. During a period of three weeks I was presented with various other pictures, wholly unlike any thing I ever saw or imagined before, and bearing no resemblance to each other. Some of them seem to be reality, with figures and other portions in motion. Others are truly *painted pictures*, the touches of the artist's pencil being distinctly perceptible. On one occasion the picture was a small plaster medal, bearing a figure in armor, with a shield inscribed with the word ONWARD, VERY *distinct* (I find, on referring to Mr. Davis' last work, this is a peculiarity of the pictorial class of media). These pictures are all of singular and remarkable beauty, with wonderful brilliancy of coloring, so much so, 'tis no easy matter to represent them with coloring alone. One in particular, to be truly represented, would require to be painted on a semi-transparent canvas, and illuminated from behind with powerful lights, like some of the gorgeous stage scenery. Some of these representations convey a useful lesson in a most beautiful manner, while others are extremely elegant compositions merely. They all are impressed upon my mind with extreme distinctness, more so than any pictures I ever saw, and haunt me continually. Something keeps saying within, "Paint! Paint!! Paint these Pictures!!!" The spirits insist upon it that I must give up my present employment and paint the pictures they present me, that the world may have some visible representations of the glories of the future life. They promise me more and more brilliant views of the unseen world, and so far have faithfully kept their promise.

Somewhat surprised that I should be selected for the work, I inquired why such a selection was made. "Have you not tried any one else?" The answer was: "We have, but have not before found one competent to execute what we demand in a satisfactory manner." These pictures can not be my own imaginings, the manner of their presentation precludes that idea. They can not be the invention

of the three different media through whom they are transmitted to me, as they have no artistic knowledge, and the result is as new and surprising to them as to me. Perceiving by an article in Vol. I. of the "SHEKINAH," parts of which are quoted in Mr. Davis' book before alluded to, that you are a *pictorial medium*, and the only one I know, I have ventured to address you thus freely. Do you know of any other similar case to my own? Should you desire it, I will give you a more detailed account of the subject of these pictures, and the mode of transmitting them to me.

Yours, for truth,

JOSIAH WOLCOTT.

NEW YORK, Aug. 14th, 1853.

Dear Sir—I perused your letter with a great deal of satisfaction, and should be very happy indeed to hear further from you in detail as to the pictures presented to your view.

Your gift, in some respects, is very like mine; but as I have progressed, I have learned something worth knowing in regard to it. For instance: In the case you refer to, mentioned by Davis, it was clearly allegorical. So for a long time did I think was the vision, first published in the "SHEKINAH." But now I begin to learn that I see two things: one a picture, and the other a reality. The first one I ever had was beyond doubt a reality; yet it was so novel to me, that I did not at all understand it, and the idea that I could see the realities as they existed in the spirit-world never entered my head. But now I know I see those realities, and I am very easily able to distinguish between the reality and the fable.

I mention this to you in order to ask you whether you have ever thought of this, and whether what you are required to paint are not the realities of spirit-life which they wish thus to convey to our minds? If I knew the details of what you see, I could tell better. In the mean time, I infer from the wisdom that is displayed in all these teachings, even amid the crudities and absurdities that are met with, that it is the reality they are presenting to you, and which they wish you to delineate.

They are presenting such things to me now, but I can paint them only with my pen; and how tame and insipid seems my language when I attempt to describe the overwhelming beauty and sublimity which are before me! How often have I wished for my brother's pencil,

and regretted that for want of it so much beauty must be lost! But now the want is supplied, and you are the man to supply it.

Judge, then, how great was my pleasure at perusing your letter; and at learning what provision had been made in that regard! I can well understand your description, for I have seen the same things, and I know if you do justice to what you see, you will present to mankind on your canvas pictures far exceeding any thing even yet dreamed of. Why, the painting of the architecture alone of those scenes would immortalize the artist. Go on, then, in God's name, and rely upon it, that you are to be a great instrument in this stupendous work of regenerating mankind.

The direct onset on the ancient errors and superstitions of the world has at length been made, and if we, who are the humble instruments of those higher powers in this great work, are but true to ourselves and the cause, it will triumph, and then how great our joy, how immense our reward!

"Slight is the task, but immense the reward
Of those who thus labor to imitate God."

One great misfortune to the cause is the timidity of believers in avowing their faith. I have endeavored to overcome that, by showing others, by my example, how easy it is to stem the torrent, and I invoke all the aid I can in that regard. I mention this because I want your aid. Thus I am receiving a vast number of letters now—since my address more than ever—and I design to publish them in order to encourage the friends of the cause, by showing how strong it is. Therefore I want you to let me publish your letter among the rest, *with your name*. It will do great good, you may rely upon it, and to do good is the great end and aim of the whole movement.

I had, like you, asked why I have been selected for my share in this work, and why some one else was not chosen? And I have received such an answer as you got, with a minute detail of their previous search for such an instrument.

See, then, how encouraging is the prospect before us, and let us recollect the inscription on your shield, "ONWARD."

Yours, ever,

J. W. EDMONDS.

Mr. JOSIAH WOLCOTT.

CONCORD, N.H., Aug. 25.

Dear Sir—Yours, dated 14th, I have read over and over again with lively avidity and a bright satisfaction. Accept my thanks for so kind a favor. Up here in the bush such a letter is a real God-send, equal to manna in the wilderness "we read of."

Before answering your queries it may be proper to inform you a little of my previous history.

At the age of sixteen I was apprenticed to the chair-painting business in Boston, under an excellent master. Always having a strong taste for drawing and painting, I was not long satisfied with being merely a chair-painter, but sighed for something higher. I obtained some instruction from Mr. Thomas Doughty, then in Boston, a gentleman now well known all over the Union as one of our very first artists. My leisure time was devoted to practicing on his instructions, instead of being wasted in the low pursuits of my fellow-shopmates.

At the age of twenty-one I was presented with a diploma by the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association, certifying to exemplary conduct and superior ability as a workman.

I afterward entered the sign and ornamental business, as it gave me more scope for taste and skill than my previous occupation, besides furnishing an opportunity to acquire more knowledge of art, as my ambition was always to excel in whatever I undertook. I never rested satisfied until I had gained some new lesson of an artistic character.

In November, 1851, I was called to this place to do the ornamental work on coaches and omnibuses, which requires to be of a high character, and must compete with similar work produced in New York.

Here my services command fifty per cent. higher pay than any other in the place. My object in coming here into this comparatively benighted region was mainly to get more knowledge of natural scenery and get further practice on some particular parts of ornamental art. I mention this to explain why I am up here.

But I must to the pictures.

At the first sitting, mentioned in my former letter, I was much affected, and in the night was induced to get up and write my impressions, that I was surrounded by spirits who promised to show me pictures of the spirit-land, which they desired me to paint or