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Stevens - The Watscka Wonder - 1887.

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PSYCHICAL AND PHYSIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDIES.

THE  
WATSEKA WONDER.

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A NARRATIVE OF STARTLING PHENOMENA OCCURRING IN  
THE CASE OF

MARY LURANCY VENNUM.

BY E. W. STEVENS.

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MARY REYNOLDS,  
A Case of Double Consciousness.

BY REV. WM. S. PLUMMER, D. D.

[Republished by permission, from Harper's Magazine for May, 1860.]

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CHICAGO:  
RELIGIO-PHILOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE.  
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## PUBLISHER'S FIRST NOTE.

To members of the various learned professions we especially commend this narrative. We believe the history of the case as herein told to be strictly true. The account is given in a modest, unassuming way, with no attempt to exaggerate or enlarge; it could have been made far more thrilling and yet have remained within the bounds of truth. It will be observed there is no chance for the witnesses to have been honestly mistaken and to have thought they heard and saw that which in fact they did not. Either the account is in exact accordance with the facts or the author and witnesses have willfully prevaricated. The evidence which we publish herewith as to the credibility of the Roff family, could not be stronger; and the reputation of E. W. Stevens is equally good; the publisher has known him for years and has implicit confidence in his veracity.

The case of Lurancy Vennum is not by any means an isolated one, and there are others which in some respects are even more remarkable. Yet on account of its recent occurrence and the facilities for investigation, we believe this case deserves and demands the careful, candid, unbiased consideration, not only of professional men, but of all who are interested, either as advocates of a future existence or as disbelievers therein. The publisher will be glad to receive honest, intelligent criticisms, which may be utilized in a future edition. We are all in search of truth, let us not be so blinded with prejudice as to be disgusted with its wrappings and fail to find the fair treasure so snugly ensconced within.

CHICAGO, September, 1879.

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## PUBLISHER'S SECOND NOTE.

Although fifty thousand copies of the case of Lurancy Vennum have been published, including the original publication in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, yet there has continued to be a steady call for the narrative. The publisher, therefore, in response to the demand, sends out this edition, from new plates. By kind permission of Harper Brothers, he combines with it an account of the case of Mary Reynolds, an instance of Double Consciousness narrated in the pages of *Harper's Magazine* in 1860, which has been frequently referred to in various books and periodicals since, but never before republished.

The case of Mary Reynolds lacks some important features developed in that of Lurancy Vennum, is less interesting as a psychical and physio-psychological study. Yet it offers valuable data for consideration, and may be more intelligently handled now than when first published. In his valuable work, "The Scientific Basis of Spiritualism" (Boston: Colby & Rich), Epes Sargent refers to the case of Mary Reynolds and offers an explanation. He also details interesting experiments of his own in 1840 with Mrs. A. C. Mowatt, afterwards Mrs. Ritchie. Mr. Sargent was an expert mesmerist and a close student of mental science; his opinions are worthy of attention.

The publisher purposely omits from this edition a number of able papers bearing upon the case of Lurancy Vennum, contributed by medical men and experts in mental science and published in previous editions, in response to the invitation given in the closing lines of his first "Note." His reasons for this omission are, no doubt, obvious; he desires in renewing the invitation, to leave those interested untrammelled by published opinions. Communications treating of the contents

of this pamphlet may be published in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, and included in future editions; they should be addressed to

JNO. C. BUNDY,

Chicago, Illinois.

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## TRIBUTE TO DR. E. W. STEVENS.

Dr. Stevens finished his earthly career on December 9th, 1885, at the age of sixty-three years. He was a man of pure life, and great benevolence. His honesty, candor, modesty and deeply religious nature combined to make him one of the noblest of men. His wonderful cures and good deeds have embalmed his memory in thousands of hearts. He left a wife and family of children whose love and reverence no space nor time can weaken. The publisher deems it only just to make this brief mention in this new edition of a story which illustrates, among other things, one instance of the beneficent work which filled the entire life of E. Winchester Stevens; a work which enabled him to leave his family rich only in recollections of the husband's and father's affection, and of his lifelong work for humanity.

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# THE CASE OF LURANCY VENNUM.

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A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY, AND AUTHENTICATED  
INSTANCE OF SPIRIT MANIFESTATION.

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BY E. W. STEVENS.

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Facts are the basis of philosophy;  
Philosophy the harmony of facts  
Seen in their right relation.—T. L. Harris.

\* \* The springing up of Spiritualism and Theosophy on grounds burnt over by the fires of the orthodox hell, and right in the teeth of the east winds that blow from the cheerless seas of doubt, testify to the hunger of men for some assurance that the loved and departed are not also lost.—*Rev. M. J. Savage, in a Sermon on "Immortality and Modern Thought," Delivered at the Saratoga Convention of Unitarians, September, 1886.*

\* \* There may be in what is called Spiritualism, and the mind cure, and many other new developments, the germs of a something higher; and we should be willing for the new theory to take its place, and under the great laws of life, to work out its destiny; and not, Pharaoh-like, seek to "kill the young child." It may be that in the first appearances of many of these new ideas, that they are crude, and that those who receive them and advocate them do not themselves understand all their real meaning. \* \* Let us rejoice that the continuity of life seems to some to be a demonstrated fact; and that to others there seems to be possible a higher law of mental healing; and that in one way and another, and by all ways the truth is coming to our world, and our world is coming to the truth. \* \* —*H. W. Thomas, D. D., in Religio-Philosophical Journal for December 25th, 1886.*

Rationally studied and interpreted, unmixed with delusions self-generated or imposed by others, Spiritualism is the one safeguard against all superstitions. It shows that the unseen world is as much within the sphere of universal nature as our own; it is the solvent of all mysteries that have perplexed philosophers.—*Epes Sargent in Scientific Basis of Spiritualism.*

## STATEMENT OF DR. E. W. STEVENS.

Watseka, Illinois, has been swept by a tidal wave of excitement, on account of the presumed insanity of one Lurancy Vennum, a young girl belonging to an unpretentious family in the suburbs of the city. Her insanity, as it was thought to be, dates from July 11th, A. D., 1877, and the remarkable phenomena continued until her perfect restoration through the aid of friendly Spiritualists and spirits, on the 21st of May, 1878.

Thus, for ten months and ten days, did these phenomena continue to excite and agitate the people. The following is a true narrative, and as full as the facts collected from the parents and relatives of the parties named herein and observations made by the writer, will warrant.

Thomas J. Vennum was born May 7th, 1832, in Washington Co., Penn.; Lurinda J. Smith (his wife), was born October 14th, 1837, in St. Joseph Co., Ind. They were married in Fayette Co., Iowa, December 2nd, 1855.

## MARY LURANCY VENNUM,

daughter of the above named Thomas J. and Lurinda J. Vennum, was born on the 16th day of April, 1864, in Milford township, seven miles south of Watseka. The family moved to Iowa, July 12th, 1864, and returned to the vicinity eight miles from Watseka, in October, 1865. In August, 1866, they removed to Milford, twelve miles south of Watseka, and remained there till March 1st, 1870, then moved out two and one-half miles from Milford until April 1st, 1871, when they moved into Watseka, locating about forty rods from the residence of A. B. Roff, the spirit daughter of whom, according to all the facts and representations every way tested, is the principal character in this remarkable narrative. The family remained at this place during the summer. The only acquaintance ever had between the two families during the season, was simply one brief call of Mrs. Roff, for a few minutes, on Mrs. Vennum, which call was never returned; and a formal speaking acquaintance between the two gentlemen. Since 1871, the Vennum family

have lived entirely away from the vicinity of Mr. Roff's, and never nearer than now, on extreme opposite limits of the city.

"Rancy," as she is familiarly called, had never been sick, save a light run of measles in 1873. A few days before the following incidents took place, she said to her family: "There were persons in my room last night, and they called 'Rancy! Rancy!!' and I felt their breath on my face." The very next night she arose from her bed, saying that she could not sleep, that every time she tried to sleep, persons came and called "Rancy! Rancy!!" to her. Her mother went to bed with her, after which she rested and slept the rest of the night.

On the 11th day of July, 1877, Lurancy had been sewing carpet a part of the afternoon, when, at about six o'clock she laid by her work, as her mother said: "Lurancy, you had better commence getting supper." The girl replied: "Ma, I feel bad; I feel so queer," and placing her hand to her left breast, she immediately went into what seemed like a fit, falling heavily on the floor, lying apparently dead, every muscle becoming suddenly rigid. Thus she lay five hours. On returning to consciousness she said she felt "very strange and queer." The remainder of the night she rested well. The next day the rigid state returned, and passing beyond the rigidity, her mind took cognizance of two states of being at the same time. Lying as if dead, she spoke freely, telling the family what persons and spirits she could see, describing them and calling some of them by name. Among those mentioned were her sister and brother, for she exclaimed, "Oh, mother! can't you see little Laura and Bertie? They are so beautiful!" etc., etc. Bertie died when Lurancy was but three years old.

She had many of these trances, describing heaven and the spirits, or the angels as she called them. Sometime in September she became free from them and seemed to the family to be quite well again.

On the 27th day of November, 1877, she was attacked with a most violent pain in her stomach, some five or six times a day; for two weeks she had the most excruciating pains. In these painful paroxysms, she would double herself back until

her head and feet actually touched. At the end of two weeks, or about the 11th of December, in these distressed attacks, she became unconscious and passed into a quiet trance, and, as at former times, would describe heaven and spirits, often calling them angels.

From this time on until the 1st of February, 1878, she would have these trances and sometimes a seemingly real obsession, from three to eight and sometimes as many as twelve times a day, lasting from one to eight hours, occasionally passing into that state of ecstasy, when, as Lurancy, she claimed to be in heaven.

During the time recorded, up to about the middle of January, 1878, she had been under the care of Dr. L. N. Pitwood in the summer and Dr. Jewett during the winter. These M. D.'s are both eminent allopathic practitioners, and residents of Watseka. Mrs. Allison, Mrs. Jolly and other relatives and friends believed her insane. The Rev. B. M. Baker, the Methodist minister in charge at Watseka, wrote to the insane asylum to ascertain if the girl could be received there. It seemed to be the general feeling among all the friends, save the parents and a few who were only sympathetic observers and thinkers, that the girl should go to the asylum.

There were in the City of Watseka at this time, persons who had more humanity than bigotry; persons who believe, in the language of a Spiritualist lecturer, that "disease has a dynamic or spiritual origin;" persons claiming to understand something of the occult forces and phenomena of mind, and the diseases incident to a false conception of, and opposition to, its potencies; persons who believe God being "no respecter of persons" and "without variableness or shadow of turning," that power exists to-day, as in the days of the Nazarene, to cast out devils. Among this class were Asa B. Roff and his wife, who, with others, became thoroughly aroused to the importance of arresting the movement, to take a lovely child from the bosom of an affectionate family, to imprison her among maniacs, to be ruled and cared for by ignorant and bigoted strangers, who know less of catalepsy than a blind,

materialist does of immortality. These good people ventured in the most gentle and christian spirit, to counsel with the parents and advise other treatment, different from any that had been administered.

These earnest, self-sacrificing souls, imbued with the conviction that uncultivated spirits had something to do with the case, plead with the many friends of the child, to withhold her from the asylum until it could be better shown whether the girl was really insane, or her unfortunate condition might be attributable to foreign minds.

Mr. Roff, after much persuasion, obtained the consent of the girl's father, to visit her and bring with him Dr. E. W. Stevens, of Janesville, Wis., to investigate the case. Dr. Stevens, who, for several months, at frequent intervals, had been in the city and a silent listener to the scoffs and scandals thrown out toward the Spiritualists on account of their opinions regarding the case, and the universal foment of mind in the city over it, was formally invited by Mr. Vennum, through Mr. Roff, to visit the family.

