

**THE SEERESS OF PREVORST: BEING
REVELATIONS CONCERNING THE
INNER-LIFE OF MAN, AND THE
INTER-DIFFUSION OF A WORLD OF
SPIRITS IN THE ONE WE INHABIT**

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The Seeress of Prevorst: Being Revelations Concerning the Inner-Life of Man, and the Inter-Diffusion of a World of Spirits in the One We Inhabit by Justinus Kerner

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JUSTINUS KERNER

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Frederica Hauffe
BEING

Revelations Concerning the Inner-Life of Man

AND THE

INTER-DIFFUSION OF A WORLD OF SPIRITS IN THE ONE WE INHABIT

COMMUNICATED BY

Andrews JUSTINUS KERNER,
Chief Physician at Weinsberg.

FROM THE GERMAN
Catharine (Havens)
BY MRS. CROWE,

AUTHOR OF "THE ADVENTURES OF SUSAN HOPLEY," "MEN AND WOMEN," "AMENODROMUS," ETC.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

As, in presenting this curious work to the public, it was my object to make a book that should be generally accessible, a literal translation became out of the question. Besides considerable prolixity, there is a great deal of repetition, in the original; some parts would have been found too dry, and others too mystical, for the general reader. I have, therefore, thought it advisable to make a free translation, giving the sum and substance of the book as succinctly as I could; only varying from this plan, where I thought a close adherence to the words of the author was indispensable.

I apprehend that many of the extraordinary phenomena recorded by Kerner will not find very general credence with English readers; but to the believers in clairvoyance, the book will have a deep interest—whilst, to the larger class, who are not yet prepared to yield faith to its wonders, I should imagine that the facts would still be considered well worthy of attention, both in a physiological and a psychological point of view. I say *facts*; because I cannot conceive the possibility of any candid mind doubting the greatest number of them, after reading the book; or of such an one entertaining a suspicion of imposture, on the part either of physician or patient. Indeed, Kerner's well-known character, ought to exempt him from such an imputation from any quarter; and, for my own part, I reject with horror the idea, that in a suffering creature, who lived ever on the verge of the grave, so much apparent innocence and piety should have been but the cloak to so useless and cruel a deception.

Nothing is more easy than to set up a cry of imposture. It is a convenient mode of eluding the trouble of inquiry, and of stifling facts obnoxious to preconceived theories; but it is a vulgar resource, as well as a cowardly one; though, I am sorry to say, in no country does the practice prevail so much as in this.

Ridicule is another weapon easily handled; but what many learned, sensible, and good men of a neighbouring nation believe they have ascertained to be true, is certainly a very improper subject for its exercise. If we cannot also believe, we are at least bound to listen with attention to what they have to tell us; and the candid and inquiring will receive the information with respect, if they cannot with conviction.

The sincerity and good faith of Dr. Kerner in this affair, has never, we believe, been impugned, even by the most determined sceptic. He is well known in Germany as an exceedingly sensible, amiable, and religious man; and is a lyric poet of considerable eminence. The point of attack, for those who seek one, must be his sagacity; but except the assailant were one who had had the same opportunities for observation and investigation that he had, the gratuitous imputation of credulity should be, at least, cautiously received. At the same time, although I confess I should be very sorry myself to be one of the many who, I am aware, will receive these alleged facts with contempt and derision, I do not deny that the question, whether the apparitions were subjective or objective—projections of the nervous system, or actually external appearances—is one which can only, if ever, be definitively answered by the exhibition of repeated phenomena of the same description. Even Kerner himself, however ultimately convinced, seems long to have doubted; whilst he freely admits the impossibility of absolute conviction on the part of those who have never had any ocular testimony that such appearances are permitted.

But in any case, there are few readers, I should think, who will not find the book interesting; whilst the amiable, earnest, and pious spirit in which it is written, should, at least, constitute the author's defence against ridicule or malignity, and be accepted as the translator's justification for presenting the work to the English public in an accessible form.

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THE SEERESS OF PREVORST.

PART FIRST.

REVELATIONS CONCERNING THE INNER LIFE OF MAN.

"I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes." -LUKE X. 21.

