

## AUTOMATIC OR SPIRIT WRITING.

*By B. F. Underwood, in the "Arena."*

Ques.—"Who are among the nearest and the dearest of your woman friends?"

Ans.—"Some my acquaintance with whom I did not emphasize in my memoirs and diary, but who really were, as they now are, my dearest and nearest friends."

To the question, "How far do the medium's own ideas color the thought given from the directing intelligence?" I received this answer: "Sharing largely what is perceived spiritually, there must ever be a large residuum of the percipient's marked atomism. Flaws are produced in our reflections as in your glass mirrors."

Ques.—"Is it true that spirits remember their earth life only when they come in contact with earthly mediums and conditions?"

Ans.—"So many souls come here wholly devoid of knowledge of the progressive steps to be taken in spirit evolution, that spirit return is absolutely necessary to bring them into soul knowledge of their deficiencies."

Ques.—"In spirit life is it generally necessary to come in contact with earth life in order to recall earthly experiences?"

Ans.—"That is true only when the returning spirit has been ignorant of advanced phases of spirit existence."

Ques.—"What are the most favorable conditions for those passed from earth to communicate with our plane?"

Ans.—"Conditions are here determined by so many laws which to you are unintelligible, that we are unable to answer your query. Change of environment is as sure to change relations here as with you."

Ques.—"Why are so many mediums controlled by Indian spirits? Is it possible for ignorant Indian spirits to get control of educated and refined persons?"

Ans.—"Yes. There are so many so-called cultured people, who are really on a savage plane, that Indians are the best interpreters of their over-estimated thought."

Ques.—"Were those who now write to us from your sphere once on earth, or did they formerly live on other planets?"

Ans.—"We lived as you now live; we were once in material form—where, it matters not."

Ques.—"Does the soul, once started in the individual man, always thereafter keep its individuality, or are all souls at last merged into one universal being?"

Ans.—"We perceive more distinctly than you can the relations between man and the universe, but we are not advanced enough to answer definitely the more abstract questions of universal being, which trouble us on this plane as greatly as they do you. We see a little more clearly, what is possible in the way of still further advancement; that is all yet."

One evening, in fine large characters was written the name, "Wendell Phillips."

Ques.—"We would be glad of a word from one whom we so much admired."

Ans.—"Shall I quiver cravenly at such seemingly absurd and sense-confounding modes of coming in contact with those on a plane on which I once acted so sophomoric a part? (I here called attention to some event in which I was brought into personal relations with Mr. Phillips.)

Ans.—"Place all reasonable faith as to your identity, and I will question you."

Ques.—"What do you wish to ask?"

Ans.—"Why was I called?"

Ques.—"Did you think you were called? We were not even thinking of you."

Ans.—"Voice said to me, 'Join a group who are now on rapport with sensitive parties with whom you will sympathize.' Trusting to the voice, I came, and am rather set back by the new sign of evolutionary existence elsewhere considered a foolish fraud. Theodore Parker's was the voice, so I trusted somewhat to his leadership; and though I feel a little as though this were humbug, I will try to test the matter in a scientific spirit." (Here the communication stopped, and what purported to be another intelligence assumed control, but answered no question in regard to Wendell Phillips.)

At another time this:—

Ques.—"Are your answers limited by our ignorances?"

Ans.—"Yes, we are obliged to answer according to your limitations. If we should state the simple truth of our lives here, you could not understand it."

Ques.—"Do you have your hours of sleep there?"

Ans.—"Sleep, as you understand it, is unknown to us."

Ques.—"From your point of view do you discern the why and wherefore of being?"

Ans.—"Yonder is the All of Being still so ghostly in affirmations; of it at this point we know no more than do you."

At one sitting came this: "All are now waiting to get some of B. F. U.'s conundrums." Among the questions I asked was this: "Does the mere fact of my giving attention facilitate your writing through Sara's hand?"

Ans.—"Sara's mediumship depends upon your sympathetic attention. You are as strong a factor in our reaching out to bring your spirit in harmony with our own as she is. You are both essential."

At another time I asked, among other questions, "What does free will mean to you?"

Ans.—"Free will is the ignorant term by which poor mortality tries to define the great purpose which the prescience of Being shapes now and forever—purpose of Spirit."

At one sitting a name was written, and the questions and replies were as follows:

Ques.—"Have you any special thing you wish to say to us?"

Ans.—"So many things, but principally that we never die. I am more alive here than ever before. Doubt forever dispelled. Oh, if I could do ardent things by which I could reach all humanity, and assure it, as I am myself here assured, of soul life!"

Ques.—"How did you feel at the moment of death? Were you conscious or unconscious?"

Ans.—"Conscious of a change, but one so easily made that I felt puzzled whether, as Paul said, I was in the body or out. I saw what seemed to be me lying inert, senseless, while my real thinking, living self stood by unable to will that senseless body to make any movement; and I said, 'Why, I am freed from that prison.'"

Ques.—"Were any of your spirit friends near you at that hour and preceptable to you?"

Ans.—"Looking around I was much surprised to see so many well-known friends." (The names of several persons now dead were written.)

At a recent sitting answers in reply to questions were as follows:—

Ques.—"What spirit will now communicate?"

Ans.—"Wordsworth."

Ques.—"Tell us what gave you the hope of immortality while yet on our plane?"

Ans.—"Laugh as you may, the Soul of the universe spoke to mine—a spark of it—and gave me those intimations which helped me to bear with life's woes and absurdities; and through me many blinded mortals have caught glimpses of the great hope of poor suffering humanity, that the soul is all, but needs earth's discipline."

Ques.—"Upon what premises did you predicate your 'Intimations of Immortality?'"

Ans.—"I based my hope, I received my intimations, I founded my expectations of immortal life upon the countless transformations seen in nature, or passing changes from one phase of existence to another—the chrysalis and butterfly, the acorn and oak, the embryo forms of life preceding humanity."

Ques. (by S. A. U.)—"I hope you will not feel aggrieved by my expressed annoyance when your name was announced, for I felt doubtful."

Ans.—"Born of woman, and free from earth's contentious phases, I understand the passing irritability, and have nothing to forgive. Good night, and sometime we will come still nearer."

Assuming that these messages which purport to come from extra-terrene minds are expressions of the sub-conscious or secondary self, why does that self claim to be a spirit apart from the primary self, a spirit that once lived in the flesh, but is now incarnate? Why does it represent