On the afternoon of January 31st, 1878, the two gentlemen repaired to Mr. Vennum's residence, a little out of the city. Dr. Stevens, an entire stranger to the family, was introduced by Mr. Roff at four o'clock P. M.; no other persons present but the family. The girl sat near the stove, in a common chair, her elbows on her knees, her hands under her chin, feet curled up on the chair, eyes staring, looking every way like an "old hag." She sat for a time in silence, until Dr. Stevens moved his chair, when she savagely warned him not to come nearer. She appeared sullen and crabbed, calling her father "Old Black Dick," and her mother "Old Granny." She refused to be touched, even to shake hands, and was reticent and sullen with all save the doctor, with whom she entered freely into conversation, giving her reasons for doing so; she said he was a Spiritual doctor and would understand her.

When he asked her name she quickly replied:

"Katrina Hogan."

"How old?"



"Sixty-three years."

"Where from?"

"Germany."

"How long ago?"

"Three days."

"How did you come?"

"Through the air."

"How long will you stay?"

"Three weeks."

After this system of conversation had proceeded for some time, she modified her manners very much, appearing to be a little penitent and confidential, and said she would be honest and tell the doctor her real name. She was not a woman; and her real name was Willie. On being asked what was her father's name, replied, "Peter Canning, and her own name was Willie Canning, a young man; ran away from home, got into difficulty, changed his name several times and finally lost his life and was now here because he wanted to be," etc. She wearied with answering questions and giving details. Then she turned upon the doctor with a perfect shower of questions, such as, "What is your name? Where do you live? Are you married? How many children? How many boys? How many girls? What is your occupation? What kind of a doctor? What did you come to Watseka for? Have you ever been at the South Pole? North Pole? Europe? Australia? Egypt? Ceylon? Benares? Sandwich Islands?" and by a long series of questions evinced a knowledge of geography. She next inquired after the doctor's habits and morals by questions like the following: "Do you lie? get drunk? steal? swear? use tobacco? tea? coffee? Do you go to church? pray?" etc., etc. She then asked to have the same questions put to Mr. Roff. She declined to ask them direct, herself, but through the doctor. They must also be repeated through him to Mr. Vennum, making the while, some very unpleasant retorts.

When, at about half-past five o'clock, P. M., the visitors arose to depart, she also arose, flung up her hands and fell upon the floor, straight, stiff and rigid, as sensitives fall with

the "power" in Methodist revival meetings, and believing it to be of the same nature, the doctor took occasion to prove it, as he has done on those smitten with the "power," by controlling body and mind and restoring them to a normal and rational state, despite the "power."

The visitors being again seated, he took her hands as they were held straight upwards, like iron bars, and by magnetic action soon had the body under perfect control, and through the laws of Spiritual science, was soon in full and free communication with the sane and happy mind of Lurancy Venum herself, who conversed with the grace and sweetness of an angel, declaring herself to be in heaven.

In this condition she answered the doctor's questions with reference to herself, her seemingly insane condition and the influences that controlled her, with great rationality and understanding. She regretted to have such evil controls about her. She said she knew the evil spirit calling itself Katrina and Willie and others. The doctor continued to suggest to her mind, things to prepare the way for a change of influences, by enlightening and instructing her now while her mind was clear and in this superior condition, and then asked her, if she must be controlled, if it would not be better, if it were possible, to have a higher, purer, happier, and more intelligent or rational control. She said she would rather, if it could be so. Then on being advised, she looked about and inquired of those she saw, and described, and named, to find some one who would prevent the cruel and insane ones from returning to annoy her and the family. She soon said: "There are a great many spirits here who would be glad to come," and she again proceeded to give names and descriptions of persons long since deceased; some that she had never known, but were known by older persons present. But, she said, there is one the angels desire should come, and she wants to come. On being asked if she knew who it was, she said: "Her name is Mary Roff." Mr. Roff being present, said: "That is my daughter; Mary Roff is my girl. Why, she has been in heaven twelve years. Yes, let her come, we'll be glad to have her come." Mr. Roff

assured Lurancy that Mary was good and intelligent and would help her all she could; stating further that Mary used to be subject to conditions like herself. Lurancy, after due deliberation and counsel with spirits, said that Mary would take the place of the former wild and unreasonable influence. Mr. Roff said to her: "Have your mother bring you to my house and Mary will be likely to come along, and a mutual benefit may be derived from our former experience with Mary." Thus reaching the sane mind of the girl and through her, the sane minds of a better class of spirits, a contract or agreement was made, to be kept sacred by the angels in heaven and heaven's agents in the flesh, by which a mortal body was to be restored to health; a spirit, unfortunate in earth-life, with twelve years' experience in spirit-life, to have an amended earthly experience, a child to be spiritualized and moulded into a fine medium, an unbelieving and scoffing city to be confounded, and the greatest truth the world has ever sought, established beyond doubt or cavil. How far the contract has been kept by the spirits and their faithful co-laborers here, the sequel will show.

The object of the visit now being attained, Dr. Stevens asked:

"How long do you want to stay in this heaven?"

She answered.

"Always, sir."

"But you will come back for the sake of your friends?"

"Yes, sir."

"When will you come back?"

"At twelve o'clock."

"But the family will want rest. Can't you come sooner?"

"Yes, sir, I can."

"How soon can you come?"

"At nine o'clock, sir."

"Will you come at nine?"

"I will."

And so she did.

After nearly three hours of careful investigation, conversation, and the application of the laws of Spiritual science and harmony, Mr. Roff and the doctor retired, leaving the family satisfied that a new fountain of light and source of help had been reached. A new beam of truth reached and touched the hearts of the sorrowing family,—and to use the language of Mary Roff, “Dr. Stevens opened the gate for her,” and for the inflowing of light where before was darkness.

On the following morning, Friday, February 1st, Mr. Vennum called at the office of Mr. Roff and informed him that the girl claimed to be Mary Roff and wanted to go home. To use Mr. Vennum’s words: “She seems like a child real homesick, wanting to see her pa and ma and her brothers.”

It now becomes necessary in the relation of this narrative to give a brief sketch of the life of

MARY ROFF.

The daughter of Asa B. and Ann Roff, was born on the 8th day of October, 1846, in Warren Co., Ind. The family moved in November of the same year to Williamsport, Ind., thence in September, 1847, to Middleport, Ill., where they resided till June, 1857, when they removed to Victoria, Texas, in search of relief for a sick child. In March, 1858, they returned to Gilman and remained there and at Onarga, Ill., till the building of the Toledo, Peoria and Warsaw Railroad, when they returned to Middleport, November 8th, 1859, and built the first house in the new town of South Middleport, which is now a part of the City of Watseka, where they still reside.

In the spring of 1847, when about six months old, Mary was taken sick and had a fit, in which she remained several hours. After the fit, she became conscious and lay several days without the family having much hope of her recovery. In two or three weeks she seemed to have entirely recovered. A few weeks later she acted, on one occasion, like a child going into a fit. The pupils of her eyes dilated, the muscles slightly twitched but lasted but a few moments. From the age of about six months, she had these spells as described, once in from three to five weeks, all the time increasing in

force and violence, until her tenth year, when they proved to be real fits, having from one to three and sometimes four or five of them within a period of three or four days, when they would cease, and she would enjoy good health until the next period approached. At these times, she for a few days would seem sad and despondent, in which mood she would sing and play the most solemn music (for with all the rest of her studies, in which she was considered well advanced, she had learned music), and almost always would sing that beautiful song, "We Are Coming, Sister Mary," which was a favorite with her.

When she was fifteen years old, and the violence of the fits had increased, the parents said they could see her mind was affected during the melancholy periods prior to the fits. Dr. Jesse Bennett, now residing at Sparta, Wis., and Dr. Franklin Blades, now Judge of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Illinois, and resident of Watseka, were employed to attend her. Dr. N. S. Davis, of Chicago, and several other prominent physicians, had examined her. They kept her in the water cure at Peoria, Ill., under the care of Dr. Nevins, for eighteen months, but all to no purpose.

In the summer of 1864 she seemed to have almost a mania<sup>d</sup> for bleeding herself for the relief, as she said, "of the lump of pain in the head." Drs. Fowler, Secrest and Pitwood were called and applied leeches. She would apply them herself to her temples, and liked them, treating them like little pets, until she seemed sound and well.

On Saturday morning, July 16th, 1864, in one of her desponding moods, she secretly took a knife with her to the back yard, and cut her arm terribly, until bleeding excessively, she fainted. This occurred about nine o'clock A. M. She remained unconscious till two o'clock P. M., when she became a raving maniac of the most violent kind, in which condition she remained five days and nights, requiring almost constantly the services of five of the most able bodied men to hold her on the bed, although her weight was only about one hundred pounds, and she had lost nearly all her blood. When she ceased raving, she looked and acted quite natural and well, and could do

everything she desired as readily and properly as at any time in her life. Yet she seemed to know no one, and could not recognize the presence of persons at all, although the house was nearly filled with people night and day. She had no sense whatever of sight, feeling or hearing in a natural way, as was proved by every test that could be applied. She could read blindfolded, and do everything as readily as when in health by her natural sight. She would dress, stand before the glass, open and search drawers, pick up loose pins, do any and all things readily and without annoyance, under heavy blindfoldings.

Near the time, in 1864, when she cut her arm while blindfolded, she took Dr. Trall's encyclopedia, turned to the index, traced the column till she came to the word "blood," then turned to the page indicated and read the subject through. On another occasion she took a box of her letters received from her friends, and sat down, heavily blindfolded by critical, intelligent, investigating gentlemen, examined and read them without error or hesitancy. When Rev. J. H. Rhea, Editor A. J. Smith, Mr. Roff and others misplaced and promiscuously arranged some of their own letters with Mary's, she at once proceeded to correctly draw out the intruded letters and examine them. If wrong side up, she would quickly turn them, and read aloud the address thereon, and throw violently away every letter not her own; and re-arranged twenty or thirty letters in the order she desired to have them. Rev. J. H. Rhea was the Methodist minister in charge at that time; A. G. Smith was editor of the Iroquois County *Republican*, now editor of the Danville (Ill.) *Times*. She was also investigated by all the prominent citizens of Watseka at that time.

With the physicians her peculiar state or condition was called catalepsy. With the clergy it was one of the mysteries of God's providence, with which we should have little to do. With editors, who are obliged to be wise or silent, it was fits or some unaccountable phenomenon. All, with untiring effort, tried to solve the mystery, and learn what it was that produced such strange and wonderful manifestations. The editor of the

Danville *Times*, in a recent issue writes:

"Now as to Mary Roff, it was our fortune to know the sweet girl, who was herself a cataleptic, and who died twelve years ago. Disease dethroned her reason and maddened her brain until she sought her own and others' lives, and the modest young lady was transformed into a screaming maniac. She had periods of exemption from raving, and thus her aberrant mind conceived fancies of the queerest hue, creating the most impossible beings for associates, and conversing with them, she maintained her own side of the conversation in a usual tone of voice, while imagination supplied her created associates with language and intelligence. When in this condition, her father and mother asserted the discovery that Mary could read a book with its lids closed, and they desired us to test the correctness of what they claimed. We therefore took from our side pocket a letter inclosed in an envelope, and holding it before her bandaged eyes, said to her, 'Mary, read the signature to that letter.' Immediately the proper name was pronounced."

After remaining in the clairvoyant state above related for three or four days, she came again to her normal condition and in good health as she usually was, except the fits. From this time she continued as she had been prior to cutting her arm. Her fits increased, and her parents were advised to place her in the insane asylum.

On July 5th, 1865, while her parents were at Peoria, Ill., on a three days' visit, she ate a hearty breakfast, and soon thereafter lay down on her bed, and in her usual health went to sleep. In a few minutes she was heard to scream, as was usual on taking a fit. On approaching her bedside, they found her in a fit, and in a few moments she expired.

We now return and take up the original narrative where we left it, dating February 1st, 1878, when it was first seen that Mary Roff had control of Lurancy's body, and teasing to go home. Could it be possible the gulf of death had been bridged! the gates of heaven left open? Had Mary, like Moses and Elias, returned to a transfiguration? Or, like the spirit of "one of the prophets," had she come with revelation to the grotto of darkness in this benighted Patmos? Were the unnumbered facts of scriptural ages repeating themselves now? Can we say with Job, "A spirit passed before my face?" Eze-

Kiel and Isaiah talked with the departed, Saul conversed with Samuel, Paul and the shepherds with spirits in the air, and can we talk with Mary? And the friends of the family went up to see, and answered, "Yes!"

