

CHAPTER XIV.

ON the 21st of March 1875, I was agreeably surprised by a visit from my old friend whom I had known as Mr. Joseph Maurice, during the time of the enquiry into Spiritualism of the Dialectical Society, but who had now resumed his name in the original form, as Maurice Joseph, by which latter surname I shall henceforward mention him. I was shocked to see what a wreck he had become of his former self, but he had been suffering from various ailments, among them paralysis ; and his nerves were still so unstrung that he could speak but few words and in a low tone, and even thus could talk but little at a time. By gradual degrees, he told me that he had been deeply under spiritual influences, and that his sufferings at times had been very intense, partly physical, but partly spiritually induced, and it is even possible that the paralysis itself may have been the work of malignant influences, such as might have been the case but for Mrs. T.'s timely warning, with another friend of mine, as I have narrated towards the close of the previous volume ; and who may say how frequently such may be the primary cause of long and painful illnesses among those who believe not in the inter-communion between the two worlds, but who are none the less operated upon from the other side ? Also, it is possible that if awakened to the truth, they might receive relief, even in the same way, from the invisible side.

It appeared to me as if he had been, as it were, a kind of battle-field for antagonistic influences, and he now came to me on a mission from very decidedly the wrong source, for it was with an entreaty that I should altogether give up spirit communion, which he was to urge upon me to the utmost. Of course, even such a step was only *permitted* by the higher influences in the certain knowledge that far from changing my life, it would lead to his own strengthen-

ing in his mediumship, as indeed was at once proved even on that very first day; after which he came to me with tolerable frequency, gathering both physical and mental strength by each visit. Many people say,—Oh! the spirits who come to people teach always the religious dogmas of the medium him or her-self, whatsoever may be their creed either of belief or unbelief.—His was most undoubtedly an evidence of a very contrary character. Be it remembered that he was a Jew:—he had been developed into trance mediumship long before this illness commenced; and even in the earlier days he told me, that to his rather horror, once on awaking from one of those trances, he found himself praying to the Virgin Mary! nothing could *possibly* be farther from his own religious views! and I consider that even that one circumstance is sufficient to topple down the theory as a dogmatic fact, although I do grant that the spirits that surround a person are likely to be those whose views are in harmonious accord, but they may nevertheless become gradually remodelled either for better or for worse according to the influences to which they may yield themselves whether for higher or lower instruction, and we also know that the thirst for conversion is as strong among some of the dwellers on the other side, as it had been with them before quitting this earth.

In his case, the struggle was very much upwards, but his was a peculiar mission, therefore it was fought against with such deadly virulence by the evil angels. He had had wondrous visions of which he had in those days kept full records, but in one of the *dark* moments he had been induced to burn the manuscripts. (Like Emanuel Marshall with his pictures, and other instances that I have known.) He was not a student of Scripture, and therefore could not realize the special grandeur of some of his own visions, which in his many visits he would relate very fully to me, and I could frequently shew him in the Bible the full meaning and interpretation of what he had passed through. I wish I had had some of those destroyed records, for the visions, with the light thus thrown upon them, were of

deep interest ; but it would have been too much for me to attempt to write down any of them after he had left me, for my own life's work has always been too close for me to have had such time to spare. . . . The truth was that all unknowingly he was being led up to Christianity. Even on his first visit he told me in how many things he had already made a change : for instance, instead of *standing*, according to the custom of his nation, he would *kneel* to pray. . . and the words he employed were those of The Lord's Prayer, retiring to his own room three times a day for that purpose. A large proportion of his visional teaching, was to shew (which comes to me to and through so very many sources) the rapid approach of some great change taking place in the spirit world, and the intense effort being made to raise the unfortunate ones in the lower spheres—and also that the antagonism between good and evil is stronger than has ever hitherto been the case, consequently the conflict between the two powers becomes more and more fierce. Do we not see it even here on earth?—look at drunkenness, what a fearful scourge it is!—and see the mighty efforts being made in all the land to contend with and utterly subdue it : efforts chiefly made with religious fervour, seeking help from The Lord, and how wonderful in the last year or two has been the realized improvement. In Mr. Joseph's own seekings after higher light, I never attempted in any way to lead or to bias him ; I simply answered any questionings he might put to me, of course according to my own views, but I was always tenderly careful to say no word that should even hint at controversy. His nation had received the truth in the earlier ages, and to them we are indebted for our own Scripture evidences as far as *they* went ; and a portion, too, of that same nation gave us the written records of the New Testament, but—could they all have received that fresh revelation, the olden prophecies would have been falsified—therefore we are their debtors both for what they did believe, and for what they did not. As a nation I honour and esteem them highly, as well as being firmly

