

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"WHATEVER DOTH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT."—Paul.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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[The Editor of "LIGHT" desires it to be distinctly understood that he can accept no responsibility as to the opinions expressed by Contributors and Correspondents. Free and courteous discussion is invited, but writers are alone responsible for the articles to which their names are attached.]

THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC MEDIUMSHIP.

(From the Banner of Light.)

The observations of Mr. E. A. Brackett, (author of that most valuable little book, "Materialized Apparitions"), in a recent number of the *Banner*, under the heading of "Séance-Room perplexities," are worthy of most serious attention, not only by all "materializing mediums," so termed, but by Spiritualists at large, and all who desire to have channels of communication with the invisible world kept open and pure, and accessible to the public. The kindly tone of these observations, as well as the large experience of their author in the phases of phenomena of which he treats, commends them to careful consideration.

The serious warning expressed in Mr. Brackett's closing sentences, against "trailing the séance in the dust," and "trifling with the unseen powers which are manifested there," induces me to offer some suggestions that I have long had in mind regarding the wise use of mediumship of all phases, especially that of materialization, and regarding its future in the world.

Dangers of Misuse.

It must have become obvious to all intelligent and experienced investigators of Spiritualism, that the practice of mediumship, in most if not all its forms, and particularly that of materialization, is attended by liabilities and dangers which need to be understood and guarded against. The same is true, indeed, of every form of human activity or employment. All occupations or subjects of thought are liable to be pursued to excess, or by unwise methods, which lead to injurious consequences—to physical or mental suffering, to disaster and ruin. But any new line of activity, where lessons of experience accumulated by previous generations are wanting, as is the case with modern mediumship, is specially exposed to such liabilities. It behoves us, then, to begin to gather up the lessons which the mediumistic experience of the last thirty or forty years has taught, and to apply them to the better regulation and guidance of this (in modern times) new department of service.

And it must be equally obvious that something is greatly amiss in the common and especially the public practice of this function, which urgently needs to be rectified, to save it from falling into disrepute, aversion, and possibly desuetude or legal prohibition. The increasing frequency of cases of physical and mental prostration, of insanity or obsession, and of apparent moral aberration, on the part of prominent public mediums of various classes, cannot but awaken the serious attention of the thoughtful. The story of the wreck, mental and physical, of the wonderful medium, Forster, is fresh in every mind. That of Reed and Colchester will also be remembered by many. Home experienced long periods of illness and disability previous to his recent decease. Monck, at one time a medium for very remarkable phenomena, suffered from internal hemorrhage in consequence, and was obliged to relinquish the practice. Slade has been repeatedly subject to paralysis, and is said to have partially lost his powers of late. The Eddy Brothers are reported to be

physically disabled and incapacitated for the exercise of mediumship. Others, more or less widely known, might be named, who are in a similar condition, and most public mediums are subject to seasons of severe bodily and nervous prostration, while some have become the undoubted victims of "obsession," or undesirable spirit-control in various forms; though these wrecks among mediums are probably not more numerous in proportion than among business men, clergymen and other professionals who live at high mental pressure, yet they ought not to occur at all. Besides these deplorable cases, we have every now and then the seizure and alleged "exposure" of a professed medium for materialization, resulting at least in a severe shock to the nervous system and usually in a season of physical prostration, with—in the public mind—serious damage if not total ruin to reputation for honesty and to "business prospects," as well as immeasurable obloquy cast upon the good name of Spiritualism.

The Commercial Aspect.

More than all this is the unpleasant commercial aspect given to the matter of spirit-communion and manifestation through public mediums, by the *fee* rendered necessary, under existing methods, at the door of the séance-room; and still worse is the temptation thereby offered—perhaps through pressing pecuniary need in some cases, and through avarice in others—to unhealthful over-exercise of the psychic powers where they really exist, and to their simulation where they are wanting or have become depleted by exhaustion. Successful mediums are doubtless strongly tempted, both by the urgent demand and by the dollars in prospect, to hold séances too frequently, and to admit too many sitters at a time, so that probably no organism can generate sufficient "power" to produce genuine phenomena to the extent required; hence a strong inducement exists to supplement the real by counterfeits, fabricated possibly in some cases by complaisant but unwise, or in other cases by hostile or unscrupulous, invisibles, while the medium is in an unconscious or irresponsible condition.

Is there not a Better Way?