From the wild, angry, ungovernable girl, to be kept only by lock and key, or the more distressing watch-care of almost frantic parents; or the rigid, corpse-like cataleptic, as believed, the girl has now become mild, docile, polite and timid, knowing none of the family, but constantly pleading to go home. The best wisdom of the family was used to convince her that she was at home, and must remain. Weeping, she would not be pacified, and only found contentment in going back to heaven, as she said, for short visits.

About a week after she took control of the body, Mrs. A. B. Roff and her daughter, Mrs. Minerva Alter, Mary's sister, hearing of the remarkable change, went to see the girl. As they came in sight, far down the street, Mary, looking out of the window, exclaimed exultingly, "There comes my ma and sister Nervie!" the name by which Mary used to call Mrs. Alter in girlhood. As they came into the house, she caught them around their necks, wept and cried for joy, and seemed so happy to meet them. From this time on she seemed more homesick than before. At times she seemed almost frantic to go home. Finally some friends of the family insisted on their sending her to Mr. Roff's, which they reluctantly consented to do; reluctantly because the girl was so much trouble and care, as she had been all winter; so much so that Mrs. Vennum was nearly prostrated, and could not have survived the care and anxiety many months longer, under the same state of affairs. They felt that it would be an imposition to send the girl to be cared for by strangers, and especially so by Mrs. Roff, as she was not able to take charge of and care for a girl that made so much trouble as this one had for Mrs. Vennum.

Mr. and Mrs. Roff, with their hearts ever full of the milk of human kindness, more ready to forgive than to censure, and braving the sneers and taunting innuendoes of an uneducated bigotry, with no other motive but one of mercy and kindness,



opened their doors and hearts to receive the unfortunate girl with her new control, having no hope or desire for reward but in the sense of a just sympathy for right and truth. They remembered the precept, "Forget not to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels."

On the 11th day of February, 1878, they sent the girl to Mr. Roff's, where she met her "pa and ma," and each member of the family, with the most gratifying expressions of love and affection, by words and embraces. On being asked how long she would stay, she said, "The angels will let me stay till some time in May;" and she made it her home there till May 21st, three months and ten days, a happy, contented daughter and sister in a borrowed body.

After the girl was at Mr. Roff's, the Rev. Mr. Baker said to Mr. Vennum, "I think you will see the time when you will wish you had sent her to the asylum." Mrs. Jolly said if she ever came home she would be more trouble than ever. Another relative, more religious than humane, said, "I would sooner follow a girl of mine to the grave than have her go to Roff's and be made a Spiritualist." Dr. Jewett called it catalepsy No. 2, which is as definite and convenient in explanation of this case as is "humbug" in explanation of any newly discovered scientific truth unacceptable to popular ignorance. He said: "Humor her whims and she will get well." Some prudent, two-faced people would say, with a non-committal air, "What strange freaks!" Others, with an exalted opinion of their wonderful perceptions, would say, "It is all put on," etc., etc. Yet none of the persons expressing such opinions had ever called to see the girl, or derived any information from those in charge of her.

The girl now in her new home, seemed perfectly happy and content, knowing every person and everything that Mary knew when in her original body; twelve to twenty-five years ago, recognizing and calling by name those who were friends and neighbors of the family from 1852 to 1865, when Mary died, calling attention to scores, yes, hundreds of incidents that transpired during her natural life. During all the period of

her sojourn at Mr. Roff's she had no knowledge of, and did not recognize any of Mr. Vennum's family, their friends or neighbors, yet Mr. and Mrs. Vennum and their children visited her and Mr. Roff's people, she being introduced to them as to any strangers. After frequent visits, and hearing them often and favorably spoken of, she learned to love them as acquaintances, and visited them with Mrs. Roff three times. From day to day she appeared natural, easy, affable and industrious, attending diligently and faithfully to her household duties, assisting in the general work of the family as a faithful, prudent daughter might be supposed to do, singing, reading or conversing as opportunity offered, upon all matters of private or general interest to the family.

Three days after she came to Mr. Roff's, while looking at him and seeming to have been in a sort of retrospective reverie, she asked, "Pa, who was it that used to say 'confound it?'" and laughing very heartily when she saw that he understood it to be himself, that being a common expression of his in the time of her girlhood, twelve to twenty years ago.

One day she met an old friend and neighbor of Mr. Roff's, who was a widow when Mary was a girl at home. Some years since the lady married a Mr. Wagoner with whom she yet lives. But when she met Mrs. Wagoner she clasped her around the neck, and said, "O Mary Lord, you look so very natural, and have changed the least of any one I have seen since I came back." Mrs. Lord was in some way related to the Vennum family, and lived close by them, but Mary could only call her by the name by which she knew her fifteen years ago, and could not seem to realize that she was married. Mrs. Lord lived just across the street from Mr. Roff's for several years, prior and up to within a few months of Mary's death; both being members of the same Methodist church, they were very intimate.

Some days after Mary was settled in her new home, Mrs. Parker, who lived neighbor to the Roff's in Middleport in 1852, and next door to them in Watseka in 1860, came in with her daughter-in-law, Nellie Parker. Mary immediately recognized both of the ladies, calling Mrs. Parker "Auntie Parker,"

and the other "Nellie," as in the acquaintance of eighteen years ago. In conversation with Mrs. Parker, Mary asked, "Do you remember how Nervie and I used to come to your house and sing?" Mrs. Parker says that was the first allusion made to that matter, nothing having been said by any one on that subject, and says that Mary and Minerva used to come to their house and sit and sing, "Mary had a little lamb," etc. Mrs. Dr. Alter (Minerva) says she remembers it well. This was when Mr. Roff kept the postoffice, and could not have been later than 1852, and twelve years before Lurancy was born.

One evening in the latter part of March, Mr. Roff was sitting in the room waiting for tea, and reading the paper, Mary being out in the yard. He asked Mrs. Roff if she could find a certain velvet head-dress that Mary used to wear the last year before she died. If so, to lay it on the stand and say nothing about it, to see if Mary would recognize it. Mrs. Roff readily found and laid it on the stand. The girl soon came in, and immediately exclaimed as she approached the stand: "O, there is my head-dress I wore when my hair was short!" She then asked, "Ma, where is my box of letters? Have you got them yet?" Mrs. Roff replied, "Yes, Mary, I have some of them." She at once got the box with many letters in it. As Mary began to examine them she said, "O, Ma, here is a collar I tatted! Ma, why, did you not show to me my letters and things before?" The collar had been preserved among the relics of the lamented child as one of the beautiful things her fingers had wrought before Lurancy was born; and so Mary continually recognized every little thing and remembered every little incident of her girlhood.

It will be remembered that the family moved to Texas in 1857. Mr. Roff asked Mary if she remembered moving to Texas or anything about it. "Yes, pa, and I remember crossing Red River and of seeing a great many Indians, and I remember Mrs. Reeder's girls, who were in our company." And thus she from time to time made first mention of things that transpired thirteen to twenty-five years ago. On the 19th of February Mr. Roff addressed the writer as follows:

"You know how we took the poor, dear girl Lurancy (Mary). Some appreciate our motives, but the many, without investigation and without a knowledge of the facts, cry out against us and against that angel girl. Some say she pretends; others that she is crazy; and we hear that some say it is the devil. \* \* \* Mary is perfectly happy; she recognizes everybody and everything that she knew when in her body twelve or more years ago. She knows nobody nor anything whatever that is known by Lurancy. \* \* \* Mr. Vennum has been to see her, and also her brother Henry, at different times, but she don't know anything about them. Mrs. Vennum is still unable to come and see her daughter. She has been nothing but Mary since she has been here, and knows nothing but what Mary knew. She has entered the trance once every other day for some days. She is perfectly happy.

\* \* \* You don't know how much comfort we take with the dear angel."

The child has often said she likes Dr. Stevens next to her father, because he opened the gate for her to come in, and because he has done so much for her father and mother, and her brothers, and for Lurancy's body, and feeling that gratitude, she wrote him a letter by permission of the parents, on the 20th of February, in which she said:

"I am yet here. \* \* Frank is better. \* \* Nervie is here for dinner; Allie Alter is going to stay all night; Mrs. Marsh was here to-day and read a beautiful letter to us. I wish you could spend the evening with us. \* \* I would like to have your picture to look at. \* \* Please write to pa when you get time. \* \* We all send our love to you. \* \* I like it here very much, and am going to stay all the time. \* \* I went to heaven and staid about an hour. \* \* It seems a long time since I saw you. \* \* \* Forget me not. Good night.

MARY ROFF."

She wrote the doctor again on February 21st, of which the following is an extract:

"I have just finished a letter to brother Frank. He went back to his store feeling quite well. The boys have gone out to play for a dance. \* \* In the evening I went to heaven, and I saw some of the beautiful things, and talked with the angels, \* \* and be sure I don't forget when I go to heaven and come back. \* \* 'Fear the Lord \* \* depart from evil.' —Prov. 3rd: 7th. MARY ROFF."

It may here be said it was frequently the case that when Mary went to heaven, as she called it, other spirits sometimes, by permission, would come and present themselves, and speak freely their own language and sentiments. Mr. Roff writes under date of March, as follows, of a communication through another young lady at his house:

"A lady came through —— at our house, who claimed to have lived and died in Tennessee, and says she was afflicted from eight years of age till twenty-five, when she died with a similar disease, and in a similar way that Mary died. She says that Mary has control of Lurancy Vennum, and will retain control till she is restored to her normal condition, when Mary will leave. Mary is happy as a lark, and gives daily, almost hourly, proofs of being Mary's intelligence. She don't recognize Lurancy's family or friends at all. She knows and recognizes everything that our Mary used to know, and nothing whatever of what the Vennum girl knows. She now enters the trance without any rigidity of the muscles whatever, very gently, and at her own will, describes heavenly scenes, etc., etc. We think all will be well, and Lurancy restored to her orthodox friends yet. \* \* Some of the relatives are yielding by Mary's calling their attention to things of thirteen years ago, that transpired between her and them. It wakes them up. \* \* It is wonderful. \* \* It would take a volume to give the important items that have occurred."

Mrs. Dr. Alter, under date of April 16th, 1878, writes of Mary as follows:

"My angel sister says she is going away from us again soon, but says she will be often with us. She says Lurancy is a beautiful girl; says she sees her nearly every day, and we do know she is getting better every day. Oh, the lessons that are being taught us are worth treasures of rare diamonds; they are stamped upon the mind so firmly that heaven and earth shall pass away before one jot or one tittle shall be forgotten. \*

\* I have learned so much that is grand and beautiful, I cannot express it; I am dumb. \* \* A few days ago Mary was caressing her father and mother, and they became a little tired of it, and asked why she hugged and kissed them. She sorrowfully looked at them, and said, 'Oh, pa and ma! I want to kiss you while I have lips to kiss you with, and hug you while I have arms to hug you with, for I am going back to heaven before long, and then I can only be with you in spirit, and you will not always know when I come, and I cannot love you as I can now. Oh, how much I love you all!'"

Mary writes to Dr. Stevens, in an envelope with Mr. Roff, under date of May 7th, as follows:

DEAR DOCTOR:—I thought I would write you. I am at Aunt Carrie's; am going to take dinner with her. \* \* \* Yesterday I went and spent the day with Mrs. Vennum. She had a dreadful headache and I rubbed it away. Pa is quite busy in his office to-day. Ma is feeling a good deal better. \*

\* I am feeling quite well, except my breast hurts me some to-day. It commenced hurting me last night. \* \* I treat ma in the morning and Nervie at night for hard colds and cold feet. We all went to the Reform Club last Saturday. Aunt Carrie's essay was splendid, and very affecting. \* \* We all read that letter in the RELIGIO-PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNAL from your daughter, and liked it very much.

MARY ROFF.