convinced of their close kinship, and that we, sturdy Britons, are likewise lineally descended from Jacob—of the tribe of Joseph—of the tribe of Ephraim. My faith is centred in The Lord, and I can trust all whom I love or care for in His Hands, secure that in His good time they shall be led into the fulness of truth ; therefore it is that I am not given to proselytising, either into Christianity or into Spiritualism, although I am ready and willing enough to speak whenever the words may be called for. I have been asked—Oh ! do talk to so-and-so about Spiritualism.—No : let them seek from me, and I will tell with open heart, but were I to speak at the wrong moment, I might do more harm than good. I was once enquired of by a dear but sceptical friend, as to whether I looked upon the refusal of these new truths as a sin, therefore I sought for *advice* how to answer her judiciously ;—and the written message was —“ In Our Lord’s time there were many of the Jewish nation who *could not* accept Him as the Messiah. Therein were they guiltless while they persecuted Him not either by word or deed. It was the active antagonism that formed the sin to be visited upon themselves and their children, even according to their own cry. So now, in these latter days, there are some who walk blindly on, unheeding the wonders vouchsafed :—for their blindness they may be pitied, nor will sin therein be imputed to them unless by scornful word or bitter action they may wound those who are God’s appointed agents in disseminating the fresh truths He is now shedding forth.” Although I have applied the word sceptical to my friend, I must do her the justice to say that she knows but very little on the subject, for she dwells at the antipodes, and during her visit to England was only twice able to spend a few short hours here, when we had many other things to talk about, so that Spiritualism could have but a small share of our time.

The awakening that God is now giving to our senses, is to teach us of the influences that have ever been around the path of humanity, whether acknowledged or otherwise, while at the same time we receive the unmistakable evi-

dences that the *possessions* spoken of in the Gospels were literal facts, however much the *intellectual* world may desire to class them under medical terms of disease, such as epilepsy, &c.;—and perhaps even in these days, their so-called epilepsy might be driven out by angelic ministry. In the Chronicles of Spirit Photography, I have given copious extracts from the letters of Mrs. P., a lady who had suffered in many ways from the malignity of untoward and low-class spirits. She had obtained much relief through the photographs I sent her, because the portrait, thus filled with their own emanations, became a link whereby she could implore the spirits' presence and aid when her tormentors became absolutely unbearable. I have saved one of her communications for this volume, and will here transcribe it, premising that I had sent to her (by direction) some frankincense (gum olibanum), for her to burn in case of any strong emergency, so as to "purify by fire," as I had been instructed to do at Mr. Hudson's when untoward influences had clung to the studio in consequence of the mixture of visitors.

"*September 25th, 1874.*—MY DEAR MISS HOUGHTON,—Again, thank God! having returned home, I am able to write to you, and to return you thanks for *all* your kindness, and for your last most thoughtful present of the frankincense which proved most useful to me. How well the dear kind spirits who favour you with their presence understand my position and the class of some of the spirits that haunt me. How happy you are with such friends, not, thank God, that I am friendless, for I have, and always have had, powerful spirit friends; indeed, were it not so, I do not know what would have become of me. I assure you I have often been snatched from the hands of spirits who I am quite sure would have caused my death. If you were to read my spiritual diary you would see that such has been the case, and at one time I was actually afraid to have the power of leaving my room, so awful was the temptation to suicide. On one night in particular I was nearly wild with terror; I never ceased praying to God, although I was so