I have no sympathy, Mr. Editor, as you know, with that snap-judgment so often exhibited by Spiritualists as well as by outsiders, which is ready to cry "fraud!" and to denounce a medium as an "impostor," when phenomena are presented that are apparently deceptive or not according to preconceived ideas, or when perplexing appearances occur in the séance-room. So little is really known of the methods by which the apparitions there seen are produced, or where mortal agency ends and spirit agency begins in their production, that it is well to be cautious and charitable, and to give the medium, who has ever exhibited any real mediumship, the benefit of the doubt, where a doubt is admissible. And I have had my share of obloquy and denunciation for this charitableness, or rather justice, to accuse mediums. Nor have I any disposition to join in wholesale objurgations against "commercial Spiritualism," until some better way shall have been provided by the co-operation of Spiritualists for meeting the public demand for evidences and channels of communication. But in view of the undeniable facts to which allusion has been made, it is surely time to inquire whether the dangers and disasters, and the obnoxious methods pointed out, are inseparable from the public practice of mediumship, or whether there is not a wiser way in which its blessings may be available without such drawbacks. If not, it is a serious question whether the general public had not better be left to get along without its benefits than that they should be offered at such a cost.

Mediumship Healthful.

Opponents of Spiritualism generally insist that all mediumship is dangerous, tending to, if not the product of, physical, mental, or moral disease. But my own opinion, founded on large observation and experience, is that every legitimate or desirable form of mediumship may be practised not only without detriment to health, whether mental or physical, but generally to its benefit

—that for the best exercise of mediumship good bodily health is always requisite, and should be attained if possible—and that disease of any kind, or mental or moral deterioration resulting from its practice, is conclusive evidence of either excess, neglect of hygienic laws, or impure associations of some nature.

That every phase of mediumship, like every other form of activity, requires more or less expenditure of the nervous and vital forces must be evident to any one. A proper degree of such expenditure in suitable exercise is always healthful, as are all the processes of life; but excess is exhaustive, and, if long continued, is ruinous to health, in mediumship, as in any other line of action. Some constitutions generate more than others of these forces, and hence can healthfully endure greater expenditure; and in mediumship fresh supplies are often undoubtedly ministered from spiritual sources, which not only give an access of vigour, but frequently enable the medium to stand excessive and long-continued drains. Physical mediumship is more exhausting than mental, and materialization most of all. But there is a limit somewhere to the power of the physical organism to supply the part contributed by it, and when that limit is passed the effects of depletion are sooner or later painfully manifest.

Sources of Disease.

The temptations to excess, in all forms of mediumship, as already intimated, are many and strong, and ignorance of the consequences has been very prevalent. Besides, the circumstances under which some forms of mediumship, particularly that for materialization, are frequently exercised, are of themselves destructive of health. A close room, often crowded by visitors—the medium in a cabinet with little or no provision for ventilation—the session often prolonged until the atmosphere is thick with exhalations—no wonder that exhaustion, with liability to sudden and severe attacks of disease or paralysis, often result.

Such séances are dangerous for visitors as well as for mediums, and many persons cannot attend them without serious consequences to their own health. (The same, it may be remarked, is, or formerly was, in a large degree, true of the United States Senate Chamber at Washington—hence the frequent breaking down of the health of prominent members of that body. The evil is by no means peculiar to séance-rooms.)

More than this, many mediums—perhaps most of them—when sensible of nervous exhaustion from the exercise of their powers, unwisely seek relief from the unpleasant sensation, or strength for a new exertion, not by rest and natural recuperation as they should, but by resort to some narcotic, such as tea, coffee, alcohol in some form, or opium in some of its insidious preparations. The result is a *deceptive* temporary sense of rest or restoration, but in reality a greater depletion of vital force, which anon calls more loudly for renewed stimulus, until the unfortunate victim becomes wholly or largely dependent on such aids for the power to act, and is liable at any time to break down in nervous prostration, paralysis, mental derangement, or some acute bodily disorder, while some have fallen a prey to obsession, and others succumbed to *spirits of the bottle*.

"Spirits should Protect."