In the same letter Mr. Roff writes:

"I want to give you a little scene; time, Monday morning, May 6th; place, A. B. Roff's office, Wateka; present, A. B. Roff at table writing; Frank Roff at the table at the right of A. B. R.; door behind A. B., and a little to the left; enters unheard the person of Lurancy Vennum; places her arm around the neck of A. B. Roff, kissing him and saying, 'Pa, I am going with Mrs. Vennum to visit to-day;' A. B. Roff looks around and discovers standing in the door Mrs. Vennum, Lurancy's mother, looking on the scene. The girl then bade an affectionate good-by to Frank; A. B. R. asks: 'How long will you stay?' She replies, 'Till two or three o'clock.' Mrs. Vennum then said to Mr. Roff: 'If she does not get back at that time, don't get alarmed, we will take care of her.' Exit Mrs. V. and the girl. You don't know how my heart aches for that poor mother, yet she is much happier than she was last winter with Lurancy as she was." \* \*

On May 7th, the day of writing the last letter, Mary called Mrs. Roff to a private room, and there in tears told her that Lurancy Vennum was coming back. She seemed very sad, and said she could not tell whether she was coming to stay or not; that if she thought she was coming to stay, she would want to see Nervie and Dr. Alter and Allie, and bid them good-by. She sat down, closed her eyes and in a few moments the change took place, and Lurancy had control of her own body. Looking wildly around the room she anxiously asked:

"Where am I? I was never here before."

Mrs. Roff replied:

"You are at Mr. Roff's, brought here by Mary to cure your body."

She cried and said:

"I want to go home."

Mrs. Roff asked her if she could stay till her folks were sent for.

She said:

"No."

She was then asked if she felt any pain in her breast. (This was during the period that Mary was suffering pain in the left breast; continually holding her hand, pressing it.) She replied:

"No, but Mary did."

In about five minutes the change was again made, and Mary came overjoyed to find herself permitted to return, and called, as she often had, for the singing of her previous girlhood's favorite song, "We are Coming, Sister Mary."

The child seemed of all the natural affection for the family that a daughter and sister of fine feelings and cultivated tastes might be supposed to possess, after an absence of twelve years, and she often took occasion to demonstrate that affection by endearing names and kindly words. When walking with Mrs. Alter, her sister Nervie as she called her, she would say, "Nervie, my only sister, put your arm around me." Or, "Come Nervie, put your arm around me and we will take a little walk in the garden or the grove, for I cannot be with you much longer and I want to be with you every minute I can." When Mrs. Alter would ask her when or where she was going, she would say, "The angels tell me I am going to heaven, but I don't know just when. O, how I wish you could live here at home with us as you used to when I was here before." She thought a great deal of Dr. Alter, the husband of her sister, but could hardly seem to realize that Nervie was married and had had a family for eleven years. She said when she got into this body she felt much as she did when here twelve years ago. This body seemed as natural to her as though she

had been born with it, yet she could not do with it as she would like to. She did not seem to realize at first, but that this was her own original, physical body, until the angels explained it to her, and she had received information and instructions from her parents, sister, brother and friends about it. So natural did it seem to her, after knowing all the facts, that she could hardly feel it was not her original body born nearly thirty years ago.

In conversation with the writer about her former life, she spoke of cutting her arm as hereinbefore stated, and asked if he ever saw where she did it. On receiving a negative answer, she proceeded to slip up her sleeve as if to exhibit the scar, but suddenly arrested the movement, as if by a sudden thought, and quickly said, "O, this is not the arm; that one is in the ground," and proceeded to tell where it was buried, and how she saw it done and who stood around, how they felt, etc., but she did not feel bad. I heard her tell Mr. Roff and the friends present, how she wrote to him a message some years ago through the hand of a medium, giving name, time and place. Also of rapping and of spelling out a message by another medium, giving time, name, place, etc., etc., which the parents admitted to be all true. I heard her relate a story of her going into the country with the men, some twenty odd years ago, after a load of hay, naming incidents that occurred on the road, which two of the gentlemen distinctly remembered.

In one of those beautiful trances which rendered her entirely oblivious to all physical surroundings, appearing in a state of happy ecstasy, and, so far as manners and movements are concerned, perfectly normal and graceful, with visions and senses fully open, she went to heaven as she called it, in company with another young lady in like condition, whose name must be reserved until the wonderful history she is making, shall be made public by the consent of all. They saw and conversed about the beautiful scenes before them, pointing out individuals, giving names, relationship, histories, facts, etc., describing places and things. Mary pointed out and described some with titles of royalty, such as Mary, Queen of Scots,



Henry IV., King of France, and others of equal note, showing a rich biographical and historical reading or experience and acquaintance in spirit-life. Then bowing low, and kneeling with hands folded, and heads together, as if in the most devout and solemn devotion remained in listening silence for some time, then rising, the unnamed girl said:

"He came to bless, didn't he, Mary? a bright, beautiful angel."

After talking of the different classes they were observing, and the "lovely children" attracting so much of their attention, Mary seemed to take in her arms a very little, tender infant and said: "This is sister Nervie's baby; how sweet and beautiful it is. Don't you think it is a sweet little angel?" The other, in softest accents said, "Yes, but it seems to me they are all too pure to be touched by such as we," and after some time the babe was carefully handed back to the care of the angels. Mrs. Alter, who was present, had recently lost by death, a beautiful babe and had scarcely recovered from her confinement. The whole scene was one of uncommon interest, very affecting and impressive beyond description.

For the discovery of facts unknown to others, Mary seemed remarkably developed. One afternoon, she, with much concern and great anxiety, declared that her brother Frank must be carefully watched the coming night, for he would be taken very sick, and would die if not properly cared for. At the time of this announcement he was in his usual health, and engaged with the Roff Bros.' band of music up town. The same evening, Dr. Stevens had been in to see the family, and on leaving was to go directly to Mrs. Hawks, far off in the Old Town, and the family so understood it. But at about nine and a half o'clock the same evening, Dr. Stevens returned unannounced to Mr. Marsh's, Mr. Roff's next neighbor, for the night. At two o'clock in the morning Frank was attacked with something like a spasm and congestive chill, which almost destroyed his consciousness. Mary at once saw the situation as predicted, and said, "Send to Mrs. Marsh's for Dr. Stevens." "No, Dr. Stevens is at Old Town," said the family. "No," said Mary,

"he is at Mr. Marsh's; go quick for him, pa." Mr. Roff called, and the doctor, as Mary said, was at Mr. Marsh's. On his arrival at the sick bed, Mary had entire control of the case. She had made Mrs. Roff sit down; had provided hot water and cloths and other necessaries, and was doing all that could be done for Frank. The doctor seconded her efforts and allowed her to continue. She saved her brother, but never made a move after the doctor's arrival, without his co-operation or advice.

Mary often spoke of seeing the children of Dr. Stevens in heaven, who were about her age and of longer residence there than herself. She said she was with them much, and went to his home with him. She correctly described his home, the rooms and furniture, gave the names and ages of his children, and as evidence of her truthfulness, told of a remarkable experience of Mrs. E. M. Wood, one of the doctor's married daughters, which, on account of its peculiar features, and the faith of some of the relatives was not intended for the public, yet was a beautiful evidence of angel guardianship. She stated the story minutely, saying that was where and when she got Mrs. Wood's name, for she was present with others she named.

The doctor's daughter Emma Angelia, who had been in spirit-life since March 10th, 1849, sought through Mary to take the body she was controlling and go home with her father to Wisconsin, to visit the family for a week, and Mary was disposed to let her do it; she asked Mr. and Mrs. Roff if she should let Emma Stevens have the body for a week to go with her father to see and be with her mother, sisters and brother, so they could realize it was Emma? But no one thought it advisable.

To show the ease with which Mary controls, or goes in and out, as it is said, and the perfect medium the body of Lurancy is, a single instance will suffice. On the 21st day of April, in the parlors of Mrs. Roff, in the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Roff, their hired woman Charlotte, Dr. Steel and wife, Mrs. Twing, of Oregon, Mrs. Alter, Mr. and Mrs. M——, and the writer, manifestations of a very peculiar and happy character occur-

red. Mary being the last one to join the company in the parlor, took the only vacant seat, next to a gentleman friend. Dr. Steel became influenced by a brother of one of the persons present, and made a very striking address, with a good deal of energy and pathos. On his becoming disentranced and entering into the general conversation, Mary voluntarily disembodied her controlling power, and leaving the girl's form like a corpse, with the head resting against the shoulder of her friend, immediately took control of Dr. Steel, and in every possible way required proved it to be herself; she then through that manly form, turned in a jovial way and laughed at the position of the seemingly untenanted body and its limp condition, with a pleasant jest at the friend who supported it. She soon, however, returned to her own proper control and seemed to enjoy the trick she had played, in the control of the gentleman.

In a few moments she appeared peculiar, and calling the hired woman to follow her, they left the room. Soon she returned clad in an old-fashioned way, with gown, cap, cape and spectacles, etc., leaning on the arm of Charlotte as if bowed down with many years. Not one trace of the girl could be seen save in the youthful skin of the face. Taking a seat in the old arm chair, she began to talk as an old lady of olden times might be supposed to do, representing herself as the grandmother of Charlotte, giving her name, inquiring after all the relatives, old and young, asking by name for those belonging to families the girl could have known nothing about. Said she died of cancer near the right eye and temple; called for tepid water and soft cloth, which being furnished, proceeded in the most natural manner to bathe and dress the cancer. She called for food and ate it, apparently without teeth, smoked after it, as she used to do, because her food always hurt her if she did not. She asked for knitting work. It being furnished, she found fault because the knitter did not know how to knit. Raveling out and taking up again she knit, at the same time telling Charlotte how to knit without looking at it. She next asked for mending and other things to do, looked at the fabric of the ladies' dresses, asking the prices, etc., etc. She

looked out at the windows, remarked how pleasant a place it was, and so continued for a full hour, never for a moment showing any sign of deception, but a veritable, honest, experienced domestic old lady. Numerous other personations might be related but this is sufficient.

When inquired of as to form materialization she said it was a truth, though she had never tried it because she did not know how, but should learn how when she found an opportunity.

During her stay at Mr. Roff's her physical condition continually improved, being under the care and treatment of her supposed parents and the advice and help of her physician. She was ever obedient to the government and rules of the family, like a careful and wise child, always keeping in the company of some of the family, unless to go in to the nearest neighbors across the street. She was often invited and went with Mrs. Roff to visit the first families of the city, who soon became satisfied that the girl was not crazy, but a fine, well-mannered child.

The manner in which she acted for a considerable time after coming into Mr. Roff's family was very strange to many. Sitting down to the tea-table on one occasion, Mrs. Roff asked:

"Now, Mary, what shall I help you to?"

She answered:

"O, nothing, I thank you, ma. I'll go to heaven for my tea."

Suiting the action to the word, off she went into a quiet trance or to heaven as she termed it, and so remained till the family had eaten, when she returned to her normal state. Being again asked, she said she had been to tea, and the question was put:

"Mary, what do you eat, and how do you eat it?"

Her answer was:

"O ma, if I could tell, you could not understand it."

And thus for some time she only ate in that way, except a very little occasionally, to pacify the anxious family. As her system became in better condition, she ate more freely, and for many weeks toward the last she ate, drank and slept as a healthy person should.

As the time drew near for the restoration of Lurancy to her parents and home, Mary would sometimes seem to recede into the memory and manner of Lurancy for a little time, yet not enough to lose her identity or permit the manifestation of Lurancy's mind, but enough to show she was impressing her presence upon her own body.

On being asked, "Where is Lurancy?" she would say, "Gone out somewhere," or, "She is in heaven taking lessons, and I am here taking lessons too." •

On Sunday, May 19th, about half-past four o'clock P. M., Mr. Roff and Mary were sitting in the parlor, Henry Vennum, Lurancy's brother, being in the sitting room, another room and hall between. Mary left control, and Lurancy took full possession of her own body. Henry was called in and she caught him around his neck, kissed and wept over him, causing all present to weep. At this juncture Mr. Roff was called and asked Lurancy if she could stay till Henry could go and bring her mother (she had expressed a desire to go and see her father and mother). She said "No," but if Henry would go and bring her, she would come again and talk with her. She immediately left and Mary came again. When Mary was asked where she had been? she replied, "I have seen Dr. Stevens and he looks as good as ever again."

