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Spiritualism.

Not long ago a friend of mine, lately returned from the United States, was telling of the wonderful things he saw in that country. And among other things he described what happened to a select spirit-*sance* in the city of Boston, to which he had the good fortune to gain an entrance. His imaginative faculty was strongly worked upon by the mysterious performance of a "medium." He witnessed the summoning up of spirits from the "vasty deeps" of the nether world; he saw their presence manifested in table-jumping and table-talking, in the strange spelling of the index-finger of a planchette. The result was that he left the *sance* a thorough-going believer in spiritualism, and now entertains his friends with marvellous doctrines of unseen spiritual agencies that are undreamt of in ordinary philosophy.

His explanation of these manifestations of occult power is rather interesting, because it partly coincides with that given by the Rev. R. W. Dibdin, M. A., who in the year 1853 took pains to investigate this subject. (I may here remark in passing that this was the year in which a table-turning and table-talking epidemic raged thro' almost the whole civilized world.) The substance of that explanation (my friend's) may be set down in the following words:—

"Do I believe in Spiritualism? Why 'how can I doubt the evidence of my own senses? You believe in the evidence of your senses and I think I should be allowed the same privilege. I speak what I saw, and whatever I might think of it the facts remain the same. At first the

"party sat for a considerable time in a state of expectation, with the whole attention fixed on the table, and eagerly looking to the fixed sign of the anticipated motion. One or two slight changes heralded the approaching revolution. At first the revolution only continued as far as the length of their arms. Then the motion of the table changed from a walk to a run, until it actually spun around so fast that they could no longer keep up with it. I saw, too, the pointer of a planchette spell out the day month and year of a friend's death, which occurred a decade ago and which we had almost forgotten ourselves!"

"What is my explanation of the mystery? Well, to tell the truth, I believe these marvels are due to Satanic agency. Devils alone (and not departed spirits), are the agents in these cases. One thing I always noticed, was that, while the future was a sealed book to them—they did not pretend to tell the future, or if they did they utterly failed—they were able accurately to describe the past. The Devil knows all things that have happened, but he cannot tell the future, for God keeps the future in his own hands until it be accomplished."

My friend does not stand alone in absurd belief of this kind. Multitudes of cultured and intelligent men at the present time believe the same thing. They receive as genuine messages supposed to be transmitted by good spirits of departed relatives and friends to those whom they have left behind them on earth. As a recent author says, "The fact that such beliefs are entertained by 'educated' men and women only shows another aspect of that myth-making tendency which has al-