It will doubtless be said by opponents, that if spirits are good and wise, as is claimed for them, they should and would protect their mediums from such mistakes and excesses. It may be replied that *all* spirits are not claimed by intelligent Spiritualists to be good and wise. Some evidently are evil-disposed, or at best indifferent to the welfare of the instruments they use to accomplish their purposes, whatever these may be; or perhaps are ignorant how to promote this welfare; and all mediumistic persons need to learn how, *by earnest love of and aspiration for truth and good*, to raise themselves above the influence or control of this debased class, whose association like that of mortals of a similar class, is always dangerous and to be avoided. But all spirits who are *good*, or well-disposed, are not *wise* regarding the laws of physical health, any more than are all mortals of the same disposition. In their eagerness to convince or to commune with their mortal friends, they often rush in whenever an opportunity is available, apparently without stopping to consider whether the medium can safely bear the strain of their exertions.

Again, it doubtless often occurs that mediums, in their benevolent willingness to gratify eager and bereaved inquirers, or to advanced a cherished truth, or perhaps in the urgency of their own pecuniary need or greed, *will not heed* the kindly admonitions

given by their spirit-guardians on this subject, and thus incur the disastrous consequences.

A Case in Point.

A lady who had been for some time an inmate of the Asylum for the Insane at Somerville, Mass., but had been discharged, once gave the writer the following statement of her own case. She was a widow, a person of refinement and culture, with ample means, and had moved in the best social circles in Boston and vicinity. In the early days of Spiritualism she became a writing medium. Overjoyed and full of enthusiasm regarding this new-found power of communicating with the departed, she opened her house, and invited all to come and partake through her instrumentality, "without money and without price." She sat often from morning till midnight, imparting proofs, consolation and light to all who came. At length her health began to suffer under the continued strain; and her spirit-friends repeatedly urged her to desist—to be more moderate in the exercise of this new power, else disastrous consequences would ensue. But she refused to listen to them—the thing was too good, the new revelation too glorious, to be withheld from any who would come and receive it.

She had a brother who was a prominent physician, and who resided in the next house. Like his profession in general, he was utterly sceptical regarding spiritual things; he watched her career with much anxiety, believing her to be under a dangerous delusion, and frequently hinted that her destiny would be the mad-house if she continued her course. One morning her spirit-friends asked her to go down into the cellar. She asked, "What for?" They said, "We will show you when you get there." She reluctantly consented, and at the bottom of the stairs her eye fell upon a wash-tub. "Place that tub on its bottom," was the next order. "Why?" she inquired. "You shall see," was the answer. "Now step into it!" was directed. She rebelled against so absurd a requirement, but was urged to comply, for reasons which would soon be made clear; and she yielded. "Now sit down!" was next ordered. This was too ridiculous! She refused, until repeatedly assured that she should quickly see the use of it. She had no sooner assumed the required position, than her brother—who had come in familiarly, as was his wont, to look after her welfare, and, not finding her above-stairs as usual, but seeing the cellar-door open, had stepped down the stairs—caught her in this ludicrous situation!

He looked at her a moment, uttered some exclamation, turned and left the house. She was immediately released, but felt that a crisis had come; so she was not surprised when, a few minutes later, he drove up to the door in his carriage and invited her to take a ride with him. Suspecting his intention, but feeling it was useless to resist, she consented, and in due time was set down at the door of the McLean Asylum in Somerville. Here she was entered by her brother as an insane patient.

When at length quiet in her allotted room, she reproached her spirit-friends with having brought this calamity upon her. They replied, "We did it purposely, for your salvation. You refused to listen to our warnings and advice, and we have had you brought here to save you from the physical and mental wreck to which you were persistently rushing."

She saw the point, and cheerfully accepted the situation. Fortunately, at that time, the McLean Asylum was under the superintendency of our old friend, Dr. Luther V. Bell, who was an interested investigator and at least partial believer in Spiritualism, and was familiar with mediumship in some of its phases. He quickly understood her case, found her to be not in the least insane, but only a medium, and held many interesting séances with her. After some weeks or months of needed rest and quiet, she was allowed to return to her own home, a less enthusiastic but much wiser woman. No doubt many of our unfortunate mediums would have been saved from disaster had they heeded the monitions given them by their spirit-friends, or had these been able to arrange for them conditions of retirement as favourable as those secured in the case of this lady.

What Can be Done?

Now, what can be done to avoid the evils and disasters to which the exercise of mediumship is exposed, and to elevate it to its best and worthiest uses? The limits of this article necessarily preclude the mention of more than a few of the most pressing needs.

