

Foreign Correspondence.

Dr. Slade and the Scientists—Letter from M. A. (Oxon.)

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

DEAR SIR—Before this letter reaches you, you will know of the storm which rages around Spiritualism in this country. The newspapers will have put you in possession of facts as they strike the outside world. But there is another side which is more interesting to your readers, and, without knowing how far it may occur to others to describe this side, I venture to send you some details myself. I have seen a good deal of Dr. Slade since he came to this country, and I have, at any rate, felt a warm interest in his defence from the imputations made against him. The hearsay knowledge that I had of him before has been supplemented by personal experience, and I can speak at first hand.

When Dr. Slade landed in this country, he presented me with a letter of introduction from your able contributor and my valued friend, Mr. Epes Sargent, and I lost no time in making myself personally familiar with phenomena of which I had read many accounts in your columns and elsewhere. So far from finding the word exaggerated, I was surprised that more had not been made of the remarkable mediumship which I then first witnessed. My impressions (communicated to Mr. Epes Sargent) have already found a place in your columns, and I need not, therefore, say more than that I judged Dr. Slade's mediumship to be precisely that which I had long sought for, and hitherto in vain. I had long despatched some means of convincing prominent scientists of facts well known to those who have familiarized themselves with the phenomena of Modern Spiritualism. Any attempt to do this I found impossible so long as conditions—darkness especially—unfavorable to minute observations were insisted on. In my delight at finding a medium who could dispense with this condition, I challenged the attention of some of our leading scientists. The response I met with was, on the whole, fair. Among others, Dr. W. Carpenter, F. R. S., went to Dr. Slade's and frankly confessed that the theories which have made his name famous were not sufficient to cover what he saw. He professed his readiness to "spare neither time nor money in the investigation," and did actually arrange for further sittings at his own house. Other men, not less eminent in their several departments, were equally interested. The subject was brought up at the British Association for the Advancement of Science, and an animated and somewhat angry discussion ensued.

It was hardly to be expected that this open recognition of a hitherto tabooed subject would be allowed to pass unchallenged by those scientists who are also materialists—unfortunately a very large body. The attitude of these men is plain. They say, "We know nothing of spirit—our scalps cannot discover it. We can find no traces of it by the scientific method." Matter we know; Force we know; but what is this that you talk of? It is a return to superstition which we thought long since dead. If you Spiritualists are right, we must revise our scientific beliefs. That cannot be thought of. Besides you are a crazy-brained lot, and we will snuff you out." This was the muttering of the storm.

The way in which it burst was on this wise. Professor Ray Lankester, F. R. S., a well-known materialist, was induced to visit Slade, and incontinently grew wrath at what he was pleased to call open and stupid trickery. He could see the cheat, and undertook to expose it. He propounded the theory that the independent slate-writing was done by Slade himself, either by changing the slate for one on which the message had been already written; or by writing it on his lap while he distracted the sitters' attention by conjuring patters; or by means of a small piece of pencil fixed under his finger-nail. He further guarded himself by saying that possibly there were other means used.

In order to put his theories to proof he took with him a personal friend, Dr. Donkin, and they proceeded to Slade's with the understanding that Dr. Lankester should snatch away the slate at a time when no message was supposed to be upon it. He anticipated thereby to prove that Slade had already written the message which was pretended to be produced by spirit agency. He waited until Slade asked him to take hold of the slate, and at once snatched it away, discovering on it a short message. Here it is that testimony varies. Lankester and his friend assert that the slate was not the fraction of a minute in position, and that they had detected Slade's arm moving nervously in a way that led them to the conclusion that he was then writing the message while he held the slate on his lap. Slade asserts that he asked Prof. Lankester to hold the slate with him, saying at the same time, "They have just begun to write." However this may be, Mr. Lankester considered that he had got the desired evidence, and, without waiting to confirm his suspicions further, rose and denounced Slade. It would have been the part of a wise and patient investigator, some of us may think, to clean the slate on which writing manifestly existed, and to repeat the experiment, holding the slate himself. If, under those circumstances, writing came again, as most probably it would—such is my experience, at any rate—he would have seen the folly of rushing to conclusions.

As it was, he rushed off and wrote a violent letter to *The Times*, backed up by one from his friend. A long correspondence followed, which was remarkable only for the singular unanimity with which other observers testified that Prof. Lankester's theories would not cover their experience. Angry at this unexpected body of testimony, and driven into a corner, Prof. Lankester wrote another angry letter, in which he propounded the "scientific method" of dealing with mediums, viz: that they should be treated like "wild beasts," and (I presume) exterminated. By way of again putting his theories into practice, he took out summonses against Slade and Simmons for conspiracy to defraud, and (to make certainty doubly sure) another against Dr. Slade alone under a statute called "The Vagrancy Act," which is aimed against gypsies and such folk, who gull unsuspecting and ignorant people who cannot take care of themselves. The absurdity of applying such an act to Fellows of the Royal Society and other astute and learned people, is self-evident. But any stick is good enough to beat a dog with, especially when he has got a bad name and ought to be hung.

One of the sharpest practitioners in the Police Courts conducts the prosecution, and his opening speech shows the *anima* with which he is armed. Offensive jokes and repartee, folly did duty for argument, and went down (that is the most melancholy symptom) with the Court unquestioned. His business was to throw mud, and he handled it as if he loved it. A more dirty and stupid exhibition was never seen. Yet it seemed to strike nobody that this attorney was doing anything more than his duty. At the time that I write, only the first day's evidence has been taken, and it would be rash to prophesy the final result. But it is safe to say that so much as ignorance, prejudice, and animosity can accomplish, will be done. Our opponents will not be held by any modest considerations of fair play from stamping us out if possible.

