

home!" cried Mrs. Hamilton, in a flutter.

"No; he knew I should see you, and he asked me to tell you that he could not leave the office until late, — there is so much to arrange."

"Oh, well, then," said Mrs. Hamilton, settling back contentedly. To be sure, the opportunity was a melancholy one, but even the duty of ordering a friend's mourning is its own recompense, and spending money on so sad an occasion affords the Mrs. Hamiltons of this world a gloomy joy.

It was evident that the time for the purchases was very short, yet as the two ladies were about to enter the store at which the carriage stopped Raymond detained them. He was greatly disquieted; his eye was anxious and wandering; he began more than one sentence, and broke off in its midst.

"There is still something I must see about," he said, uncertainly. "I will come back here and say good-by — or — no — I shall not have time. Perhaps, Mrs. Hamilton, you will drive down to the depot. I will meet you there."

He left them abruptly, and Mrs. Hamilton stared at him as he went. "How funny he is!" she said, wondering.

The truth was, the Reverend Robert's conscience was after him, and it pursued him in a lively fashion till he reached the office of Hamilton and Gale — Com-

mission Merchants. He was very nearly left by the train, this afternoon. Mrs. Hamilton and Felicia, still sitting in the carriage, had waited half an hour; the locomotive had pulled into the building; the crowd of passengers was pouring past and boarding the cars before they saw his face framed by the window of a hack that was driven furiously to the depot. He had barely time for hasty adieux. "Good-by, good-by!" he exclaimed. "It is very kind of you to take so much trouble."

He looked hard at Felicia; she did not understand his expression. It was tender; it curiously blended a sort of compassion and a sort of entreaty. After he had started hurriedly from them, he turned back suddenly, took her hand, and held it in a strong clasp. "God bless you, my dear child," he said.

"He is very, very odd, to-day," said Mrs. Hamilton, again gazing vaguely after his receding figure. "How strange, his coming back to bid you good-by again, Felicia, and how strangely he looked at you!"

"I suppose it is because Amy is so fond of me," said Felicia. "Now that she is grieved he feels very kindly to any one she loves."

But she did not quite accept her own explanation, and pondered on that pitiful expression of his in pained bewilderment.

*Fanny N. D. Murfree.*

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## SOME ASPECTS OF PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

WHEN the Society for Psychical Research was first organized in Boston, there was great expectation that some old questions would be answered, some old problems solved, some old mysteries cleared up. As time went on, and these expectations were not fulfilled, there was a good deal of disappointment. Then

hope revived, new interest was felt, and, although familiar faiths were not confirmed, new outlooks were opened. The friends of "Spiritualism" were, in the beginning, confident that their theory would receive complete demonstration. The foes of "Spiritualism" were equally sure that natural causes would be found

for all appearances. In fact, neither was satisfied. The account of the believers in angelic interposition was simply reckoned as one theory among several; while their unreasoning opponents were accused of a want of the scientific spirit. The earliest explanation of the mysterious intercourse between minds was, naturally, that of the influence of departed men and women; just as the earliest explanation of malign occurrences was, naturally, the agency of Satan. This was a most convenient hypothesis; exceedingly comfortable for those who desired a simple solution. It was a short and easy method, admirably adapted to such as did not wish to probe the recesses of evil; a summary way of dealing with an intricate problem; a mode of getting out of a difficulty instead of penetrating to its depths. But as the complexities of evil disclosed themselves, as delicate shades of distinction appeared, this theory receded. So with "Spiritualism." It may be true, the only sufficient view; but then, again, it may not be. There are grave objections to it, — objections that can never be wholly met. Granting that the element of fraud can be finally expelled, the identity of the intelligences at work with people who have once lived on earth must always remain in doubt. Why should there not be an order of beings, distinct from humanity, limited by the atmosphere of the globe, knowing our mundane affairs, capable of interfering in our experiences, able to manifest themselves, even to take on visible forms and simulate the once living? Such a possibility cannot be disproved, and it might in some degree account for the very ordinary tone of the communications, as well as the impish character of many of the performances. The saints and sages do not worthily appear. This difficulty of establishing identity was apparent long ago to candid minds, — to William Lloyd Garrison, for instance, who confessed it; and to me it

still seems insuperable. That there is intelligence outside of palpable human beings may be freely conceded; but it is not necessarily that of departed spirits, that have once been on the earth.