And, first, mediums, and all who would become such, need not

only "development," as it is called, from the spirit-side, to bring into activity the occult or psychic powers, which constitute mediumship, but they also need *instruction* from the human or earth-side as to the wise and healthful use of those powers, to be derived from the experience of those who have travelled the same path before them, and from knowledge of the laws of hygiene. These two sides of education should go together; neither is sufficient without the other. Until recently the lessons of experience in this matter have been to but small extent available, and the pioneers in this line have had to work their own way as they could, learning often through severe sufferings what may now be learned by teachable minds in less painful ways.

A School of Mediumship.

In short, a *School of Mediumship*, or something which shall answer its purpose, is needed, as really as are schools for other avocations. The time must come when a department of *Psychical Culture*, under competent instructors, will be added to our educational institutions; and all persons who would exercise their gifts in this direction with credit and safety should avail themselves of its advantages. One lesson to be taught in such a school is, that none should court mediumship, or be encouraged to exercise it, except those in whom the love of truth and good, and the desire of usefulness to their fellow-beings is predominant. Otherwise it may be expected that it will be prostituted to base and selfish ends, and its subjects will attract about them frivolous, deceptive, and misleading influences, resulting in evil, disaster, and ruin. Mediums should earnestly seek to learn and practise the laws of physical, as well as mental, moral, and spiritual health, which are the laws of rectitude or rightness in all departments. In fact, the culture of the *moral virtues* and the *spiritual graces*—such as truthfulness, justice, faithfulness, charity or universal good-will, amiability, patience, teachableness, reverence, self-control and the rest—should in all cases precede or attend the development of the psychic powers, to insure their exercise for worthy ends. Only so can persons become trustworthy and safe mediums for the transmission of truth and wisdom from the higher life.

Spirit-Tuition Insufficient.

It may be said by some that all education or instruction of mediums may be safely left to *spirits*, who are best competent to attend to such matters. It is sufficient in reply to point to the existing state of things already mentioned. The tuition of spirits plainly has not availed to avert great mistakes and fearful disasters, either from their ignorance or inexperience (spirits should not be expected to know everything on these matters, at least until experience has been gained), or from their inability to restrain headstrong mediums and guide them in wiser ways. It is desirable, then, to supplement their teachings and silent influence by bringing to bear as forcibly as possible the lessons of human experience, in the hope that both together may be effective in inducing the desired result. And one of these lessons is the peril of over-exercise of the psychic powers; another is the disaster which sooner or later follows their perversion to any base or unworthy end.

Instruction needed by Investigators.

Again, all Spiritualists, as well as investigators generally, who seek the exercise of mediumship by others, need to be instructed in regard to its laws, and to carefully conform to them, so as not to inflict harm upon mediums. They should never urge the latter to hold sésances when fatigued or exhausted, or to prolong them beyond reasonable hours. They should never insist on tests or communications when the medium is disinclined or weary. They should never intrude inharmonious or antagonistic influences upon a medium, nor indulge in detractive gossip concerning other mediums, nor venture into the presence of one when under the impulse of any selfish or impure desire or sinister purpose, or when their bodies or their garments are saturated with narcotic or alcoholic poisons. In fact, they should learn that, for the best results, when communications of spiritual truth are sought, it is desirable to lay aside the clothing ordinarily worn, take a bath, and dress in garments as little contaminated with gross emanations as possible, for all such emanations affect a sensitive medium and more or less modify the ideas and words which shall be spoken. Some of the ancient sibyls of Greece—the mediums of their time, many of whose utterances have lived through the centuries—are said to have required of those who approached them for messages from the unseen world, that they

should not only change their apparel, and bathe, but fast for twenty-four hours, as a preparation for the interview. Such requirements were doubtless founded on good reasons learned from experience, and when we moderns learn to be equally careful of conditions we shall no doubt obtain correspondingly valuable results.

Another thing needs to be learnt by Spiritualists, and that is never to induce or encourage the practice of mediumship by any one not known to be, or known *not* to be, firmly grounded in truthfulness and integrity. Where these qualities have been evinced in the previous life it will not be very difficult to obtain conclusive evidence of it; but where they have been wanting, the deficiency detracts sadly from the usefulness of the most extraordinary mediumistic capabilities. A great mistake has been made, to the detriment of Spiritualism, by encouraging trickishly-inclined and untrustworthy persons, who may nevertheless have strong medial qualities, to enter the profession of mediumship. Such, sooner or later, are pretty sure to bring obloquy upon the cause. The same may be said of those who manifest jealousy and uncharitableness, or a condemnatory spirit toward other mediums. As Mr. Brackett has advised of this class, "let them alone severely."