EXTRACTS FROM AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

UPON the truth of her Revelations the Seeress has set the seal of death. Her story is not to be confounded with those of persons who have only been subject to the early and imperfect magnetic conditions, and still less with those of impostors, of whom several have lately been detected, although the adversaries of the Seherin do not scruple to use these detections to her disadvantage. The existence of one genuine pearl cannot be disproved by the production of a thousand false ones.

It has been frequently asserted that the extraordinary magnetic condition of the Seherin is to be ascribed to the influence of others. How can we answer such an absurd objection? To those who followed and observed throughout the course of these phenomena, the assertion is not only false but ridiculous.

Neither are her Revelations to be judged as if they were portions of a system of philosophy constructed by an enlightened mind; they are revelations drawn from the intimate contemplation of nature herself, and will therefore frequently be found not only in strict conformity with popular belief, but also with the opinions of Plato, both of which sprung from the same source. It is certainly hard, and we cannot wonder at the annoyance it occasions, that a weak silly woman should thus disturb the established systems of the learned, and revive persuasions that it has long been the aim of the wise amongst men to

eradicate. In this strait, I am acquainted with but one consolation—it is that which Paul gives in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter i., verses 27, 28:—"27. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty: 28. And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are."

INTRODUCTION.

DISCLOSURES CONCERNING THE INNER LIFE OF MAN.

As must every man who, isolating himself from the hurry and bustle of external life, to contemplate his inner self, you will feel, dear reader, that our inner and outer life are not only different, but often in flat contradiction of each other. What the outer life finds decorous, the inner frequently condemns; and in the midst of the world we are often disquieted by a still small voice that whispers us from within. If you examine further, you will feel that this external life is the dominion of the brain—the intellect which belongs to the world—whilst the inner life dwells in the region of the heart, within the sphere of sensitive life, in the sympathet-

ic and ganglionic system. You will further feel, that by virtue of this inner life, mankind is bound up in an eternal connexion with nature, from which his imperfect external existence can only apparently release him. It is true, indeed, that this inner life is overshadowed and obscured to the world-possessed brain; but still irrepressible and immutable, it lives on, a concealed but vigilant guard on the conduct and economy of the outer. Every act and thought, however trifling it may now appear, is by it noted and numbered; and will one day or other appear in bright relief before our spiritual eyes, when our bodily ones are for ever extinguished.

You will also feel, that it is this secret unseen connexion with nature which unites man with the other world, and conducts him on his way towards it.

The more, in the tumult of the world and the bustle of existence, this inner life makes itself felt—the more the gentle voices within us drown the loud music of the world—the greater is our debt to the spirit that guides us.* But if thou art carried away by the current of worldly life, seeking only what belongs to it, believe, dear reader, that an hour will one day come, and God grant it be not thy last!—an hour of sorrow and of tears—an hour when thou shalt stand by the death-bed of thy beloved, or from the summit of earthly happiness be cast into the depths of repentance and of shame, deserted and alone—when thy inner life shall rise up before thee, embracing thee again within its sphere; that life which, since thy childhood, has been hidden from thee, of which thou hast only been visited by glimpses in thy dreams—dreams which thou knewest not to interpret.

Beloved, to so many has this befallen! To so many will it yet, who, now joyous and with unclouded brows, are wholly engrossed with the interests of this world, and devoting all their best faculties to their advancement! By the bedside of such an one I once stood, and, with the death-rattle in his throat, he said to me, "I feel that my life has passed from my brain to the epigastric region; of my brain I have no more consciousness—I no longer feel my arms nor my feet; but I see inex-

* Kerner here alludes to the protecting spirit, to be afterwards alluded to.

pressible things—things which I never believed; there is another world!"—and so saying, he expired.

