

By way of opening the proceedings, we were asked to sing a hymn, and while so doing, the several mediums amongst us were being controlled ; tiny sparkles of light too were seen flashing about over our heads, and strange sounds came from different parts of the room. Yes, surely this was the place in which to get my powers developed.

Everybody seemed to be in real earnest ; sometimes when for a moment, perfect silence prevailed I fancied I could see faces peering at me through the gloom and whispering to me, and I steadily returned the gaze whilst mentally beseeching them to assist me.

“Good evening ; God bless you all,” came from one of the controlled mediums.

“Good evening,” we answered. “Have you anything to tell us?”

“Nothing particular. I have just looked in to see how you are getting on. But I must be off, for I have to go to another meeting, and I see a lot of spirits around who want to speak to you. Good night.”

“Hulloh ! Here we are again. How are you, old cock !” rang out on our startled ears from another medium.

“You be quiet, and conduct yourself properly, or you shan’t come again,” remonstrated the spirit leader of the band, and who forthwith gave us a long discourse on the beauty of the spheres. “That spirit, who but just now addressed you in slang, is one who is still in the lower degrees. He was a clown on earth, and his old habits cling to him still ; he is not wicked, because he spoke in that manner, he is simply what you would call a ‘rough gem.’ But you must not speak harshly to such spirits ; on the contrary, help them upwards by prayer. Of course, you know that we have all sorts of spirits here, just as you have all sorts of men with you. Good night, and God bless you.”

“Stay one moment, please ; is Sira coming to-night?”

“No, I think you had better break up now. It is not good to sit too long at one time. Next Sunday he is coming, and many others whom you know. Good night.”

“Hulloh! Good-night, all,” shouted the clown spirit.

“I thought you had been gone ever so long ago.”

“I left my hat behind, so I came back to fetch it.”

“I didn’t think spirits wore hats,” said his questioner.

“Oh, yes, they do old boy, but another thing made me come back. You heard old ‘stick-in-the-mud’ (the spirit leader) blow me up because I spoke? Well, I pulled off one of my shoes and flung it at his head, and then I had to bolt pretty quick I can tell you. The next time I’ll hit him over the head with my fiddle; but I am off now. Good-night all.”

After this we sang the doxology, and departed to our homes, fresh food for thought being given to me by these new spirit encounters.

The following Sunday I again went to the same place, the company this time being increased by several others, who came from all parts of the town; some from the suburbs, and some from nearer home. I was gratified now to meet with a medium of some renown. I was informed that he had suffered for the cause; that is to say, he had been charged by the enemies of Spiritualism with fraud, and the result had been six months hard labour.

We believed him to be a martyr, and treated him with the respect due to such people. I sat down beside him; but from motives of delicacy did not like to refer to the sad occurrence. But he introduced the subject himself without hesitation, and I was pleased to listen to the recital of his wrongs.

“It ever was, and, I suppose, it ever will be,” I answered, “that the pioneers of every great cause have been stoned and imprisoned. You have not been exempted from the usual cruel persecution, and Paul did not consider it a disgrace because he had been in prison; on the contrary, he boasted of the fact. To suffer for a principle is no degradation. I would not be afraid of imprisonment in defence of Spiritualism, and I am pleased to see that you look upon it in the same way.”