What Spiritualists may do.

Lastly, it is time to consider whether Spiritualists cannot and should not do something toward redeeming the public practice of mediumship from the odious commercial character which now attaches to it, and which is the source of all inducements to fraud, as well as the chief incentive to over-exercise and misuse of the psychic powers, and all the evils that arise therefrom. While it is but just that a person who gives time and vital force for the benefit, instruction, or gratification of others, should receive a proper compensation therefor—and one who devotes his or her energies chiefly to mediumship in any form is thereby unfitted to earn a livelihood in other ways—may not the matter be so arranged as to provide for the public demand, and yet relieve the individual medium of the necessity of collecting a fee for each sitting or sésance?

Why should not Spiritualist societies make it one object of association to sustain one or more mediums for the public benefit, guaranteeing them a suitable salary, and thus relieving them from bread-and-butter anxieties, and from the need of requiring admission fees?—a necessity which is repulsive to the finer instincts of every sensitive medium. The society, through its proper officer or agent, can make such terms as it sees fit with those who desire the medium's services—either raising the necessary funds by subscription or donations, according to ability or disposition, or requiring a stated sum from each visitor (to be paid into the society's treasury), as may be deemed most feasible. Free tickets may be issued to such as are unable to pay. Admission could and should be refused to any who are believed to apply for any improper purpose, or whose proper behaviour is not vouched for by some responsible person, or who are unwilling to comply with the necessary conditions of quietness, neatness, courtesy, &c. The medium should have the privilege of excluding any one whose atmosphere, mental or moral, is felt to be obnoxious, or any one whom the controlling spirit perceives to be in an unfit condition for the privilege. The medium should never be required or permitted to overwork, and the number of visitors should be strictly limited.

The person selected to act as medium should of course be one whose powers, of whatever class, shall have been well tested, and in whom the society has full confidence—one who, in addition to "spiritual gifts," has the *spiritual graces* of amiability, patience, truthfulness, self-control, and abounding good-will—one in whose honesty and good faith reliance can be placed under all circumstances. It is believed such may be found when there is a demand for them. Such mediums will not, through jealousy or envy, deal in detractive gossip about others, or denounce them as "frauds" on suspicion, nor will their "doubles" (if these present themselves in the sésance-room, as Mr. Brackett has suggested), be likely to do any such unseemly thing. Such mediums will be careful not to insist on mysterious "conditions," calculated to excite suspicions of fraudulent intent, but on the contrary will invite scrutiny, and by frankness of manner disarm all suspicions. And they will not be irritated by the carefulness of the honest investigator, nor regard his efforts to convince his own senses by guarding all points against possible deception as an offensive imputation upon the medium's honesty. They will know that

extraordinary facts require extraordinary evidence for their rational acceptance, and hence be patient with inquirers.

Suitable apartments for the practice of mediumship, with the best available conditions in all respects, should be provided by the society; and there should be furnished for the information of inexperienced inquirers, either in printed form or orally, a plain statement of the nature of the phenomena to be expected, with the conditions necessary to be observed, and the reasons therefor, so far as these can be explained; also the liabilities to failure which experience has shown; in order that there may be no misunderstanding or unnecessary cause for complaint. The public, as well as many Spiritualists, greatly need education in these matters.

A Forward Step.

In this way, it is believed, a step may be taken toward introducing something like order, responsibility and reliability, where now the chaos of individual action and uncertainty prevails. There appears no good reason why a society should not employ and sustain, in the way suggested, a medium for "tests" or proofs of spirit-agency, or for personal communications, or for the production of any desirable class of phenomena demonstrative of a future life, just as properly as one for trance-speaking on Sundays, as is now extensively done. Probably an equal if not greater amount of good could be effected in this way, since "proof" is the great demand of the public; and in some cases the two methods might be readily combined.

The *Banner of Light* establishment has for years set an admirable example in this direction by maintaining a medium for free messages from spirits—any who can obtain control—also for the answering of questions from all sources by an intelligent spirit-conductor of the sances. This medium, not being dependent on the sitters present for patronage, is free to give utterance to any truth that seeks utterance, and thus a higher order of teachings, more free from personal earthly influence than could otherwise be expected, is obtained. Why should not societies in many places imitate this example, and extend it to other valuable phases of mediumship—in fact be organised with this special object in view?