We have done our best for the visitor who comes to us a stranger and without knowledge of our customs. The British Association of Spiritualists has now taken up his case, and will afford him the benefit of their advice and material support. At no time has he been left without friends, who have endeavored to show that they are not unmindful of the obligation laid upon them of consoling and supporting those in trial.

It will be plain from the tone of my remarks that I consider Dr. Slade to be the victim of a conspiracy, and not a complainer himself. That is so. I have seen nothing in my investigation with him in any degree suspicious, while I have seen phenomena the most remarkable evolved under conditions the most simple. More than this—I have tested the phenomena one by one, with

Prof. Lankester's explanations before me, and have found that those explanations entirely fail to explain anything except that their author knew nothing of Spiritualism, and jumped violently to conclusions. I believe that any fair-minded man, who would patiently go through six sittings with Dr. Slade, would agree with me in that statement.

Unfortunately fair-mindedness is a rare virtue, and it flourishes most scantily in that atmosphere of scientific precision where one ought to find it at home. It is a grave indictment against scientists to say of them that, with rare and honorable exceptions, they display none of the candor and honesty which are necessary prerequisites of growth in knowledge. What they may do when they deal with their own domain of matter, I know not. They are in their respective grooves, and possibly cannot get far wrong. But once out of the groove, they seem to display those qualities most prominently which are least favorable to true scientific growth. Bigoted in antecedent opinion, their bigotry goes to lengths which might discredit the inquirers of medieval days. Witness Firman, Leymarie, and now Slade! Dogmatic and unbending, their dogmatism is even more offensive than the dogmatism of priests, for they at least ought to know better than to set up claims to infallibility. It is not from such that justice is to be sought, unless we can wring it from them for very shame. At any rate we will try, and in that trial I do not doubt that we shall have the sympathy of our American brethren, whom, with your kind permission, I cordially salute.

M. A. (Oxon.)

London, Oct. 4th, 1876.

To Book-Purchasers.

We respectfully call the attention of the reading public to the large stock of Spiritual, Reformatory and Miscellaneous Works which we keep on sale at the BANNER OF LIGHT BOOKSTORE, ground floor of building No. 9 Montgomery Place, corner of Province Street, Boston, Mass.

Having recently purchased the stock in trade at ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS'S PROGRESSIVE BOOKSTORE, New York City, we are now prepared to fill orders for such books, pamphlets, etc., as have appeared by name in his catalogue, and hope to hear from the friends in all parts of the world.

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COLBY & RICH.

In quoting from the BANNER OF LIGHT, care should be taken to distinguish between editorial articles and the communications (condensed or otherwise) of correspondents. Our columns are open for the expression of individual free thought; but we cannot undertake to endorse the varied shades of opinion to which our correspondents give utterance.

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LETTER COLBY, EDITOR. BUSINESS MANAGER.

Letters and communications pertaining to the editorial department of this paper should be addressed to LUTHER COLBY; and all BUSINESS LETTERS TO ISAAC B. RICH, BANNER OF LIGHT PUBLISHING HOUSE, BOSTON, MASS.

"While we recognize no man as master, and take no book as an unerring authority, we most cordially accept all great men as lights of the world. The generations of men come and go, and he alone is wise who walks in the light, reverent and thankful before God, but self-centered in his own individuality."—Prof. R. B. Britton.

The Assaults on Spiritualism.

There is no revolution going on in the facts or philosophy of Spiritualism, as a good many people would like to make others believe. Truth is truth just as much as it ever was, and what is false, no genuine believer in Spiritualism wishes to have stand. The laws according to which spirit power works cannot be set aside by the charlatanism nor overturned by ridicule. The gust of a storm that is sweeping through the avenues which Spiritualism has opened for the human soul is not going to block them up so that there will be no more passing. Every new cause attracts mountebanks and impostors, who count on advancing themselves by professing to be its directors. Nothing is in fact more easy than their detection, from the simple fact that they do not penetrate to the living springs of the movement nor possess any personal knowledge of its active principles.

But before noticing the fresh charges which are brought, with the collusion of fraudulent professors, against the sacred cause of Spiritualism, it is as well to regard the motive with which they are brought, that will show at a glance how heavily they are weighted. When we see the pulpits, occupied by a portion of the secular press that owes to the alliance its own substantial support, howling forth in a strange harmony the joy that fills them, because a few feeble persons of undoubted mediumistic powers have succumbed to temptation, and for paltry rewards shown themselves willing to betray their high trust, we are to pause to consider just how much respect is due to accusations brought in such a mocking spirit, and above all what particular weight is to be attached to those who manifest their glee at the prospect of immortality's being still longer obscured instead of being more and more fully brought to light.

It is this chanting peans of triumph over the alleged discomfiture of Spiritualism that forms the peculiar feature of the character of the priests. The pulpits gladly welcome the most unscrupulous agents and allies. It would seem as if, trusting the ordinary church professions, any slip, fraud, connivance, or even accident that had a tendency to lessen or undermine the proofs of immortality, would be received by religious professors and teachers with unaffected sorrow. But now they explode in ecstasies, go off in perfect raptures of delight, to find that the phenomena of spiritual belief have been travestied and claimed to be exposed. They rejoice at any fraud that for the time seems to bring the evidence of immortal life into ridicule and contempt. Yet they know well enough that this knowledge of a life hereafter which Spiritualism has brought home to so many human souls has comforted and strengthened them when they were groveling in despair, and that through that knowledge infidels and scoffers have been changed in every fibre of their being, and renovated in every part of their conduct.