Mrs. Vennum was brought within an hour, and on her arrival, Lurancy came into full control, when one of the most affecting scenes ever witnessed took place. Mother and daughter embraced and kissed each other, and wept until all present shed tears of sympathy; it seemed the very gate of heaven.

On the morning of May 21st, Mr. Roff writes as follows:

"Mary is to leave the body of Rancy to-day, about eleven o'clock, so she says. She is bidding neighbors and friends good-by. Rancy to return home all right to-day. Mary came from her room up stairs where she was sleeping with Lottie, at ten o'clock last night, lay down by us, hugged and kissed us, and cried because she must bid us good-by, telling us to give all her pictures, marbles and cards, and twenty-five cents Mrs. Vennum had given her, to Rancy, and had us promise to visit Rancy often. She tells me to write to Dr. Stevens as follows:

'Tell him I am going to heaven, and Rancy is coming home well.' She says she will see your dear children in spirit-life; says she saw you on Sunday last. \* \* She said last night, weeping, 'O pa, I am going to heaven to-morrow at eleven o'clock, and Rancy is coming back cured, and going home all right.' She talked most lovingly about the separation to take place, and most beautiful was her talk about heaven and her home."

Mrs. Alter writes:

"When the day came, and the angels told Mary that Lurancy was coming to take full possession of her own body, it seemed to make her feel very sad. She went to the residences of Mr. L. C. Marsh and Mr. M. Hooper, to say good-by, telling them the angels had said the body was cured, and Lurancy was coming to go home and live with her parents again all well, yet she says, 'I feel sad at parting with you all, for you have treated me so kindly; you have helped by your sympathy to cure this body, and Rancy can come and inhabit it.'"

This shows that the angels can help the children of earth. Mr. M. Hooper being a pious Christian gentleman, and loving Mary for her sweet influence in his family, came into the room and asked if she would like to sing with him and his good wife. She said:

"Yes, I am so sad, but when I go to heaven all tears will be wiped away, and I will be happy."

After singing they all knelt down, and Mr. Hooper made a very affecting prayer, saying, "If it can be that an angel is in our midst, and about to leave us to go and join her own in spirit-life, will God in his goodness allow her to bear a message of love to my own angel father and loved ones, who may, for all we can see, be hovering around our household at this moment." He hoped we would all be better and wiser, and when Lurancy should come back to her normal condition, would be better for the strange and new lessons she has learned.

Mary had sent word to her sister Nervie to come to her father's to stay an hour with her, to say good-by, and when Rancy should come back at eleven o'clock, to take her to Mr. Roff's office, and he would go to Mr. Vennum's with her. Mary said: "I will come in spirit as close to you as I can, and com-

fort you in sorrow, and you will feel me near you sometimes."

When eleven o'clock came she seemed loth to go or let Rancy come back. Mrs. Alter started to go home and Mary started with her. When in the yard, Mrs. A. said: "Mary, you have always done as you said you would, but as I don't understand these things, will you please let Lurancy come back just now, and then you can come again if you want to?" Mary said: "Yes, I will," and she kissed mother and sister good-by.

A voice said, "Why, Mrs. Alter, where are we going?" Then in a breath, "Oh, yes, I know, Mary told me!"

On the way they met Mrs. Marsh and Mrs. Hooper, who were the nearest neighbors and Mary's favorite friends; Lurancy did not seem to know them, but remarked, "Mary thinks so much of these neighbors." Then turning to Mrs. Alter, with whom Lurancy had been but slightly acquainted two years ago, she said, "Mrs. Alter, Mary can come and talk to you nearly all the way home, if you want her to, and then I will come back." She spoke, and appeared like one slightly acquainted. Mrs. Alter said: "I have trusted you in the past, and of course I would love to talk with my sister."

The change was again made, and Mary said, "I do love to be with you so much."

She talked lovingly, and gave good advice about many things and family matters. The final change now took place at the time predicted, and Lurancy stated she felt something as though she had been asleep, yet she knew she had not. On reaching Mr. Roff's office, she addressed him as Mr. Roff, and asked if he would take her home, which he did.

May 22nd, Mr. Roff writes me as follows:

"Thank God and the good angels, the dead is alive and the lost is found. I mailed you a letter yesterday at half-past ten o'clock A. M., stating that Mary had told us she would go away, and Rancy return at eleven o'clock the 21st of May. Now I write you that at half-past eleven o'clock A. M., Minerva called at my office with Rancy Vennum, and wanted me to take her home, which I did. She called me Mr. Roff, and talked with me as a young girl would, not being acquainted. I asked her how things appeared to her—if they seemed natural.

She said it seemed like a dream to her. She met her parents and brothers in a very affectionate manner, hugging and kissing each one in tears of gladness. She clasped her arms around her father's neck a long time, fairly smothering him with kisses. I saw her father just now (eleven o'clock). He says she has been perfectly natural, and seems entirely well. You see my faith in writing you yesterday morning instead of waiting till she came."

The *Watseka Republican* says:

"The meeting with her parents at the home was very affecting, and now she seems to be a healthy, happy little girl, going about noting things she saw before she was stricken, and recognizes changes that have since taken place. This is a remarkable case, and the fact that we cannot understand such things, does not do away with the existence of these unaccountable manifestations."

The *Danville (Ill.) Times*, in speaking of this case, says:

"Mr. and Mrs. Roff are Spiritualists, and stoutly maintain that their daughter's ability to penetrate closed books and letters in the manner indicated, was imparted by the inhabitants of an unseen world. We have no fixed opinion as to whether Spiritualism is false or true. Certain it is, that occurrences are upon record which are hard to explain upon any natural hypothesis, but attributable to spirits' aid. Let those say who know, for we do not. In spite of all opposition, Spiritualists have increased in numbers, nor are they confined to the illiterate classes, but embrace poets, scholars and statesmen. Let us hope the unharmed truth will early assert a glorious reign, and illuminate the darkened understanding of men."

The *Iroquois County (Ill.) Times*, under the head of "Mesmeric Mysteries," and in reference to Lurancy Venum, says:

"Mr. and Mrs. Roff kindly offered to take charge of her until her mind would change, and she would become well again. She went there in February, and remained till about three weeks ago. Since then she has been Lurancy Venum, and is healthy and full of intelligence. \* \* It was hard for even the most skeptical not to believe there was something supernatural about her. If she was not prompted by the spirit of Mary Roff, how could she know so much about the family, people with whom she was not acquainted, and whom she had never visited? \* \* No stranger would have suspected her of being the victim of disease, though her eyes were unusually bright. \* \* There are yet numberless mysteries in this world, though science has dissipated many wonders, and phi-



osophy has made plain many marvels. There is much that is unaccountable in the action of spiritualistic mediums, and they do many things that puzzle the greatest philosophers. Skeptical and unbelieving as we are, and slight as our experience has been, we have seen enough to convince us that Spiritualism is not all humbug. The case of Lurancy Vennum, a bright young girl of fourteen years, has been the subject of much discussion in Watseka during the past year, and there is a good deal in it beyond human comprehension."

The subject of this article had become familiar with the writer during the several months she was under his advice and the more kindly care and sympathy of Mr. Roff's family, speaking with him freely upon every subject necessary to her good and the courtesies of association, always, however, in the presence of members of the family. On Sunday, the second day of June, he met her with her parents at the house of a friend, who lived nearly two miles from Mr. Vennum's. Lurancy was introduced to him by Mr. Vennum. She seemed to be an entire stranger, and for two hours remained like a timid, unacquainted child. The next day, June 3rd, without notice to any one, the writer went to the house of a noted attorney, and as he entered the gate, Lurancy came out the door, stopped on the steps and said, "How do you do, Doctor? Mary Roff told me to come here and meet you. Somehow she makes me feel you have been a very kind friend to me;" and she would not let him into the house till she had delivered a long message from Mary. Since the last interview he has seen her several times, and she seems easy, affable, and as a young lady should.

On the 25th of June she wrote a beautiful letter, by the consent of her friends, saying among other things:

"Dear Doctor, I am feeling quite well to-day. I was up to Mrs. Alter's to-day; she is very well at present. This afternoon I called at Mr. Roff's office, and had quite a long talk with him; but of course it was about the loving angels that you and I love so well. Let them twine around your neck their arms and press upon your brow their kiss. \* \* Well, Doctor, you have many dear friends in this city who love you much. I saw Mrs. M——. She said she would have died if it had not been for you, and you know about Mrs. I——. We know you saved her life. \* \* Kiss your loving wife for me, and tell her we shall all meet in heaven if not on earth. \* \* I

shall visit Mrs. Roff to-morrow. \* \* I shall have my picture taken and send it to you in my next letter. I get up early and take the morning air. I should like to have you write a line to me.

Your friend,

LURANCY VENNUM.

This letter, written in pencil, is very different in its make-up and penmanship from those written by the same hand, signed by Mary Roff, and gives evidence of another mind.

Since penning the foregoing, the writer has received the following letter from the mother of Lurancy, through the politeness of Mr. Roff:

WATSEKA, ILL., July 9th, 1878.

DEAR FRIEND:—Mary L. Vennum is perfectly and entirely well, and perfectly natural. For two or three weeks after her return home, she seemed a little strange to what she had been before she was taken sick last summer, but only, perhaps, the natural change that had taken place with the girl, and except it seemed to her as though she had been dreaming or sleeping, etc. Lurancy has been smarter, more intelligent, more industrious, more womanly and more polite than before. We give the credit of her complete cure and restoration to her family, to Dr. E. W. Stevens and Mr. and Mrs. Roff, by their obtaining her removal to Mr. Roff's, where her cure was perfected. We firmly believe that had she remained at home, she would have died, or we would have been obliged to send her to the insane asylum, and if so, that she would have died there, and further, that I could not have lived but a short time with the care and trouble devolving on me. Several of the relatives of Mary Lurancy, including ourselves, now believe she was cured by spirit power, and that Mary Roff controlled the girl.

MRS. LURINDA VENNUM.

On the 10th of July Mr. Roff writes:

DEAR DOCTOR:—Mr. Vennum is out of town, but I have often talked with him, and I know his opinion, often expressed, that Lurancy and her mother would both have died if we had not taken the girl; he gives all credit to yourself and us for it. He believes it was spirit agency that did the work. Lurancy is in perfect health, and "much more womanly than before" (so her mother says). She says she used to romp and play with her brothers, and with the horses, etc. Now she is steady; you can hardly imagine how the dear girl loves those who saved her. She sends you a letter to-day, but thinks it a little strange you have not answered her last letter.

Yours, etc.,

A. B. ROFF.

In the foregoing letter referred to, the child writes:

I am quite well, and much obliged that you showed my letter to your dear wife. I am sure there is nothing for me to be ashamed of. \* \* I was down to Mr. M.'s store, and he told me how you saved his wife's life, and they appreciate it. Will you want me to give you my description of heaven? I will sometime, when there are but few present. I can't write it, for I make so many mistakes. I made a short call at Mrs. Alter's. \* \* Please ask your daughter to write to me. Can't you bring your wife when you come? Poor Mr. Wickersham still lives. We should pity such mortals. My aunt says I know all that has transpired, but none know but the angels and you.

Your friend, MARY L. VENNUM.

CORROBORATION OF THE NARRATIVE BY THE LEADING  
WITNESSES.

On the evening of the 16th of July, 1878, in the parlors of Asa B. Roff and his wife, we, the undersigned, met and listened to the careful reading and consideration of the foregoing narrative, and declare it to be entirely true and correct in every respect; and further, that now after eight weeks of home life, Lurancy Vennum remains well and sound in body and mind.

ASA B. ROFF,  
ANN ROFF,  
THOMAS J. VENNUM,  
LURINDA VENNUM.

Watseka, Iroquois Co., Ill.,  
July 18th, 1878.