Of course, all public mediums now in the field might not at once find employment and support in this way: and doubtless some—perhaps many—would decline to come under any such arrangement, preferring to act solely in an individual capacity. But if the plan is undertaken by judicious managers, it may be expected that some, at least, of the best, most trustworthy, unselfish, and useful will find occupation, with support and protection; while the public will be afforded additional guarantees of good faith and other desirable qualities. And the superior results, in the long run, will be likely to attract the chief patronage. But those mediums who prefer merely individual action will be free to go their own way, and continue to incur the liabilities of danger and disaster as hitherto.

Some such step in advance, Mr. Editor, seems most desirable for the future of public mediumship and for the interests of Spiritualism. It is for the good sense of intelligent Spiritualists to make it practicable; and these suggestions are, with deference, submitted to the consideration of the thoughtful.

Arlington, Mass.

A. E. NEWTON.

THE EARL OF DUNRAVEN has again been appointed Under-Secretary for the Colonies.

FROM a correspondent we learn that a Spiritualist Society has just been formed at Christiania, Norway.

THE REV. WARD BEECHER, who is now on a visit to this country, recently declared to a New York reporter that his investigations into spiritualism had convinced him that there was more in the subject than was commonly supposed; and Professor Kiddle, in a letter to the *New York World*, writes that Mr. Beecher "appeared to be impressed very deeply by the phenomena" he had seen at a séance for form manifestations.

THE popular and eloquent Boston preacher, the Rev. Minot Savage, who has been on a brief visit to England, returned to America on Wednesday last. Mr. Savage admits the genuineness of the phenomena, but has not yet decided what the agency is.

"Magnetic treatment (often called *Mesmeric*), is pursued with excellent results, in many different cases, at 158, Marylebone Road, N.W., where a few patients can be received."

OFFICIAL INTOLERANCE AT BLACKBURN.

FROM the *Blackburn Times* of August 7 we learn that "at a Town Council meeting the question was considered of Police Constable Dibden, who had been ordered to resign his connection with the police force in consequence of his being a Spiritualist. The Town Clerk tried to trump up a case about incapacity, but when the Chief Constable spoke to Dibden about the matter, the only question put was, "Do you attend the Spiritualist meetings? If you do, you must either cease to attend or send in your resignation." Dibden the following day did as he was ordered, and sent in his resignation. Thereupon an extremely lively debate ensued at the next Town Council meeting as to whether Dibden's resignation should be accepted or not. Several members of the Board protested against the intolerance exhibited in the case. Councillor Hamer moved that the minute be referred back, in order that the matter might be properly investigated. He had seen the man personally, and asked him what were the words the Chief Constable used to him. He denied that they had made any charge against him, and said they most deliberately told him he must cease to attend a certain religious place of worship, as there were plenty of churches and chapels in the town of the proper sort. He must attend one of those, or the Police Mission, or else send in his resignation. They were told that that particular form of religious worship rendered a man physically and mentally incompetent for the duty of a policeman. He had never heard greater bosh or rubbish. In the nineteenth century they had a constable who had to send in his resignation because he attended a certain place of worship in his spare time. It was a disgrace to the Chief Constable and a disgrace to the Watch Committee. He was a first-class constable, and had been in the force eight years, and during the last four years had been a total abstainer. There had never been a charge against him until this patched-up one of attending Spiritualists' meetings was brought forward.—Councillor Briggs seconded, and said they were bringing disgrace upon the town. To make the charge they had done about the effect upon his health through attending the Spiritualists' meetings was absurd. He was disgusted with it.—Councillor Taylor also supported the amendment, and said the reasons given in the statement of the Chief Constable were to his mind not sufficient reasons. He said he appeared to be physically and mentally incapable of duty. They had seen him at the Copy Nook police-station, but why did they not let the police doctor see him, and find whether he was physically and mentally incapable of doing his duty? Instead of that the Chief of the Police and the superintendent took upon themselves the duty of doctor." In the result the amendment was lost by a majority of 12—9 voting for and 21 against. Comment is unnecessary; the facts speak for themselves.

HIS EXCELLENCY ALEXANDER AKSAKOF has left Paris for Biarritz.

MR. EGLINTON has received a large mass of testimony in response to the appeals published in these columns a few weeks ago, but should any readers be desirous of communicating experiences in Psychography to be included in the Special Supplement they should forward the same to Mr. Eglinton at 6, Nottingham Place, W., without delay.