But this tempest of hostility that is at present beating with pitiless force on the citadel of Spiritualism is soon to expend itself and die. So far as it may tend to separate the wheat from the chaff, no true Spiritualist will fail to welcome its

visit. Yet it is to be borne in mind that it is not for the correction of any faults in practice which Spiritualism may be responsible for that it is beating upon our works with such angry vehemence. It seeks only its destruction, its annihilation. Spiritualists themselves are the ones best capable of making those corrections. They are better aware than any others can be of the shortcomings which need reproof and the inconsistencies which require the hand of discipline.

The Slade affair in England seems to be the culmination of all the sins which are charged against Spiritualism. Because certain *sarants* have endorsed him, and another *sarant*, with an assistant, has pretended to expose him, they are all out baying him and baying Spiritualism at the top of their voices, proclaiming that Spiritualism is thoroughly exposed and at an end. How they wish they could indeed believe their own words! Prof. Lankester was far too hasty; he got in between the fact and his too ready interpretation of it. He did not wait to obtain the proofs of the fraud which he alleges, but seized an opportunity before it had in fact occurred, and then cried it up that he had "caught" the medium. The event simply shows that he sat down with Dr. Slade for the purpose of overreaching him, but in no sense of investigating the truth.

And straightway the preachers, "religious" newspapers and the secular allies and agents join in a perfect ululation of delight, and call on all mankind to fall in with them and help make the riotous demonstration as uproarious as possible. There is a simultaneous outbreak of joy from saint and sinner. And this is the religion which they claim is so much better than Spiritualism! A religion of envy and malice, of spleen and hate, of anything and everything but love and faith and charity. All this, however, is not going to hurt Spiritualism. It will help it instead.

This whole movement is only an onset against the cause, which is to triumph all the sooner by reason of it. But not through boasting and self-conceit, but rather through watching and praying, sifting and weighing, judging and trying. The readiness to be deluded which is alleged as the reason why so many are deluded in matters of the spirit, is not the fruit and result of Spiritualism. That takes men just as it finds them. If it finds them, then, superstitious and prone to be deceived, who is responsible for it but that Old Theology which has always held them in leading strings, and impressed them with its blinding beliefs?

Spiritualists have nothing to fear because the false is being separated from the true. Orthodox would do well to practice on a similar rule. But it prefers to find notes in other eyes to pulling out the beams from its own. And that is the best evidence that could be asked to prove that its own downfall is not far off. While Old Theology ridicules and shouts, and is in ecstasies over the belief that Spiritualism is at an end, it is unconsciously digging its own grave and preparing a welcome for its sure successor.

"A Staggering Blow."

If we may believe the Boston Evening Transcript of Oct. 14th, another "staggering blow" has been applied to Spiritualism. The following paragraph describes it:

"The Spiritualists are being crowded very hard just now by exposures. The worst sort of staggering blow for them is that kind dealt by a performer named Baldwin, in San Francisco, of all the wonders, such as writing answers to unseen questions, materializing, making letters appear on his arm, turning water to wine and back again; who all the while insists that he is a humbug, and that he knows nothing at all about spirits, except that they have nothing to do with his jugglery—which by all accounts fairly outdoes Foster's."

Our friends of the Transcript are behind the age. If they had read the Banner they would have understood very thoroughly the character of Baldwin and his performances. That the man (though a sort of medium) is a deceiver, his own words and letters abundantly show. The Transcript tells us, "he insists that he is a humbug." Sometimes he may do so, but at other times he will play the part of a severe exposé of humbugs, and claim that he is doing Spiritualism a service in showing up false mediums. One moment he will say that all so-called spiritual phenomena are fraudulent; and the next moment he will take the ground that Spiritualism is a fact, and that all he wants to do is to show up impostors.

The truth seems to be that the man, whether consciously or unconsciously, is really a medium for various phenomena. These he can never explain by duplicating them in the light and showing how another person can do them by the simple exercise of his normal powers. So, to keep up the farce of exposing Spiritualism, he has to dodge all explanation of these. He does not frankly admit that they are inexplicable, and, for all that he knows to the contrary, spiritual, but he tries to convey the impression that they are successful feats of jugglery on his part. Ask him to prove it, and he will either "talk you blind" by his circumlocution and pretending to explain, or he will say he is too tired now; he will do it to-morrow; or he will declare that he would rather not do it at all, as he does not like to disclose all his secrets.

We have had proofs enough of these facts and of Baldwin's disingenuous, prevaricating, and deceptive courses. He finds it far more profitable to go round as an exposé of Spiritualism, than to exhibit, as genuine, inexplicable phenomena, some of the things that take place in his presence. Of course he supplements his performances, as far as he can, with trickery and jugglery. He is said to be a cleverer man than Bishop, who is playing the same game; using the little media power he possesses to fool the public.

Letter from M. A. (Oxon.)

We need not call the attention of our readers to the excellent letter from M. A. (Oxon.), which we publish to-day. Few writers on Spiritualism bring more culture and vigor of thought to the great subject; and all that he says will carry weight with the many who know his reputation and are acquainted with his contributions.

We have a few copies of the fifth edition of Warren Sumner Barlow's capital work, "THE VOICES," which we will send by mail to any address on receipt of 75 cents. The book contains "The Voice of Nature," "The Voice of a People," and "The Voice of Superstition;" and differs from the sixth edition only in that it lacks "The Voice of Prayer."

The Pioneer Press, of Minneapolis, Minn., speaks "in good set terms" concerning a lecture recently delivered there by the boy-medium Walker.

Spirit Communion—Verification of Spirit Messages.