TO THE READER:—The writer has collated the foregoing facts from a mass of interesting incidents, which might be much enlarged upon, but he is satisfied with the few incidents that involve principles hitherto discussed by the philosophic world, and sends them out to make a chapter in the literature of Spiritualism. He has this day seen the family, including the subject of the narrative. Mrs. Vennum has gone to Indiana for a two weeks' rest and visit, and left Lurancy in charge of the family and house, a healthy, happy, noble girl.

E. WINCHESTER STEVENS.

July 19th, 1878.

SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENT BY MR. ASA B. ROFF.

*To the Editor of the Religio-Philosophical Journal :*

Being almost daily in receipt of letters from readers of the JOURNAL, inquiring as to the truthfulness of the narrative entitled, "The Watseka Wonder," and not having time to fully answer all their questions, I am impelled to collect from them the prominent points of inquiry and objection, and briefly reply through the JOURNAL. Persons hereafter writing me, who do not receive an answer to their letters, will seek for the information desired in this article.

One writer inquires: "Is it a fact, or is it a story made up to see how cunning a tale one can tell?" Another asks: "Can the truthfulness of the narrative be substantiated outside of yourself and those immediately interested? Can it be shown that there was no collusion between the parties, and no former acquaintance?" A reader of the JOURNAL suggests: "It is a pretty big yarn, and there might be some arrangement between the parties, or they themselves deceived." Another after saying he has read the narrative, remarks: "I confess that I am not of your faith, and I am very doubtful whether newspapers are always embodiments of sacred truths, and I wish that under your hand, as a gentleman, you might confirm to me and other doubting friends, the strange, mysterious, and to me, fanciful, statements in those two papers. I write wholly to overcome a doubting feeling that exists with myself and friends in regard to that remarkable and wonderful personation." A lady writes: "Is the account true in every particular? I hope there is a life beyond this, but I have never had any proof."

## REPLY.

I furnished Dr. Stevens with all the material facts in the case, except such as were within his own knowledge. The history of the Vennum family (and Lurancy's condition up to the time he and I went to see her January 31st), I obtained from the members thereof, and the neighbors intimately acquainted with them. The narrative, as written by Dr. Stevens, is substantially true in every part and particular, yet the half has not been told, and never can be; it is impossible for pen to describe or language portray the wonderful events that transpired during the memorable fourteen weeks that the girl was at our house. The material facts of the case can be substantiated by disinterested witnesses, whose veracity cannot be questioned, and whose evidence would settle any case in a court of law. I refer you to Robert Doyle, Chas. Sherman, S. R. Hawks, Lile

Marsh, J. M. Hooper, and their wives, and to Mrs. Mary Wag-  
 oner, formerly Mary Lord, all residents of Watseka. As to  
 "collusion," "arrangement," or "ourselves being deceived,"  
 that is simply impossible, as you will see if you carefully read  
 the whole narrative over again. I, too, doubt whether news-  
 papers are always "embodiments of sacred truths," but in this  
 case I assure the writer, the JOURNAL does embody a very  
 sacred truth, that of man's immortality.

\* \* \* \* \*

Talking with Mary, we sometimes spoke of her death.  
 She would quickly reply: "I never died," or "I did not die."  
 She never tired of talking of the life beyond this. She would  
 at any time leave her play, her reading or her jovial compan-  
 ions, to talk with her "pa" and "ma" about heaven and the  
 angels, as she termed spirit-life, and spirits that have left the  
 body.

I have questioned Lurancy Vennum on different occasions,  
 as to whether she remembered anything that occurred during  
 the time that Mary had control of her organism, and she states  
 that a very few things occurring the last month that she was  
 controlled, she recollects, but that in all cases the information  
 was imparted by Mary.

In conclusion, let me say to those who doubt or disbelieve  
 the "strange, mysterious and wonderful story:" Call to mind  
 Lurancy's condition at her home last January, surrounded with  
 all the kind care of parents, friends and physicians, every thing  
 done to alleviate her suffering and perform a cure that human  
 minds and hands could possibly do, yet growing continually  
 worse (if that were possible), given up by her physicians, her  
 friends without a ray of hope, the insane asylum ready to re-  
 ceive her, a condition terrible to behold! Then view her con-  
 dition from May 21st until to-day, over three months, a bright,  
 beautiful, happy, healthy girl, and then tell me what produced  
 the change. The narrative furnishes the facts; account for  
 them if you can on any other hypothesis, than power exercised  
 through or by the spirit of Mary Roff having control of Lu-  
 rancy's body.

I am now sixty years old; have resided in Iroquois county  
 thirty years, and would not now sacrifice what reputation I  
 may have by being a party to the publication of such a nar-  
 rative, if it was not perfectly true. If any should desire testi-  
 monials of my standing, Col. Bundy has some to use as he  
 deems best.

ASA B. ROFF.

Watsaka, Ill., August 23rd, 1878.

## HONORABLE REPUTATION OF MR. ASA B. ROFF.

[*Religio-Philosophical Journal*, Aug. 31, 1878.]

The name of this gentleman has lately become of much interest to our readers in connection with the case of Lurancy Vennum. From a somewhat lengthy biographical sketch of Mr. Roff, published last January in the *Iroquois County Times*, a paper printed at Watseka, we make the following extracts:

\* \* \* A gentleman now in his 60th year, though with a heart as young and happy as that of a child; agreeable, generous and full of sympathy, he is respected by all who know him, while his more intimate friends love and honor him for his personal worth. \* \* \* His present enviable standing among his fellow-men is entirely owing to his indomitable energy and integrity of purpose. His family is a most exemplary one; all who know them love them; no family in our community are more happy in their domestic relations. May it ever be so with them.

The above extracts in connection with the following letters, would seem to establish Mr. Roff's reputation for truth and veracity beyond all question:

WATSEKA, ILL., Aug. 22, 1878.

*Editor Religio-Philosophical Journal:*

DEAR SIR.—Many inquiries are made of me as to the standing of Mr. Asa B. Roff. These questions are elicited through the publication in your journal of Dr. E. W. Stevens's account of the Mary Roff and Lurancy Vennum phenomena. I wish to say to you that no man in this community stands higher in the estimation of the people than Mr. Roff. He is a high-minded, honorable gentleman who would spurn to give currency to any thing not verified by facts. I don't believe Mr. Roff capable of a mean act. It is not in his nature.

Very truly yours,

MATTHEW H. PETERS.

*Mayor of Watseka and Editor Iroquois Times.*

CHICAGO, ILL., Aug. 22, 1878.

I have been personally acquainted with Asa B. Roff since the year 1858, and take pleasure in stating that his character and reputation for truth and veracity is good.

CHAS. H. WOOD,

*Ex-Judge Twentieth Circuit of Illinois.*

122 La Salle Street.

We have also received letters speaking in the highest terms of Mr. Roff and family, from the following gentlemen of Watseka: O. F. McNeill, Ex-County Judge; O. C. Munhall, Postmaster; Robert Doyle, Attorney-at-Law; John W. Riggs, Circuit Clerk; Henry Butzow, County Clerk; Thomas Vennum, former Circuit Clerk; Franklin Blades, Judge of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit; M. B. Wright, County Judge.

LURANCY VENNUM FROM 1878 TO 1886.

Believing that those who read the account of Lurancy Vennum's case as published eight years ago, as well as thousands who will now read it for the first time, would be interested in tracing the subject of such unusual experiences through succeeding years, the publisher addressed a letter of inquiry to Mr. A. B. Roff. That gentleman having secured such information as he could from her parents and others, adds it to his own and brings the history of Lurancy Vennum down to date. His statement as given below can be fully substantiated and is entitled to confidence.—PUBLISHER.

WATSEKA, ILL., Dec. 4, 1886.

*Editor Religio-Philosophical Journal:*

In your letter to me of November 9th, you say:

"On July 16th, 1878, you and others certified to Lurancy Vennum's good health and sound mind. Will you give me a brief statement of her history from then until now? Has she had any return of symptoms? Is she a medium now, or has she been since 1878, at any time? What is the state of her health, and what has it been since 1878? Has she any remembrance of her old experience while controlled by the spirits?"

For convenience I will not answer your queries categorically, but in narrative form. Lurancy Vennum continued to reside with her parents in Watseka and vicinity, from May, 1878—when she returned home from our house—until January 1st, 1882, when she was married to George Binning, a farmer living three miles from Watseka, where they resided until they moved West in September, 1884, and they are now living in Rollins County, Kansas.

We met her often before we went West in June, 1879, and every year thereafter until they moved West in 1884, whenever opportunity afforded during our annual visits to Watseka, and

then Mary would take control of Lurancy just as she did during the time she was at our home in 1878; we thus enjoyed many happy seasons together. Aside from this she had little opportunity of using her mediumship, her parents being afraid to converse with her upon the subject lest it should cause a return of the "spells" (as they called them), such as she had before Mary brought her to our house. Her husband, never having made himself acquainted with Spiritualism, furnished poor conditions for farther development in that direction; this, with the fact that her many household cares and busy life, together with the charge of her children, has made the exercise of her mediumship extremely difficult, except when she was thrown in the society of our family or others who chanced to furnish the necessary conditions.

Lurancy has what might be called, perhaps, a "remembrance" of her old experience while controlled by the spirit. She always speaks of it thus: "Mary told me," or "Mary made me acquainted," etc. She became acquainted with several persons while Mary controlled her, who were entire strangers to Lurancy Vennum. When the control left her, she continued the acquaintance thus formed, and has ever had a warm attachment for them. Mary, she says, told her these were good people, etc. She has never had any occasion for a physician since she left us—never having been sick since then; neither has there been a return of the old symptoms—no pain, no fits—in short, "she is clothed and in her right mind." That the Spirit-world has charge concerning her, let the following forever settle, which can be fully substantiated by reliable witnesses: At the birth of her first child she was entranced, her eyes were turned heavenward, a beautiful smile played over her face, the work of deliverance went on painlessly, and not until the new soul voiced its presence, did she show any sign of consciousness of what had occurred. She then said: "Why, what is that?" When she was informed it was her baby, she said: "Is that so?" And was overjoyed to think that the Father—God—should send an angel to stand between her and that agony which every mother-soul so well understands.

I deem it a duty since Dr. E. W. Stevens has passed to the higher life, to relate an occurrence that would have been published in the "Watseka Wonder" at first, had it not been for the Doctor's unwillingness to have any thing in that publication rest wholly upon his individual testimony for proof. When Lurancy had been at our house under Mary's control about six or eight weeks she said to Dr. Stevens in our presence:

"You are going to get a letter from heaven."



He asked, "When?"

"I don't know," "but you will get one," she replied.

Two or three weeks later Dr. Stevens again came to our house and then related to Lurancy (Mary) and us that he had received the letter at some place where he stayed over night. He saw in the morning while making his toilet a letter, seemingly hanging in the air, yet in plain writing, and signed by a noted French physician (whose name we have forgotten), who died many years ago. The letter contained directions for treating a physical ailment of Lurancy, which Dr. S. had lost sight of. It was with difficulty that the family and the Doctor got the consent of the controlling spirit to have the body magnetized; however, the treatment was given, Dr. S. being under control of Peonomo, his Indian healer, and while he treated, Peonomo talked in his native language, and Mary interpreted for her parents. The conversation was about the diseased organs of which Lurancy was wholly ignorant. The letter referred to ordered five treatments, but three proved sufficient to reinstate natural action, and to make better conditions for the controlling spirit to finish the cure. Lurancy has had the strongest regard and affection for the family of Dr. Stevens and our family, and all of Mary Roff's friends ever since Mary relinquished her control, and Lurancy became herself again. The father and mother of Lurancy remain firm in the belief that it was spirit power that saved and cured their daughter.

Yours truly,

ASA B. ROFF.

## MARY REYNOLDS: A CASE OF DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS.

BY REV. WM. S. PLUMMER, D. D.