PROMISCUOUS sances are often causes of great scandal and grave offence, not because the medium is a designing culprit, but because of the impurity of thought prevalent in the room, and the biological influence of those who have come for no other purpose than to break up the circle, expose the medium, and then rush into print, declaring that all that took place was fraudulent, that they knew it would be so beforehand, and that they went to the séance for the express purpose of showing up the trickery.

PHYSICAL MEDIUMSHIP.—The life of a physical medium is not an easy one. Nothing is more trying than to be constantly the subject of antagonistic and suspicious wills. The constant effort to overcome them is burdensome and exhausting, and as the physical medium is not usually so fully protected by strong-willed, intellectual bands of intelligences as those who are developed solely for intellectual purposes, the danger of the sitters influencing the conduct of the medium and the phenomena is very great.

CORRESPONDENCE.

[It is preferable that correspondents should append their names and addresses to communications. In any case, however, these must be supplied to the Editor as a guarantee of good faith.]

A Suggestion to "S. J. D."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—May I offer the suggestion that, as "S. J. D." has set himself up as an exponent of psychography, myself and Mr. Massey be allowed to witness one of his mock séances, that we may jointly judge whether his writing is produced under *Eglinton's* conditions, because, as Mrs. Sidgwick and Mr. Podmore have not seen his manifestations, and I and Mr. Massey have, we are necessarily more competent than they can possibly be to judge if the results are the same.—Believe me, yours, faithfully,

GEORGE HERSCHELL, M.D.

Automatic Writing.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—From an editorial note appended to my letter in *LIGHT* of July 31, and from a letter of Dr. Speer's in *LIGHT* of August 7, I gather that there is in some quarters an unwillingness to send me evidence on the points on which I am trying to collect it, for fear that such evidence should be "entrusted to certain persons" unacceptable to Spiritualists. Permit me to reply that, throughout the whole of these inquiries, I have, I hope always, when receiving evidence from any informant, scrupulously respected such conditions as that informant might choose to attach thereto. If anyone, for instance, is willing to send me information as to facts (unknown to the sitters) given by automatic writing, on condition that certain persons whom he names shall not make inquiries as to that information, or even see it while it remains in MS., I shall of course attend to his wish.

I hope, therefore, that if the apprehension above alluded to has in fact existed, it may now cease. I do not, indeed, understand whether it has also operated in deterring persons with evidence to give from sending it, as requested, to the editor of *LIGHT*. It would seem to be pushing controversial caution inconveniently far, if anyone were to refrain from publicly stating facts which support his own views, for fear that such facts should be commented on by his supposed opponents. I must thank "M.A., Oxon.," for his promise to "bear in mind what Mr. Myers desires" when he republishes his valuable account of the phenomena obtained through himself, and I will trust that Dr. Speer also may then feel that it is due to a gentleman who gives such experiences to the world that his friends should corroborate his narrative by every means in their power.—I am, Sir, yours obediently,

FREDERIC W. H. MYERS.

Leckhampton House, Cambridge,
August 7, 1886.

[Mr. Myers does himself an injustice when he suggests that there has existed an unwillingness to send evidence to him personally. That is not the case. We suspect Mr. Myers' extreme courtesy and kind-heartedness is unwittingly leading him to screen others at his own expense. Let the Society publicly and explicitly assure Spiritualists that the "heroes" of the "Physical Phenomena Committee" episode, the "Morell Theobald" case, the "Wendover Hauntings" fiasco, with its later development, shall have nothing to do with any evidence sent to them; and further deal satisfactorily with the "S. J. D." conjuring business, and we make bold to say that there will be no further difficulty; indeed we will ourselves at once send Mr. Myers a lot of cases we have still unpublished.—ED.]

A Curious Experiment.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I offer for your insertion in "LIGHT," (if you think it will be of interest) a brief note of an experiment of mine, which at a time when Psychography is under active discussion, may be repeated by those possessing magnetic power, and the knowledge

how to use it with safety to the subject. I say this, because the chief feature of this experiment is the almost instantaneous production of complete mesmeric unconsciousness, and the equally rapid restoration to the normal state, so that the hiatus (as it were), of unconsciousness is not recognised as a "break" in the continuity of observation. I will give the *modus operandi* briefly, so as to save space, but will supply fuller details (through "LIGHT") to any one wishing further information. I may premise that the subject I used in this experiment is in good "rapport" with me from frequent mesmerisation—and I am therefore able to induce instantaneous insensibility (trance) by a wave of the hand, or the rapidly whispered word "Sleep" (in his case), and as rapidly to restore him to a normal condition by hastily uttering the word "Wake." I would also state, to caution unpractised or inexperienced mesmerists, that the rapid "putting to sleep" and rapid awakening of a subject (especially the latter) are fraught with danger unless in the hands of a competent mesmeriser, and with a "subject" well under his control, and not liable to convulsive symptoms or palpitation. Competent mesmerists will, of course, understand this.