Last week we gave a lengthy citation from the supply of letters we have from time to time received, recognizing the reliability of messages from the so-called dead which have been spoken at the Banner of Light Public Free Circle Meetings, Boston, through the trance mediumship of Mrs. Jennie S. Rudd. We now append the following epistles in evidence of the truthfulness of certain communications given through the lips of Mrs. Sarah A. Danskin, of Baltimore, and printed in due course on our sixth page:

MISS MAGGIE BRANT.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

You have often, through the Banner, requested persons knowing to the truthfulness of the communications through the Message Department, to report the same to you. I find in the Banner of March 18th a communication, through Mrs. Danskin, from Miss Maggie Brant, of Mattoon, Ill., which was a surprise to myself. I am well acquainted with all the circumstances, and they were in part published in our city papers last fall. It was a most distressing circumstance for so young and innocent a girl to commit such a rash act, and could not be accounted for. She first attempted self-destruction by taking poison at the Dole House; medical aid was called at once, and antidotes taken which reacted on the poison, and her life was saved. Friends were sent for who took her home, and eventually she was more successful in her determined self-destruction at her father's house in Shawmway, Effingham County. Now the question comes up for the doubter to solve—how did Mrs. Sarah A. Danskin procure her information? Was it through a correspondent, or was it through the published statements in our papers, or did she have direct communication with Miss Maggie Brant through her own spiritual organization?

Yours for truth and progression,

A. J. MCNEIL.

Mattoon, Ill., March 21st, 1876.

WILLIAM LUSH WEBSTER.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

In the early part of April the Banner published a communication from the spirit of William Lush Webster, saying he went South for his health, and died on his way home; was buried at Enfield, Conn., &c., &c. It so happened that I was conversant with the facts. Was in New York at the time his body was taken through to be deposited at Enfield, Conn. I consider it a most excellent test, and if this acknowledgment will be of any service to the cause of truth, it is at your disposal.

Yours, &c.,

DELIA AVERY.

Clinton, Oneida Co., N. Y., May 15th, 1876.

MARY MILLS.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

The message that was published in the Banner of May 6th, from Mary Mills (it ought to have been Mills, though), through Mrs. Danskin, I can verify as truthful. She says, "This converse I have had for many years—ever since I was a child, I knew nothing of it," and well she might say it, for herself and her family were buried deep down in old theology. I sent the paper to her brother-in-law, who lives in Stratford, and he sent it to Fairfield, and said that the message sounded like her. She was a very practical and sensible woman. The message did sound just like Mary Mills. I knew her well in our younger days.

Respectfully,

HELEN WHITING.

Stratford, Ct., Sept. 16th, 1876.

TREADWELL.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

In your issue of the Banner of Light of the 3d of June, 1876, I notice a communication from Treadwell, of St. Nicholas Hotel, N. Y. I knew Mr. Treadwell for many years—ever since he was on the corner of Dey and Broadway, when he kept the old Franklin House. The communication is characteristic of the man, and ought to be recognized by his friends in Connecticut.

Yours respectfully,

PETER P. GOOD.

Plainfield, Union County, N. J., June 14th, 1876.

CHARLES JEFFREY SMITH.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

The communication recorded in your Message Department of July 15th from Charles Jeffrey Smith, of Mastic, L. I., N. Y., I am able to state is strictly true. I knew him well. He was, by profession, a lawyer, and was possessed of a genial and happy spirit, attractive and holding many friends. His family have the advantage and prestige which wealth, high social position, and a long line of respectable ancestry combine to give. God grant that his message may arrest their attention and affect their hearts, influencing them and helping them to a higher standpoint in spiritual views.

Spiritualism has a strong hold on the east end of our island. Good seed was sown here in 1856—by earnest preachers of the new gospel as Drs. S. B. Britton and R. T. Hallock, Mrs. Bulene, Rev. Adin Ballou and others, which has yielded a rich harvest of comfort and joy.

Respectfully yours,

WM. C. BUCKINGHAM.

Peconic, L. I., Aug. 21st, 1876.

JOHN DUNLAP.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

In your issue of Aug. 19th we notice a communication from John Dunlap, which we feel constrained to acknowledge. Our son of that name passed to the higher life in May last, and while there is no convincing test, the names of persons and places given are correct, and the general tone and expression are such that we readily accept it as coming from the source it claims. He says we are seeking no tests to convince us of spirit-return, which is true. And now that he has learned the method, we hope to hear from him often, and in a way that will be more convincing to those of his relatives and friends that are not so thoroughly convinced. With kind regards and hearty wishes for your future success, we remain your ever interested and instructed readers.

A. DUNLAP.

Cleveland, O., Sept. 6th, 1876.

HENRY HAVEN.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

I noticed in your issue, on the sixth page, a message from Henry Haven, of New London, Conn., in which he says that he died on Sunday morning, that he was 61 years old, and that he was buried from the Congregational church.

I immediately wrote to my son-in-law in New London, who was a member of Mr. Haven's Bible class, asking him the following questions, without giving my reasons for doing so: 1st. On what day of the week did Mr. Haven die? 2d. At what time in the day? 3d. How old was he? 4th. Was he buried from the Congregational church? This morning I received the following reply:

NEW LONDON, Aug. 23d, 1876.
Dear Sir—Yours of the 22d is at hand. Mr. Henry P. Haven died on Sunday morning, April 30th, at 9 o'clock, aged 61 years. He was buried from the Congregational church on Thursday following at 2 o'clock P. M.

Wm. H. B.

You are at liberty to publish the above, with my name and residence in full.

EDWIN LEACH.