But with this speculation the Society for Psychical Research has no concern. Indeed, it gets continually farther from any spiritualistic conclusions, its interest being mainly fixed on the natural laws that govern the action of mind as such, apart from any consideration of its existence on one side of the grave or the other. It leaves aside the questions of immortality and disembodiment. The mode of communication is the matter to which it addresses itself. Not that there is any disbelief in the immortal life, but simply that such a question lies out of its province, which includes the means of intercourse alone, and this particular explanation is in order only when every other has been exhausted. In the *Journal* for February, 1890, Mr. Frank Podmore, one of the leaders of the movement in England, deprecated the rashness which finds in the facts (facts of thought-transference) conclusive evidence for the survival of consciousness after the death of the body, as well as the confident skepticism, equally unscientific, which would reject any such explanation as untenable. The prime business is with phenomena; and while these are being collected, classified, and analyzed, all final inference concerning their origin or cause is premature. Mr. Podmore frankly tries to escape from the spiritualistic hypothesis, and Mr. F. W. H. Myers evidently inclines towards it; but both deplore any sudden surmise, both cling to the scientific as contrasted with the moral or sentimental method, both put away personal predilections as far as possible, though no one probably can do so entirely.

As to telepathy, — supposing it to be proved, as many do, — it points in two directions: first, towards some immaterial property in the individual, by virtue

of which he survives bodily dissolution ; or, second, towards a general force, which, like air, is intangible and constant, and which, on certain conditions, hitherto unascertained, lights on a few heads, — a cosmic energy whereof souls partake in consequence of some peculiar attribute.

The first supposition looks in the direction of a spiritual essence, indestructible by physical decay ; not the product of muscle, or nerve, or any physiological combination whatever, but rather setting these at naught, with their implications of space and time. This essence may be resolved into some primary elements by chemistry, but thus far it is not decomposable. It is a quality that defies distance, is instantaneous, is not dependent on terrestrial states, is most apparent in our least conscious moods and in our least wakeful hours, is strongest in the most undeveloped intellectually, is conspicuous in the moments when organization is dissolving, in the hour of death, — is certainly as near to our conception of soul as a thing can be. If there be a power in men that transcends the senses, it may well escape from the tomb.

Of course, this is not all the immortality the Christian believes in. It does not imply even conscious existence ; far less does it involve social relations, or hint at the possibility of communication with those yet in the flesh ; but it furnishes a basis for personal continuity, and it provides a foundation upon which faith may build.

Fourteen years ago, in 1876, Antoinette Brown Blackwell published a book entitled *The Physical Basis of Immortality*, in which she used the following language : “ In what way consciousness will associate itself with coöperative energies in the future, where and in what state we have been in the past, must at present be matter of surmise. But that life, in all orders of being, has a physical basis, through which it can ally itself to

a willingly coöperative universe, is not left to any contingency.”

What an immense change in the attitude of scientific investigation has taken place in the last fifty years ! In 1836, Isaac Taylor, author of the *Natural History of Enthusiasm*, wrote a book called *Physical Theory of Another Life*. In the Introduction he remarks, “ To intrude into ‘ things not seen,’ under the influence of a ‘ fleshly mind,’ is a grave fault ; and especially so if, on the strength of even the most reasonable theory, we are led to bring into question a particle of that which the text of Scripture, duly interpreted, requires us to believe.”

At the meeting, on January 31, 1890, in London, Mr. Podmore, in answer to the question whether he could conceive any circumstances about appearances of the dead which might not be accounted for by some possible extension of telepathy, replied at once that he could not ; that he had tried, and failed. But he added that the evidence might be extended in such a way that, at a certain point, the hypothesis of telepathy from the living would become more improbable than that of communication from the dead. Thus psychical research conducts away from materialism.

The second point shows the tendency towards a form of theism. Not the old-fashioned theism, with its doctrines of Providence and prayer and moral government, but rather, I should say, towards that noble pantheism which enchants the most poetical minds of this generation. The recognition of another power, universal and steady as gravitation, exalts the Divine Majesty, and raises the soul to new heights of wonder and worship. The reign of law is extended and established ; and the nearness of law, its personal influence, is illustrated. Such a power possesses attributes such as gravitation does not claim ; for that deals with ponderable matter only, while this manages impon-

derable elements, mind, the relations of spiritual things, as we deem them. Thus, as the former is an example of a supreme *force*, so the latter is an example of a supreme *power*, and introduces us to the region of living sympathy. The "Power not ourselves" receives a new impressiveness. It becomes human. It lays hold of the heart-strings. It renders more intelligible the name Father. There may be no suggestion of direct purpose, no hint of explicit design, but the thought of a more completely organized universe is forced upon us, making it easier to conceive of a presiding Deity. This kind of pantheism appeals to the imagination, filling it with ideas of wealth, of fullness, of tenderness; touching the sensibilities, enhancing the vision of unity. The older theism addresses itself to the individual, his lot, his experiences, his private concerns, his moods, his emotions. This goes directly to his soul; fosters its aspirations after disinterestedness, purity, serenity, peace.