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For many years brief and meagre accounts of the remarkable case of Mary Reynolds have appeared in various quarters. In 1815 Major Elicott, Prof. of Mathematics in the U. S. Military Academy at West Point, a relative of Miss Reynolds, communicated some of the facts of the case to the late Dr. Mitchell of New York, by whom they were published in the *Medical Repository*. This statement is quoted by Prof. Upham in his work on "Disordered Mental Action." A further notice of the case appeared in the *Alleghany Magazine*. The late Archibald Alexander, D. D., many years later became interested in the subject, and secured material for a full statement, which he proposed to place in the hands of Prof. Henry to be communicated to the American Phil. Society. But the death of Dr. Alexander prevented the execution of the design. Dr. Wayland, in a note to the later editions of his "Intellectual Philosophy," "refers to this case as more remarkable than any he had met with elsewhere," and copies a considerable part of the statement of the subject herself, others portions of which I am enabled to give. All the accessible details of a case so singular should be placed upon permanent record. The following statement, which is more full and complete than any which has heretofore been prepared, embodies, I believe, all that can be

known in relation to it. The venerable Mr. John Reynolds, who is honored by all who know him, the brother of Mary, and his son, the Rev. John V. Reynolds, D. D., of Meadville, Penn., in whose family the last years of his life were passed, will vouch for the minute accuracy of all that is here stated. Many others who are still living will testify to the general truthfulness of the statement which follows.

Toward the close of the last century Wm. Reynolds, with his family, emigrated to America. He belonged to the Baptist denomination, and was an intimate friend of Dr. Hall and other distinguished Dissenters, and in after years his house in what was then the "Far West" became a "stopping place" for the pioneer missionaries in their laborious excursions into the wilderness.

Wm. Reynolds, leaving the remainder of his family in New York, took his son John, a lad of fourteen years, and set out to find a new home. They pitched upon a spot in Venango County, in Western Pennsylvania, between Franklin and what is now known as Titusville—twelve miles from the former, and six from the latter. The whole surrounding country was an unbroken wilderness; the nearest white neighbors being, as far as he knew, the few inhabitants of Franklin on the one side, and Jonathan Titus, the proprietor of the land on which Titusville now stands, on the other.

Here in the unbroken wilderness, Wm. Reynolds and his young son built a log cabin, in which the father left the lad while he returned to New York to bring the remainder of the family to their new home. For four months the boy remained alone in the cabin, rarely seeing the face of a white man, but being frequently visited by Indians. In due time the Reynolds family were reunited in their new Western Home.

Of this family was the daughter, Mary Reynolds. She was born in England, and was a child when brought to America. Her childhood and youth appear to have been marked by no extraordinary incidents. "She possessed an excellent capacity," says her kinsman, Prof. Elicott, "and enjoyed fair opportunities to acquire knowledge. Besides the domestic arts and

social attainments, she had improved her mind by reading and conversation. Her memory was capacious, and well stored with a copious stock of ideas." Though in no respect brilliant, she seems to have been naturally endowed with an uncommonly well-balanced organization, physical, mental and moral.

When she had reached about eighteen years of age, she became subject to occasional attacks of "fits," of the exciting cause and precise character of these no reliable information can be obtained; for the new country in which she resided contained no physician competent to form a correct diagnosis of her case. An acute physiologist, taking account of the time when these attacks first appeared, and that of their final disappearance, would form an opinion as to their immediate physical cause.

One Sunday in the spring of 1811, when she was about nineteen years of age, she had an attack of unusual severity. She had taken a book, and gone into the fields, at some distance from the house, that she might read in quiet. She was found lying in a state of utter insensibility. When she recovered her consciousness she was blind and deaf, and continued in this state for five or six weeks. The sense of hearing returned suddenly and entirely; that of sight more gradually, but in the end perfectly.

About three months after this attack, when she had apparently nearly recovered her usual health, though still somewhat feeble, she was found one morning, long after her usual hour of rising, in a profound sleep, from which it was impossible to arouse her. After some hours she awoke, but had lost all recollection of her former self. All the knowledge which she had acquired, had passed away from her. She knew neither father nor mother, brothers nor sisters. She was ignorant of the usages of the most familiar implements, and of the commonest details of every day life. She had not the slightest consciousness that she had ever existed previous to the moment in which she awoke from that mysterious slumber. As far as all acquired knowledge was concerned, her condition was precisely that

of a new-born infant. All the past that remained to her, was the faculty of pronouncing a few words; and this seems to have been as purely instinctive as the wailings of an infant, for the words which she uttered were connected with no ideas in her mind. Until she was taught their significance, they were unmeaning sounds to her.

But in this state she differed from an infant in this, that her faculty of acquiring knowledge was that of a person in the possession of mature intellect, fully capable of dealing at once with the facts of existence. She therefore rapidly acquired a knowledge of the world into which she had, as it were, been so mysteriously re-born.

She continued in this state for about five weeks, when one morning she again awoke in her natural state, without any intimation from memory or consciousness that anything unusual had happened. The five weeks that she had passed in her abnormal state, were to her as though she had never been. All the knowledge and experience which had been so strangely lost, were as strangely restored; and she took life up again at the precise point where she had left it when she fell into that slumber from which she had awoke to the new life. She was surprised at the change of the season and the different arrangements of the things around her, which seemed to her to have been wrought in a single night. Her friends rejoiced as if they had received her back from the dead, fondly trusting that her restoration would be permanent, and that the extraordinary occurrences of that mysterious five weeks would never be repeated. But their anticipations were not to be realized.

After the lapse of a few weeks she again fell into a profound slumber, from which she awoke in her second state, taking up her new life again precisely where she had left it when she before passed from that state. The whole previous life of which memory or consciousness remained was comprised in the limits of the five weeks which she had passed in that state. Her knowledge was confined within the narrow limits of what she had acquired.

These alternations from one state to the other continued for fifteen or sixteen years, but finally ceased when she had attained the age of thirty-five or thirty-six, leaving her permanently in the second state in which she remained without change for the last quarter of a century of her life.

In 1836, after these changes had wholly ceased, she wrote at the request of her nephew, Rev. John V. Reynolds, D. D., of whose family she was then an inmate, a statement of some of the facts of her remarkable experience. As she was then in her "second state," in which she had no recollection of the feelings or incidents of her other state, she relied upon the testimony of her friends for the circumstances related concerning the "first stage." She says:

"From the spring of 1811, when the first change occurred, until within eight or ten years, frequently changing from my first to my second, and from my second to my first state, I was more than three-fourths of my time in my second state. There was not any regularity as to the length of time that the one or the other continued. Sometimes I remained several months, sometimes a few weeks, or even days, in my second state; but in no instance did I continue more than twenty days in my first state. The transitions from one to the other always took place during my sleep. In passing from my second to my first state nothing special was noticeable in the character of my sleep. But in passing from my first to my second state my sleep was so profound that no one could awake me, and it not unfrequently continued eighteen or twenty hours.

"Whatever knowledge I acquired in my second state became familiar to me in that state, and I made such proficiency that I became well acquainted with things, and was, in general, as intelligent in that as in my first state.

"My mental sufferings in the near prospect of the transition from either state to the other, but particularly from the first to the second (for I commonly had a presentiment of the change for a short time before it took place), were very great, for I feared I might never revert so as to know again in this world, as I then knew them, those who were dear to me. My

feelings, in this respect, were not unlike those of one about to be separated from loved ones by death. During the early stages of my disease I had no idea, while in my second state, of employing my time in anything useful. I cared for nothing but to ramble about, and never tired walking through the fields and woods. I ate and slept very little. Sometimes for two and three consecutive days and nights, I would neither eat nor sleep. I would often conceive prejudices, without cause against my best friends. These feelings, however, began gradually to wear away, and eventually quite disappeared."

The two lives which Mary Reynolds lived for many years were thus entirely separate. Each was complete in itself, the fragments of which it was composed, though in reality separated by the portions of the other life intervening, succeeded each other in uninterrupted succession, as far as the evidence of her own memory or consciousness was concerned. The thoughts and feelings, the knowledge and experience, the joys and sorrows, the likes and dislikes of the one state, did not in any way influence or modify those of the other state. But not only were the two lives entirely separate, but her character and habits in the two states were wholly different. In her first state she was quiet and sedate, sober and pensive, almost to melancholy, with an intellect sound though rather slow in its operations, and apparently singularly destitute of the imaginative faculty. In her second state she was gay and cheerful, extravagantly fond of society, of fun and practical jokes, with a lively fancy and a strong propensity for versification and rhyming, though some of her poetical productions appear to have possessed merit of a high order. The difference in her character in the two states, was manifested in almost every act and habit. Her handwriting in one state differed wholly from that of the other. In her natural state the strange double life which she led was the cause of much unhappiness. She looked upon it as a severe affliction from the hand of Providence, and dreaded a relapse into the opposite state, fearing that she might never recover from it, so might never again in this life, know the friends of her youth, nor her parents, the guardians of her

childhood. She had a great desire to retain a knowledge and memory of them. But in her abnormal state, though the prospect of changing into her natural state was far from being pleasant to her, yet it was for quite different reasons. She looked upon it as passing from a bright and joyous into a dull and stupid phase of life. Yet to her it was often a source of merriment, and the occasion of frequent humorous deceptions practiced upon friends.

Having given a general outline of the facts of this singular case, I will now detail such separate incidents as I have been able to collect.

At the time of her first change her brother John was a permanent inhabitant of Meadville. Hearing of her remarkable change he visited her at the old homestead. Of course she did not recognize him. But having been told of his relationship to her, she soon became warmly attached to him, and her affection grew as he repeated his visits during her continuance in her second state.

In her second state she had strong feelings of fondness or of dislike to persons. During the early part of her change to an unnatural state, her friends found it necessary to keep a watchful eye upon her, and often to put restraints upon her movements. This restraint was never that of physical force, but consisted in prohibitory commands. This excited her displeasure, so that for some time she affected to believe that those about her were not her relatives, as they affirmed that they were.

She became very anxious to visit her brother in Meadville, but her friends did not think it advisable to give her permission. Between one and two years after the first change, and while in her second state, she left home on horseback—an exercise of which she was very fond, and in which she was freely indulged—under pretense of visiting a neighbor. She made the visit—for she always carefully kept the letter of her word, though not always the spirit—but she made her visit very brief, and then rode on to Meadville, a distance of nearly *thirty* miles. Her family soon learned where she had gone, and allowed her



to remain some weeks. During that time she was a guest of Mrs. Kennedy, whose husband, Dr. Kennedy, had recently died. At the same time a young lady, Miss Nancy Dewey, was a guest in the same family. Between her and Mary Reynolds a strong friendship sprang up. One night they agreed together to play off a practical joke on Mr. John Reynolds, who was boarding at the same house. But it happened that neither of the young ladies awoke at the right time, and when Mary awoke in the morning she had changed to her natural state.

She now found herself in a strange house, for she had never been in Meadville in her natural state. She had for a sleeping companion a person who was a total stranger. She saw nothing with which she was familiar, and could not imagine where she was. Being in her natural state, quiet and reserved, and even shy, she asked no questions. Miss Dewey spoke of the trick which they had proposed to play, but had not awaked to perform. Miss Reynolds made no reply. She remembered nothing of the trick, and knew not who it was that addressed her. Miss Dewey saw that something unusual had occurred. She probably suspected the true state of the matter, for she had been fully told of the singular changes to which Miss Reynolds was subject. So she became silent.

Miss Reynolds dressed herself and found her way down stairs, wondering and perplexed, but waiting to see what would happen, and hoping that something would soon occur that would solve the mystery. Mrs. Kennedy (afterward the wife of Mr. John Reynolds) came into the sitting-room, and spoke in her usually cheerful manner, but Mary knew her not. Soon after her brother John entered the room. Then all was at once explained. In both states she knew him. In both states she knew that he resided in Meadville. She informed him of the occurrence of the change, though there was little need of it. The observation of a moment or two, and the change in her disposition were sufficient to reveal to her friends, the transition from one state to another. She was then introduced anew to those whom she had so strangely fallen among. She remained at Mrs. Kennedy's, in Meadville, for some days, and then re-

turned home. Very soon after her return she awoke one night, and arousing her sister with whom she was sleeping, she exclaimed, "Come, Nancy, it is time to get up and play that trick on John!" She had changed into her second state, and supposed that she was still in Meadville, and sleeping with Miss Nancy Dewey, and that it was the same night on which they had planned the joke. When she found she had returned to the "Nocturnal Shades," as she called her home in Venango, when she was in her second state, she was much chagrined, for the larger society she found in Meadville was, in that state, much more to her taste.