328 Delancey St., New York, Aug. 24th, 1876.

ALICE A. F. WEAVER.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

Not wishing to take up too much space in your valuable columns, nevertheless I must acknowledge a communication from my wife, Alice A. F. Weaver, which was given through the mediumship of Mrs. Danskin, and appeared in the Banner of Light of last week; it is an excellent test, as my wife was not known by any person in Baltimore where the communication was given.

Yours for the truth,

A. A. WEAVER.

River avenue, below Market street,

Harrisburg, Pa., Sept. 17th, 1876.

MERITON YALE.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

I am happy to inform you that the letter in the column of communications in last Banner, Sept.

9th, from Mr. Meriton Yale, is identified here by me. My daughter attended his funeral services soon after we came here, which was June 16th; the funeral took place a few days after. It was in the Presbyterian church—Dr. Berry, pastor. His family reside here. He had built eight houses here together. I have often wished I could verify one of the letters and names. I assure you this message is a comforting word to me. I have enclosed it in a note to send to his wife. I don't know how she will receive it, for it sends a bomb-shell into the heart of orthodoxy. I felt Mr. Yale desired me to send it to her. I remain with respect,

H. E. BEACH.

Montclair, N. J., Sept. 11th, 1876.

ALBERT EASTMAN DALTON.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

In the Banner there appears a communication from the spirit of Albert Eastman Dalton, son of Sarah Dalton, Harlem, N. Y. The paper containing it was taken to the mother, who read the message and remarked that it was correct in all its particulars. She desired that the publishers of the Banner be informed of the fact. There were many personal tests in the communication that could not have been known by the medium. The communication was published in the number for September 16th, and was given through Mrs. Danskin's mediumship.

Philadelphia, Pa.

A. S. HAYWARD.

In addition to the above we have received a letter from a lady (who for personal reasons desires that her name be not made public) recognizing the verity of the message of John Rae, printed in our issue for May 6th. She says:

"In the first part of May I seemed to hear a voice say that I must subscribe for the Banner of Light, which I had not previously done, so I sent to you for the Banner on the 4th of May, and the first number I received, dated 6th of May, had in it, to my surprise, a message from John Rae, spirit, and one advertised to come from John Rae. I wrote to a prominent person (Spiritualist) in Morrisania Inquiring, and his letter stated 'There is no place by the name of Morrisania. There was a person who died at Morrisania, on Mary Street, by the name of John Rae, who was born in Dumfriesshire, Scotland, at the age of 82 years, who had resided here at Morrisania for about thirty-five years. He was a self-willed person, and on looking at the message in the Banner of May 6th, referred to by you in your letter, I should think it quite likely he had something to do with the message.'

The lady assures us that she herself has the best of reasons for recognizing this communication as coming from the person claimed.

Mrs. Whitehead, of San Francisco, also recognizes the message in the Banner of Light for August 5, 1876, given through the mediumship of Mrs. Danskin by "Julia, the suicide." She pronounces it correct in every particular. The parties were all Jews, and well known in that city.

A. A. Thurber, 1086 Second avenue, New York, writes that he holds as correct, the messages from Mrs. Horace Meech, in the Banner for Sept. 30th, and that of Mr. Treadwell, in our issue for June 3d.

Mrs. H. F. M. Brown, writes from National City, Cal., as follows, in the course of a business letter under a recent date: "Frederick Underhill, San Diego, Cal., has reported himself through Mrs. Danskin. A man of that name died in this county last spring."

The Winsted (Ct.) Press of a recent date copies in full the message of Arilla Rockwell, as it was given, and while it says: "In publishing the above we do not wish to be considered as endorsing the claims of the Banner nor Mrs. Danskin," it yet admits that such a lady, wife of Reuben Rockwell, of Colebrook, Ct., did pass on, and that "the character expressed in the message is that of refinement and purity of life which is proper in this connection." The editor further remarks:

"There may be something more convincing to her friends and relatives than to those who are not conversant with all the circumstances where she says: 'I am not playing false to you. I am truthfully and honestly opening the door by which you may enter into peace and understanding.' If the message does contain convincing evidence of its genuineness and apparent on its face, we hope the friends acquainted with the conditions addressed will see it their duty to let the fact be known through the Banner, which is always glad to print such corroborations, or in some other public way. A matter of such import is not strictly a private affair, but one which the public at large has a right to take some interest in."

We received an order from Sampson George, Kier P. O., Buchanan Co., Iowa, some time since, wherein he called for three numbers of the Banner of Light for March 11th, and used the following language: "In it is a communication from my sister, Mrs. Margaret George Mouthrop, which I shall prize very much."

What Do They Mean?

A correspondent asks: "What is meant precisely by the phrases *a priori* and *a posteriori*, so often used in philosophical discussions?" The two terms signify literally "from a thing before," and "from a thing after." These are rather terms of common conversation and writing, than of logic, properly so called, so that they are seldom used by strict logicians. As an illustration of the common meaning of the terms, we may remark that we reason *a priori* when we infer the existence of a God from the general difficulties in the supposition of the existence of what we call creation, on any other hypothesis; but we reason *a posteriori* when we infer the same from marks of intelligent contrivance in this particular creation with which we are acquainted.

The term *a priori* is frequently used in a sense which implies "previous to any special examination" or "on grounds purely conjectural." When a sentence begins with, "*a priori* we should think," &c., &c., in most cases this will be found to mean nothing more than an expression of the leaning which the speaker found his mind inclined to, when he had only heard the proposition, and before he had investigated it. When Mr. Herbert Spencer says that he rejects Spiritualism on *a priori* grounds, he simply means that convictions in his mind, independent of all experience and acquaintance with the facts in question, forbid his entertaining a belief in the possibility of spirit-action, manifestation, &c.