The effect of psychical research is thus to increase the mystery of the world. Such is the effect of all scientific investigation, even the most rudimentary. The ancient simplicity disappears, to be succeeded by another sort of simplicity, resulting from the combination of many complex phenomena. The elements may be fewer, but the ingredients have multiplied. The old world had no mystery, properly speaking. The mind of the Eternal was unfathomable, his intentions were past discovering, but his outward creation stirred no profound awe. The laws of nature did not exist. There were, here and there, students of stars, flowers, animals, and the more obvious phases of creation. There was an occasional investigator of more secret existences. But the close systematic, organized examination of phenomena was unknown. The real mystery of the world dawned on men when physical science was born; it has deepened with every step of its advance.

The subtle inquiries of the Society for Psychical Research open abysses that ages will not explore. The substitution of facts for fancies, of observation for surmise, of theory as an instrument of investigation for theory as a final dogma, the dismissal of all idols whatever, marks a revolution in discovery. No doubt a great number of other superstitions have been exposed along with multitudes of baneful chimeras, like witchcraft and demonic possession, but reverence, awe, wonder, have increased. We need not fear lest the universe should become prosaic. Imagination already has enough to do, and fresh demands will surely be made on it. A religion will grow out of the revelation of physical science, by and by.

In regard to the other point, — the mystery of the brain, — psychical research is throwing floods of light upon that, disclosing powers hitherto unsuspected. What masses of nebulae have been resolved into stars! What visions, illusions, delusions, hallucinations, have been traced directly to the cerebral organs, and shown to be products of nerve cells! They may be effects of disease; they may be results of temperament. They may be abnormal; they may be normal. At all events, they are inside the constitution. The tricks of the brain are known to be innumerable and most perplexing. The brain of man cannot be examined directly, and surmises are hard to verify; but it is certain that cerebral organization plays strange pranks with us, and of such kind that its agency in matters beyond our present knowledge is gravely suspected. Some years since, a man suffering from decomposition of the brain saw reptiles on the ceiling, serpents on the floor, and creeping things on the sofa where he sat. So real were they that though, being an educated person, he was sure they must be semblances, he dared not move lest he should excite them. In a few moments they vanished, to return

at some new paroxysm of his disease. Medical books abound in similar examples, and they suggest indefinite possibilities of nervous achievement; just as Lord Rosse's telescope led to anticipations that the nebula of Orion would be disintegrated.

The truth is that psychical research is yet in its infancy, and must be for a long time. Its task is extremely difficult, requiring, as it does, keen powers of observation, trained judgment, perfect candor, honesty, courage; in short, the rarest mental gifts. Men of this stamp are few. In this country, they are for the most part professors, physicians in large practice, clergymen with heavy duties. They are more numerous in England, where the two great universities, Oxford and Cambridge, keep up the supply of disciplined men; and an old country affords more leisure. The work is expensive, too, as it involves a good deal of traveling, an extensive correspondence, a liberal supply of time, — costly commodities, all of them. It was necessary, therefore, to make the American society a branch of the English one, which is not only ably managed, but powerfully maintained; men and women,

lords and ladies, members of Parliament, authors, philosophers, experts in science, possessors of wealth, mind, cultivation, energy, being actively devoted to the quest.

The first report of proceedings by the London society was published in October, 1882. In the short time of eight years how much has been accomplished! Considering the elusive nature of the facts; the delicacy of the insight demanded; the inexactness of testimony; the all but impossibility of procuring precise accounts; the association of the phenomena with delusion, deceit, nervous derangement, some kind of eccentricity, with the consequent unwillingness to assume personal responsibility or to allow the use of names, the result has been very remarkable. If the promise of the past is at all justified in the future, we may confidently hope to find some clue to the enigmas that have so long and so cruelly baffled us. But, be this as it may, we cannot withhold our admiration of the patience, industry, devotedness, of those engaged in this inquiry. These qualities are of permanent value, and deepen the impression of earnestness which scientific men make.

*O. B. Frothingham.*

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## A NEW RACE PROBLEM.

IN the negotiations which terminated in the purchase of Alaska in 1867, it was scarcely contemplated that, in acquiring a quitclaim from Russia for an outlying territory equal in area to five of the greater States of the Union, we were also assuming a new race problem of the most interesting character. The long delay of Congress, until 1884, in making any other provision for the government of the country than applying the customs laws, and authorizing the Secretary of the Treasury to lease the two

small seal islands in Behring Sea, in order to preserve the seal rookeries from total destruction, was a reflex of the indifference of the people of the entire country to this most recent acquisition of federal domain.

Ten years ago, the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church first turned its attention to this new field, and sent its agents into Alaska to break the ground for an entirely new missionary enterprise; and while that body, by reason of its priority in preëmpting the