

THE
Knox College Monthly

AND
PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE.

VOL. IX.

FEBRUARY, 1889.

No. 4.

SPIRITUALISM.

BY spiritualism is understood a belief that certain phenomena, mental and physical, are the result of the action of spirits from the supernatural world, upon persons of peculiarly sensitive organization, known as mediums. It is to be distinguished from other kindred phenomena such as clairvoyance, mesmerism, and somnambulism, often confounded with it, and in recent years closely allied by its advocates.

A clairvoyant professes to have acquired extraordinary powers of sense and perception through the manipulation of a magnetizer. Mesmerism or animal magnetism is supposed to be an influence analogous to metallic or terrestrial magnetism, residing in animal bodies and capable of transmission from one to another. So that clairvoyance and mesmerism claim only the influence of natural laws, and have no connection with the supernatural. It is a noticeable fact that clairvoyants usually graduate as spiritualists, and thus are regarded by many as identical with them. But in order intelligently to discuss the merits of spiritualistic phenomena, we must avoid the territory of any other subjects which although closely allied in practice, are entirely different.