A correspondent, and patron as well, in writing recently from New Jersey renewing subscription, says: "The Banner of Light is one of the blessings we enjoy beyond the power of words to express. The recent numbers have been full of interest."

Andrew Jackson Davis has a paragraph on our fifth page, (signed "Seer") which will be interesting to those who have read his pamphlet on "The Dakota."

William Foster,

Banner of Light.

BOSTON, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1876.

How Street and Spiritualism: Dr. Slade before Police Justice Flowers: Substance of the Preliminary Examination, held Oct. 2d.

From recent English files—The Times, (London.) The Daily Telegraph, etc.—we condense the following sketch where in the main facts transpiring in the preliminary examination of Dr. Slade and Mr. Simmons before Mr. Flowers are set forth. As our readers are aware, the case was again taken up and proceeded with on the 10th inst., and was then further continued till the 20th—accounts concerning which sessions of court we hope to lay before our patrons in due season.

Monday afternoon, Oct. 2d, at the Bow-Street Police Court, before Mr. Flowers, Henry Slade, 8 Upper Bedford-place, was summoned, on the information of Mr. E. Ray Lankester, "for that he did, on Sept. 11th, unlawfully use certain substances and devices to deceive and impose on certain of her Majesty's subjects, to wit, E. Ray Lankester, T. J. Oldman, Henry Sidgwick, R. H. Hutton, Edmund Gurney and W. B. Carpenter." Another summons charged Henry Slade and Mr. Simmons "for that they, on or about Sept. 11th, did unlawfully conspire and combine together, by divers false pretences and subtle means and devices, to obtain and acquire to themselves, and of and from E. Ray Lankester, T. J. Oldman, Henry Sidgwick, R. H. Hutton, Edmund Gurney, W. B. Carpenter, and others, divers sums of money, and to cheat and defraud the before-mentioned persons."

The court was densely crowded. Amongst those present were Miss Florence Maryatt (Mrs. Ross Church), Mr. Harrison, of the Spiritualists, Mr. Morton (the manager of Maskelyne and Cooke), Miss Treherne, Mr. Carter Blake, Mr. A. Calder (Chairman of the Council of Spiritualists), Dr. Wyle, Mrs. Weldon (Miss Treherne), Mr. Alfred K. Wallace and Mr. Leighton.

Mr. Geo. Lewis prosecuted, and Mr. Munton (of the firm of Munton & Morris) appeared for the defence.

Mr. Lewis, in opening the case, referred to the line of business pursued by Dr. Slade and Mr. Simmons—the first of whom "called himself a medium for spiritual agency, and carried on business at Upper Bedford-place, Russell-square."

"The other defendant," he held, "was either a partner with Mr. Slade, or filled a very confidential position in relation to the business." The charge against the two was that they had "conspired together to pretend that they communicated with the spirits of departed persons for the purpose of cheating and defrauding those who were foolish enough to go to them to communicate with deceased relations or friends."

He further proceeded: "The charge against Mr. Slade was that he invited persons to go to his house in Upper Bedford-place, and that he charged one sovereign to each person who consulted him for the purpose of communicating with the spirits of departed relatives who had died recently or even years ago. He affected that, having lost his wife twelve years ago, her spirit was constantly hovering about him, and that her spirit was able to search for and discover the spirits of other world, and that when she had discovered them, they presented themselves to Mr. Slade in the house in Upper Bedford-place; and the defendants went through a variety of forms which he should call conjuring with a view to deceive people and induce them to pay money. One summons had been taken out under the Vagrant Act, and another for conspiracy to defraud, and if there were evidence to sustain the charge of conspiracy, he trusted the case would be sent before a jury, though, of course, the magistrate could deal with the summons under the Vagrant Act. In support of the charge of conspiracy, he proposed to show that various persons had gone to the house and were introduced to Mr. Simmons. The prosecution charged that Simmons, being seated in an outer apartment, saw the persons who came, with the view of picking up any information he could. Many of the visitors dropped hints which were duly communicated to Slade, and enabled him to carry on the fraud he practiced. It would be easily understood that a man like Simmons, of fifteen years' experience, was able to pick up information and communicate it to Slade. Simmons carried on all communications out of the room. If any body worked for him, Simmons would make it so; and if the case for the prosecution was correct that Slade himself wrote the spirit-messages, it was important that his handwriting should be unknown to those who went to see him. If he wrote letters himself, his handwriting might, perhaps, be recognized in the spirit-messages on the slate; therefore, it was absolutely necessary there should be a second person acting in concert with him, to write letters, and so keep the handwriting of Mr. Slade concealed. The suggestion on the part of the prosecution was that the part which Simmons took, though apparently he was an innocent agent, was really necessary, and that he was a guilty participator in the conspiracy.