The foregoing statement illustrates two things. One is, that she did not in one state recognize acquaintances of the other state; the other is, that there was a blank in her memory of the period, however long, passed in a given state when she passed into the other. Thus weeks and months disappeared during one sleep. And the sleep from which she awoke seemed to her but the continuation of that into which she had fallen long before.

During the earlier period of these changes, she manifested, while in her second state, many symptoms of wildness and eccentricity, amounting almost to insanity. Proof of this is found in her long abstinence from food and sleep, and in her indifference to, and even strong prejudices against, her best friends. "For some time," she writes, "after I had been in my second state, my feelings were such that, had all my friends been lying dead around me, I do not think it would have given me one moment's pain of mind. At that time my feelings were never moved with the manifestations of joy or sorrow. I had no idea of the past or the future; nothing but the present occupied my mind."

She was also very restless, and had a strong and uncontrollable inclination to wander off into the woods. Being utterly devoid of fear she could not be restrained by any representations her friends made to her respecting her perils from rattlesnakes, wolves and bears, all of which were numerous in the vicinity. These things made her friends solicitous, and caused

them to keep as close a watch as possible on all her movements.

It has been already stated that she was very careful to keep the letter of her word, though she did not feel herself bound by its spirit. She seemed rather to delight in finding some means or pretense of avoiding that, as giving her an opportunity of boasting of her smartness. She was very ingenious in finding such pretenses. But when once she promised to do or not to do a certain thing, her family and friends had perfect confidence that she would keep her word.

On one occasion in her ramblings she met a bear. She was on horseback riding along a path when she met it. In giving an account of the adventure on her return home she said she had met a "great black hog," which acted very strangely. She said it grinned and growled at her, and would not get out of the way. She said her horse was frightened, and wished to turn back. She ordered the black creature to leave the path, but it would not mind her. "Well," said she, "if you will not get out of the way, I will make you." She was about to dismount and attempt to drive it from the path, when it slowly retreated, occasionally stopping, turning round, and grunting. She used to insist that the bears with which her friends sought to frighten her from rambling off too far, were only "black hogs."

About the same time, in one of her rambles, she saw a rattlesnake, with the beauty of which she was struck. She attempted to capture it. Instead of making battle it attempted to escape. It ran under a heap of logs. She seized it by the tail just as it was disappearing. Providentially her foot slipped, and to save herself from a fall she let go the snake. She afterwards thrust her arm into the hole, but it had gone beyond her reach. It was known to be a rattlesnake, both by its appearance and by its rattle. She afterward became familiar with the species, and remembered that the one she pursued was like those which she now knew.

During this stage of her history there was one person, a brother-in-law, who had complete control over her. This was another proof of an unsound, if not of an insane state of mind.

She did not dare to disobey his commands, yet if he left an opportunity she would disobey them. For instance, one morning he said to her, "Mary, you must not ride over the hills to-day." This he considered equivalent to telling her that she must not ride at all, as her home was surrounded with hills, and she could not avoid them if she followed any road. But as soon as he was out of the way, she got a horse, left home, and was gone nearly all day. In the evening he said, "Mary, did I not tell you that you must not ride to-day?" She replied, "No! you told me I must not ride over the hills, and I did not; but I rode through all the hollows I could find."

Another singular fact should here be mentioned. During that same period in the history of her case, immediately after falling asleep, she would, in an audible voice, narrate the events of the day in which she had been an actor, sometimes laughing heartily at some joke she had played off. She would then lay out her plans for the next day. After this she would become silent. The next day, unless thwarted, she would attempt to do all she had proposed, and in the order she had marked out. It has been stated that none of the knowledge or experience which Mary Reynolds had acquired during her early life, or while she was in her "first state," remained in her memory or passed over into her consciousness while she was in the second state. To this, however, there was one remarkable exception, the nature of which can be best stated in her own words, contained in the narrative from which I have quoted. She says:

"When I was for the first time in my second state, the family were on one Sabbath preparing to go to church at Titusville. I was very anxious to accompany them, though at that time I was wholly ignorant of what preaching meant. They told me it was impossible for me to go. So, much to my dissatisfaction, I had to stay at home. On the night following that day I had a singular dream. I have a more distinct recollection of that dream than of any other thing which happened about that time.

“I dreamed that I was on a large plain, where neither a tree nor a stump was to be seen. It was beautifully green. A great number of persons, all clothed in white, were walking to and from a large river, which flowed through the midst of the plain, singing as they walked. The music was the most delightful I ever heard. As I was standing and gazing with admiration on the scene before me, I thought my sister Eliza (who was dead) came up to me from among the throng, which had by this time collected—for I thought they increased in number very rapidly—and, with a sweet smile on her face, talked with me. Among other things, she told me that I should join that company after awhile, but that I could not then. While she was conversing with me, I saw a very majestic person approach and ascend a platform that was erected about the middle of the plain. He opened a large book which he held in his hand, and began to speak, giving out for a text, Revelations, iii. 20: ‘Behold I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and he with me.’ I was perfectly enraptured, for I thought he spoke to none but me. ‘Well,’ I thought, ‘this must be preaching,’ for in my dream I remembered how I had been disappointed the day before at not being permitted to go to meeting, and I thought he knew my case, for he explained the Scriptures to me. The next day I repeated several passages, though at the time I could not read a word. It seemed that after that dream I regained all my knowledge of Scriptures. I frequently repeated passages of Scriptures; and when my friends, in reply to my assertion that they were contained in the Bible, would ask how I knew that to be so, I told them the person whom I had heard preaching in my dream made me acquainted with them.

“When I arose the next morning after my dream I related it to the family, and observed to them that I had been to a much more splendid meeting than the one at which they had been.

“In my dream I did not mingle with the company; but after I saw the person who ascended the pulpit, and when he

commenced preaching, I became so interested that my attention was no longer attracted by the multitude, who were still moving about. But my sister remained at my side.

“After this I used frequently to dream of seeing her. Particularly if anything troubled me, she would appear to minister comfort. I loved to dream of her, though when awake I had not the slightest recollection of her. It was a remarkable circumstance that my sister and another particular friend, also dead, used to be my almost constant companions in my sleep. I have not dreamed of them since the earlier periods of my changes. I have wished much that I could, though at this time I do not remember either of them except as they appeared to me in dreams.”

All her friends testified, and some still live to testify, that at the time mentioned by her, she appeared to recover her lost knowledge of much contained in the Holy Scriptures, though, as she says, she could not then read, and did not know the Bible from any other book. She never recovered any other knowledge in the same or like manner.

Her parents were both very pious and intelligent—in sentiments Baptists. They had been, as I have before said, intimately acquainted with the Rev. Robert Hall and other distinguished ministers of the same persuasion in England. Among them was a maternal Uncle. After the neighborhood had become somewhat settled her father, Wm. Reynolds, used to invite those living near him to come to his house on Lord's Day. He would read a sermon to them, and offer a prayer with them and for them. His house was a well known stopping-place; often the pioneer ministers, chiefly Presbyterian, during their laborious missionary excursions, rested and preached at his house. Under such influences Mary must have made large acquisitions of religious knowledge, and become familiar with the words of Holy Writ. What she had thus acquired and subsequently lost she recovered in the remarkable manner mentioned.

It should be stated that Mary knew the lady who appeared to her in a dream, to be her deceased sister, not by recognizing

her from memory, but by describing her appearance, and learning from her family that the description exactly suited the appearance of her sister. For in her second state, whether asleep or awake, she had no recollection of her sister as one she had previously known in every-day walks. One friend thinks also that he has heard Mary say that, in her dream, Eliza informed her that she was her sister. But this is not certain. It is certain, however, that she minutely described a person precisely corresponding to the appearance of her sister.

The indications of mental unsoundness which characterized the earlier portions of the time which she passed in her second state, grew fainter, and at length wholly disappeared after these changes had ceased, leaving her permanently in her abnormal state. This occurred about the year 1829 when she had reached her thirty-sixth year. She lived twenty-five years after this, wholly in her second state. During this quarter of a century no one could have discovered in her any thing out of the ordinary way, except that she manifested an unusual degree of nervousness and restlessness; yet that was not sufficient to attract particular attention. She was rational, sober, industrious, and gave good evidence of being a sincere Christian. For a number of years she was a consistent member of the Presbyterian Church. For some years she taught school, and in that capacity she was both useful and acceptable.

During the last few years of her life she was a member of the family of her nephew, Rev. John V. Reynolds, D. D. Part of that time she kept house for him, showing a sound judgment, and manifesting a thorough acquaintance with the duties of her position.

Her death occurred in January, 1854. In the morning she arose in her usual health, ate her breakfast with a good appetite, and after breakfast went into the kitchen, to superintend some matters in that department. In a few minutes the girl called to Dr. Reynolds, saying that his aunt had fallen down. He hastened to her, and assisted the girl in carrying her into the parlor, where she was laid on the sofa. The girl said that while Miss Mary was engaged about some matter, she suddenly

raised her hands to her head and exclaimed, "Oh! I wonder what is the matter of my head." She said no more, but immediately fell to the floor. When carried to the parlor she gasped once or twice, but never spoke, and then died. She was thus gratified in a wish she had often expressed: "Sudden death, sudden glory!" She died at the age of somewhat more than sixty years.

The foregoing narrative embodies all that I have been able to gather which seemed to me to throw any light upon this case of Double Consciousness, the most remarkable that has been recorded. My object in preparing it has been to place before the public, and especially before those interested in mental philosophy the well authenticated facts in the case. That the case was a genuine one admits of no doubt. The leading facts are authenticated by a chain of testimony furnished by witnesses of unimpeachable character, covering the whole period. Mary Reynolds had no motive for practicing an imposture; and her mental and moral character forbids the supposition that she had either the disposition or ability to plan and carry out such a fraud, and had she done so, she could not have avoided detection in the course of fifteen years during which the pretended changes alternated, and the subsequent quarter of a century, which she professed to pass wholly in her second state.

The phenomena presented were as if her body was the house of two souls, not occupied by both at the same time, but alternately, first by one, then by the other, until at last the usurper gained and held possession, after a struggle of fifteen years. For not only did she seem to have two memories, each in its turn active, and then dormant; but the whole structure of her mind and consciousness, and their mode of operating seemed dissimilar, according to her states. Her sympathies, her method of reasoning, her tastes, her friendships, and the reasons which led to their formation, were in one state wholly unlike what they were in the other. She had different objects of desire, took different views of life, looked at things through different mediums, according to her state.



That her second state had its origin in, and was accompanied by physical disease, is evident from many considerations. She herself was conscious of this. In her narrative she writes:

“Whenever I changed into my natural state, I was very much debilitated. When in my second state, I had no inclination for either food or sleep. My strength at such times was entirely artificial. I generally had a flush in one cheek, and a continued thirst, which denotes inward fever.”

Physiologists considering the time of life when this strange phenomena of her life began, and the time of their termination, will form some conclusion as to their ultimate cause, but that the brain was the organ immediately affected is rendered probable from the convulsions that preceded the first change, and from the manner of her death, which unmistakably indicated that the brain was disordered. But the facts, as far as ascertainable now, fail to explain the special features of her case; the two lives covering fifteen years, wholly unconnected with each other, yet each continuous from state to state, and the final settling down into a state of being lasting for a quarter of a century, and accompanied by no special indications of either mental or physical disorder, yet which had no apparent relation to, or connection with, that which she had passed for the first nineteen years of her life, and which continued through a portion of the succeeding years.

The bearings of this case on the sanitive treatment of the insane, on questions of mental science beyond those alluded to, on questions of conscience or casuistry, and on the religious aspect of the matter, are left to the thinking world. None will be more ready than the author to receive light on any of these important and intricate matters.

Western Theological Seminary, 1859.

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