"When by the graves of the just, the flowers we have planted as memorials, invite us to a far distant world, or when we first see the gulf of death yawning for ourselves, then—but, alas! too late—we are seized with a trembling awe at the thoughts of eternity. Strange presentiments creep round the failing heart, and anxious sighs burst from the oppressed bosom. But these thoughts are far from us by the cradle of infancy, and in the flower of our age,—far from us at the marriage feast, in the glittering halls of the wealthy, and the joyous circles of Bacchus."⁷*

And thus once wrote to us a spiritually-minded medical friend, after the death of one much honoured and beloved:—

"It was not terror at the sight of death that so shook me and incapacitated me for the office of a physician, nor was it altogether grief for my loss. The concussion awakened the inner life within me, and in despair I was ready to sink into its depths. I contemplated with horror the monstrous blindness of the soul, the vanity and nothingness of our self-knowledge and self-will, the fearfulness of the inevitable and untractable concatenation of things, our deeds and their consequences—indelible, ineffaceable,—fast in the gripe of eternity: Ah! I should despair, did I not look for help from God. Beloved, it has become clear and evident to me, that there is but one mode of deliverance from this bond, this chain by which we, blind and bewildered, are dragged forward, knowing nothing, neither what we do nor the consequences of our actions; that there is a kingdom of grace and of love; and that when we stand before the judgment-seat, face to face with God, he only can be set free, and reach eternal rest and happiness, who is to it reconciled and into it received. In God we must live, work, and act, if we would not, according to the eternal laws of nature, have our souls ensnared and plunged into a darkness through which no beam of light and joy can penetrate. So, beloved, let us love life, yea covet life, yet live not for ourselves; but make our peace

* From Ennenosser's History of Magnetism.

with God, and through the living God within us, do our work. Ah! it is awful to think that every step a man takes is on the brink of a thousand precipices."

And thus writes to us the well-known philosopher Schelling, in the year 1811, on the death of a friend's wife, after he had himself experienced a like misfortune:—

"When we form a proper estimate of our present life, when we reflect that our situation here is much more awful than we are accustomed to consider it, since the hand of God conceals from us its real signification, we must look upon those as happy who are released from it. Justly considered, they have won the victory, whilst we stand yet on the field of battle, and are waiting to be set free. The value of this life is well denoted by the common proverb, that no man should be pronounced happy till he is dead. Reflection and inquiry have brought me to the conviction, that death, so far from weakening our personality, exalts it, since it frees it from so many contingencies. *Remembrance* is but a feeble expression to convey the intimate connexion which exists betwixt those who are departed and those who remain. In our innermost being, we are in strict union with the dead; for in our better part we are no other than what they are—spirits. The future reunion of accordant souls, who through life have had one love, one faith, and one hope, is a thing to be confidently relied on, being one of the promises of Christianity to be faithfully fulfilled to all, however difficult the conception is, even to those minds most accustomed to abstract contemplations. I am daily more satisfied that, as we might expect, there is a mutual dependence betwixt things essentially personal and things immortal. If more were needed to confirm this persuasion in those who think and feel rightly, the death of one bound to us by the fondest ties of love, is sufficient to set on it the seal of conviction. It is when we know that life is fading from us, and that for us there is no more pleasure in the world, we first begin to live for God. Then, when the external world sinks from us, the inner life ascends. It needs no sleep-waking to perceive this inner life; to every man who is not too much entangled in the

world—to him who lives in it, but is not of it—is given an eye to discern it.

"Look for it in others, and you will need no sleep-waking to find it. In how many godly and spiritually minded men it exists! How often does it dwell in the poor hovel with the Bible and Prayer-Book, where guiltless souls suffer sorrow, and the morsel of black bread is moistened with tears!"—

"A free untrammelled mind," says Athanasius Kirchner, "not shackled by its earthly covering, in union with God, and remembering its original condition, enjoys the clearest view of all things, seeing them in their essence."

Thus, you will find, beloved, in the history of pious men, how, when in moments of pain and affliction, the external world disappeared, they plunged into the profoundest depths and innermost sphere of their inner life, and revealed to themselves such wonders as have since been made known to us by somnambules.

Let a few examples suffice us.