"After visitors had spent a little time with Mr. Simmons they were asked into the adjoining room, where Mr. Slade was, where no more than two visitors were allowed at a time, probably for a reason that would be easily perceived. It was easier for him to engage the attention of two persons and prevent them watching him very closely than it would be for him to engage the attention of five or six, and prevent some of them watching him effectually. Slade and Simmons kept the visitors well engaged in conversation, after the fashion of conjurers generally. Part of a conjurer's business is to keep up a conversation, so as to distract attention at the moment of performing the trick, and this was done by Mr. Slade. He also pretended to be very much affected when under the influence of the spirits; he shuddered or shivered, and put himself in various attitudes and seemed to be in great distress, and in the midst of this visitors received kicks under the table. There was nothing done that was not within the reach of his legs or his arms that he could not do with either foot or hand, nothing that a good conjurer could not do cleverly. Mr. Slade would call off a visitor's attention by pretending there was a light on the visitor's arm or in some part of the room when there was no light to be seen, and these distractions enabled him to perform the great trick of all—that of appearing to communicate with the spirits. He should prove to demonstration that the communications were produced by Mr. Slade himself in a very clumsy and very stupid way. The communications were made, not only by kicks, but by raps on the table, and also by writing on a slate, and the great question was how he produced the messages on the slate. He held the slate under the table and produced messages, at first very short, and afterwards longer, sometimes almost illegible and at others more legible, and he pretended that these messages were produced by spiritual agency. Having got a pretended message, he generally said to his visitors, 'We have now got the spirits here. We will try and get a longer message from them.' He then took the slate to a sideboard, and rubbed it clean with a sponge. He then showed it to his visitors clean, put it down for a short time before them, and when in the course of a few minutes he took it up again, on the under side there appeared a lengthy written message. To show how this was done, Mr. Lewis produced a slate on which he had written 'I wonder whether the spirits will appear in court before the magistrates to-day.' (Laughter.) He rubbed out the writing with a sponge moistened with spirits of wine, and he exhibited a blank surface, remarking that the writing would reappear as the slate dried, which it subsequently did on examination." In this way, a

message being written beforehand, Slade took the slate and rubbed both sides, remarking to the visitors, 'You see both sides are clean, though the message was already written and ready to appear the moment the slate was sufficiently dry.' The drying occurred while the slate held in his hands on the slate, and the warmth of their hands of course assisted the drying. That was the way in which this very simple conjurer's trick was performed by the defendant. If he did this himself everybody would suppose he was a clumsy conjurer; but what he did affect was that the message was written by spirits, and this was the offence of which the defendants were guilty. They said that what they did was done by spiritual agency, whereas it was done by a prepared slate. To make it clear that it was a fraud, and a fraud of the worst kind, he would call before the magistrate Mr. Maskelyne, of Messrs. Maskelyne and Cooke, who would do all that the defendants did in their spiritual tricks. He would write on the slate as Mr. Slade had done, and show that it was a mere conjurer's trick, and by the remark from the Bench that the ability of others to do this did not show that the spirits did not do it, he said that if it could be done by others, by ordinary men, it was *prima facie* evidence that there was an attempt to deceive, and he thought that if he showed that these things were not done by spiritual agencies the magistrates would have no hesitation in committing the defendants for trial. The case, however, would not rest upon what he had already said. Professor Lankester, having learnt that Mr. Slade was able to communicate with the spirits, called upon him. The magistrate would hear his evidence, and he would state that after the preliminary touches—the kicks and raps—he actually saw the defendant Slade write the messages, and write them in a very clumsy way. Professor Lankester went a second time in company with Mr. Donkin, on that occasion the defendant produced on the slate the written words, 'Samuel Lankester.' Well, there was no one of that name, and it was suggested to Slade that it was 'Edwin Lankester.' The defendant accepted the suggestion, said perhaps it was meant for 'Edwin,' tried again, and produced the name 'Edwin Lankester,' the pretence being that the spirit of Professor Lankester's dead father had written the words. But in that case Professor Lankester actually saw him write the words. Well, having got that message he said, 'the spirit is now present; we will try to get a longer message.' He accordingly fetched another slate from a side-table, and was about to lay it down on the table, when Professor Lankester snatched it from him, and there was the message already written. (Laughter.) The two gentlemen showed it to Slade, who put very plain but not very cleverly, upon which Mr. Donkin said to him, 'Why, you are a liar.' (Laughter.) Upon that Professor Lankester and Mr. Donkin went out into the ante-room, where there were some half-dozen ladies waiting to have sances with Slade. They told them what had occurred, and then threatened Simmons that they would write to the papers and expose the fraud. Simmons said, 'If you do, we have had two hundred people here, and they will come back again to see whether your representations are true.' However, after some little hesitation and consideration he (Mr. Simmons) advised them not to write to the papers. Simmons said the thing had occurred before, and that they had found it pay, but after a little reflection he advised Dr. Lankester not to write to the newspapers. The ladies, however, had taken that course, and he had applied to that Court. It would be for the magistrate to determine whether the defence could satisfy him that Slade had some supernatural power or agency by which he could communicate with departed spirits, or whether his performance was not a mere piece of vulgar conjuring, not half so good as could be seen anywhere for half a crown. If that case, so, and he proved, it would be for the magistrate to make the defendants find substantial bail for any reappearance there, and finally to commit them to take their trial for an offence of which it would be difficult to overrate. In reply to a question from the Bench as to how the complainants were defrauded if they did not believe the pretence of communications with spirits, he said that the actual commission of crime was unnecessary to support a charge of conspiracy. It was enough to conspire, whether to defraud or commit a murder, to constitute an offence; and if the conspiracy succeeded, a still more serious offence was committed. The offence was in conspiring together to do an unlawful act, the unlawful act in this case being the obtaining of money by pretending that the defendants could communicate with spirits. The defendants issued an advertisement in which they said that they could do it. There was conspiracy at common law, even although the offence was not committed. Conspiring to confer with the spirits of the departed was not an unlawful act, but obtaining money by the false pretence, was. Even if persons did not believe that the writing was produced by spiritual agency, still, if the defendants conspired together to obtain money by the pretence, that would be an offence at common law; and if the evidence established that charge the should ask for the commitment of the defendants."