It was in the year 1461, when the Hussites were undergoing a cruel persecution, that a pious man at Prague, called Georginus, who was brought to the rack, and stretched upon the instrument of torture, became, in an extraordinary manner, insensible to pain, and to all external sensations, appearing so entirely lifeless that the executioners took him down, and flung him on the earth for dead. After the lapse of some hours, however, he came again to himself, wondering why his side, feet, and hands, caused him so much uneasiness. But when he beheld the wounds and scars, the burnt and bloody places on his body, and the tools of the executioner, they brought to his mind what had happened: and he related a dream that he had had during the torture. "I thought," said he, "that I was in a green and beautiful meadow, and in the middle of it stood a tree, on which grew a great deal of fine fruit; and on the tree were perched many birds, who ate of the fruit, whilst they sang melodiously. And amongst the birds I beheld a youth, who, with a small rod, appeared to regulate their movements, that none should presume too far or get out of his place; and I saw three men, who kept watch over the tree."

He described the appearance and persons of these men; and it is a remarkable fact, that six years afterwards, the same number of men that he had seen in his dream, and answering to the same description, were appointed to rule over the Church.

In the year 1639, a poor widow, called Lücken, who was accused of being a witch, and sentenced to the rack, at Helmstädt, having been cruelly tortured by the screw, was seized with dreadful convulsions, spoke high German, and a strange language, and then fell asleep on the rack, and appeared to be dead. The circumstance being related to the Jurisconsult at Helmstädt, she was ordered to be again submitted to the torture. Then, protesting she was a good Christian, whilst the executioner stretched her on the rack, whipt her with rods, and sprinkled her with burning brimstone, she fell again fast asleep, and could not by any means be awakened.

In the first of these anecdotes you will perceive how the soul, afflicted by the external world, abandons it, leaving the body alone for its prey, whilst it flies to unite itself to the spirit in the innermost sphere of its inner life, where, as in sleep-waking, the future is revealed to it, and it enjoys the wondrous gift of prophecy.

By the second history you will observe how the soul, whilst it resigned its body to the tortures of the external world, itself took refuge in its home, and thence, perhaps, (as happened to our own somnambule,) spoke the language of that home.

"It may happen," says a deep-seherin, or clear-seer, "to a man who is intimately acquainted with his inner life, that in proportion as he is disturbed by the elements without, his inner-life becomes more joyful, and the sensations of the body thus repressed, are altogether annihilated."

The history of the martyrs shows how, in moments of the severest anguish from without, they attained an inward security, by which they endured with patience the most cruel tortures, laughed at their oppressors, and went to the rack and the pile as to a bridal-bed. Thus did John Huss and Jeremy of Prague, whilst their bodies were being consumed in the flames,

with their latest breath, sing songs of praise and thanksgiving. So, as to a feast, went Dorothy to the stake. Joyous, and like conquerors, the martyrs stood, as if their bodies were no longer made of flesh. Where, then, was their soul? It was in the light and security within. Similar phenomena are shown us in the magnetic life, and in several histories of the Old and New Testament, as well as in the lives of many godly persons—the Maid of Orleans, for example. Thus we read in Delavergy, an account, extracted from a MS. in the Royal Library, of the words spoken by the Maid of Orleans on her trial.

"When I was thirteen years old, I heard a voice in my father's garden at Donremy. It proceeded from the side where the church stood, and was succeeded by a bright light. At first I was frightened, but presently I became aware that it was the voice of an angel, who has been ever since my guide and instructor. It was Saint Michael. I also saw Saint Catherine and St. Margaret, who admonished me, and directed all my proceedings. I could easily distinguish by the voice whether it was an angel or a saint that spoke to me. They were generally accompanied by a bright light. Their voices are soft and sweet. The angels appeared to me with natural heads. I have seen them, and do see them with my eyes."

Five years after, as she was keeping the cows, a voice said to her that God had pity upon the French people, and that she must go and save them. As thereupon she began to weep, the voice bade her go to Vaucouleurs, where she would find a captain, who, without impediment, would conduct her to the king.

"Since then," said she, "I have done nothing but in conformity with these directing revelations and apparitions; and now, during my whole trial, I speak only as they prompt me."

At the siege of Orleans he foretold the capture of the city, and that her own blood would be shed; and in reality, on the following day, she was wounded by an arrow, which penetrated six inches into her shoulder.

A similar natural somnambule was St. Theresa, who was born in the beginning