Prof. Edwin Ray Lankester was then examined. He spoke of what occurred at his two sittings with Dr. Slade, and endeavored to carry the idea that all which was then accomplished was performed by Dr. Slade's feet—as to touches—or hands as to writing. At one point in a sance he distinctly saw the tendons of Dr. Slade's wrist move as if in writing, and at another, while Dr. S. was ostensibly biting a pencil to make the piece smaller, he (L.) saw the Doctor's hand move across the table after the usual manner of writing. His testimony concerning both the sances which he attended may be summed up in the following paragraph from the *verbatim* report of his statements:

"Nothing occurred in my presence which, having regard to the place where the defendant Slade sat, and to his moving his seat and his position, was out of the reach of his legs and arms to perform; nothing occurred in my presence which he could not have performed. The movement of the tendons of the wrist I observed on the occasion of the first sance, and the second saw the upper part of his arm moving, and I could hear the sound of writing."

[We desire to call the attention of the reader, however, to the following, which he deposed to concerning the culminating moment of the great "expose" sance:

"He (Dr. Slade) got the slate under the table again after the usual preliminary, and said the spirits were a long time coming to me. He said, 'The spirits wrote to you (Prof. L.) on the last occasion.' I said, 'Yes,' and he said, 'If you will hold the slate perhaps they will write more distinctly.' I held out my hand, and dragged the slate from him directly he put it in position under the corner of the table. I drew it from him before it had been in position the fraction of a second, and I got up from the table holding the slate up, and said, 'You have already written upon it. Have watched you doing it each time.'"

Here it seems that all we claimed in the course of a recent article regarding this whole matter is granted by the principal "exposer" while under oath; he admits that the slate had been put in position under the table, and is of opinion that it remained there not even the fraction of a second. But how is he to decide how long it remained, and who is disposed to allow that he, the prejudiced witness—who admits under oath that he deceived Dr. Slade so much concerning the matter of his spirit friends, that Justice Flowers was persons at the other end of the little court, and Mr. Lewis remarked that if they were longer, the warmth of hands was applied to the slate, it would be counterfeited. Everybody was laughing at the experiment. From the slight demerits of the first sance, it was clear that which were at once suppressed, it would appear that the court was about half full of persons who knew something about the matter, and who were ignorant thereof.—The *Spiritualist*, London, Oct. 2d.

feign to remark that it seemed to be a clear "case of diamond cut diamond"—had the power of truthfully deciding so important a point? There is every reason for the most positive assurance that the slate was longer beneath the table than the excited professor, primed with the "awful" disclosure he was about to make, was aware of, and that the message was written *bona fide* and in due course like all those which come under similar circumstances in presence of Dr. Slade. We are, in the light of the experience of many English investigators, in regard to independent spirit-writing, ready even to declare that the message found could have been produced on that slate with lightning-like rapidity, and in a period of time so brief as to be absolutely imperceptible to human senses.]

Prof. Lankester was cross-examined by Mr. Munton with the subjoined result:

"I never saw the slate produced by Mr. Lewis before. The slate used was like that produced (an ordinary one, in a wooden frame). On the 11th some conversation passed beyond ordinary salutation, but I cannot recollect what it was. The table was moved each time the tap was heard. It was such a tap as might have been caused by the side of a boot. I do not know whether the tap caused the shock. I was not interested in that. I went for the purpose of inquiring into the writing on the slate. I did not go there prejudiced against Dr. Slade. I did not come to the conclusion before I went there on the first occasion that nothing could occur except by fraud or imposture. I had no opinion upon the slate-writing at all. I knew that the matter had been very much discussed elsewhere. I am a member of the British Association. I remember Professor Barrett's paper. I was not present when that was read. I had not read the paper when I first went to Slade's house. I had not read the report of the meeting of the British Association when this was dealt with—in fact I knew that it was a snuff box. You are making a great mistake. The meeting of the British Association was after my first interview with Slade. (Laughter.) The paper was read between the 11th and 15th of September. I did not go to the first sance on the 11th of September with my mind made up that nothing could occur except by imposture. With regard to matters of this kind I never make up my mind until I have witnessed them. I know nothing of possibilities. It is exceedingly probable that I had made up my mind that a great deal of what I have experienced of so-called 'psychic force' was imposture or delusion. I do not know I ever said that what was stated by such men as Professors Crookes, Barrett and others to have occurred, had not occurred. I have probably expressed the opinion that what have been of this phenomenon was imposture because that was the evidence ascertained for myself. I expressed my disappointment that Barrett's paper had been received at the British Association, but I was not actuated by that feeling in pursuing this inquiry. I may have been mistaken in my statement in The Times as to the mode of the production of the first message being by one finger. It was the influence of observation of other people that I think I may not have been fully collected. The first message that came may have been so produced by a single finger, though I still believe it may have been so produced. The writing may have been produced by a single finger; but I cannot say. I think it was. If a slate were held under the table with the thumb on the top of the table, I should think that two fingers would be sufficient to sustain the slate. And in such a position I think I could succeed in writing with the remaining two fingers. I think it would be possible, with practice, to write the words I found on the slate on the first occasion. I should say that they occupied a space of about two and one-half inches by one and one-half inches. It is still my opinion that those words might have been written with one finger. I am not quite certain that any words appeared on the under surface of the slate. I could succeed in writing with the remaining two fingers. I think it would be possible, with practice, to write the words I found on the slate on the first occasion. I should say that they occupied a space of about two and one-half inches by one and one-half inches. It is still my opinion that those words might have been written with one finger. I am not quite certain that any words appeared on the under surface of the slate. I could succeed in writing with the remaining two fingers. I think it would be possible, with practice, to write the words I found on the slate on the first occasion. I should say that they occupied a space of about two and one-half inches by one and one-half inches. 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