Now as regards the experiment.

Give the subject a clean slate, allow him (or any person) to write on it a question, turn the slate downwards, that is to say write the question on the under side, the mesmeriser not having been allowed to see it. Now let the subject place his hands firmly on it (or sit upon it—or place his foot upon it), and direct him to hold it securely and not divert his attention from it an instant to see that it be not tampered with. Up to this the subject is, of course, in a normal state. Now commence a conversation similar to this. "Well, be sure you keep a good watch on the slate, don't take your eyes off it at all. Sleep!" Here take the slate away from under the hands of the entranced subject, read the question, write the answer underneath, replace the slate and his hands on it, and go on to say to him, "Not off it for one moment; wake! you have not done so, have you?" He will reply, "NO," and continue to hold it down, thinking he has been doing so from the first, and quite unaware of its having been abstracted and replaced—as evidenced by his look of astonishment when the slate is taken up and he sees the written answer. Even in his subsequent normal condition when told of the experiment by on-lookers my subject would not believe he had ceased watching the slate an instant, and still maintains he did not. The interval of unconsciousness was noted to be four seconds. I do not set this forth as any explanation of psychography, but merely a process which is neither mediumship nor conjuring.

H. VENMAN.

20, Pimlico Road.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

PROF. KERSHAW.—We know of no history of Mesmerism now in print. We could, however, if you read French, get you a half-bound second-hand copy of Deleuze's "Histoire du Magnetisme." The price would be 20s.

J. M. PEEBLES, M.D.—We have done as you requested. Your letter was inadvertently insufficiently paid, and we had to submit to a fine of twenty cents.

A. D. BATHEL.—If you send us any more communications, we shall refuse them. Besides, a man of your voluminous correspondence should know by this time that it is a fraud on the Post-office to send communications of the nature of a letter by book-post.

C. J. ATKINSON.—Received with thanks.

G. M. (Barnton).—The Psychological Press at this Office is an agent for the papers you name. The subscription to *Banner of Light* is 15s. per annum, and to *The Golden Gate*, 12s. per annum.

E. M.—The accounts of séances with Mr. Eglinton will be published in the forthcoming Special number.

Dissipation of every kind is destructive of mediumistic power, and the reason why so many mediums appear shattered in health is because in moments of weakness they have yielded to an acquired taste, often imparted to them by some of their patrons, for alcohol, opium, and other abominations.

OFFICE OF "LIGHT,"
16, CRAVEN STREET,
CHARING CROSS, S.W.

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"LIGHT" may also be obtained from E. W. ALLEN, 4, Ave Maria Lane, London, and all Booksellers.

Light :

SATURDAY, AUGUST 14TH, 1886.

"LIGHT" AND THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

A very valued correspondent has directed our attention to the fact that what he designates as the "unamiable tone of 'LIGHT' towards the S. P. R." may do much injury to the circulation of this paper, and hopes that, if for no other reason, we shall "show friendship to the Society." We hasten to state, if it be necessary, that our feelings always have been, and ever will be friendly to the S. P. R. We have always cordially recognised the good work performed by it in one direction in the past, and so long as the governing body permitted us to do so, by placing no barriers in the way, we gave due prominence to its transactions. Indeed, we consider "LIGHT" was by no means an unimportant factor in the initiation and successful establishment of the Society. It is, therefore, with extreme regret that we now find ourselves forced to differ, and to differ widely from the present views and methods of the working members of the S. P. R. For twelve months or more a crisis in its affairs has slowly been coming to a head. Over and over again we have directed criticism of its doings into temperate channels, and in some cases have induced those who would have indicted the Society to withdraw their communications, in order that the best possible chance should be given them of doing a very difficult work under almost inconceivably trying circumstances. Now, however, the time seems to have come when our duty is to speak with no uncertain voice against what we believe to be very grave abuses—abuses which if not faced fairly by the Society can scarcely fail in the result to utterly ruin its usefulness. That is a consummation which we, in common with all Spiritualists, would deeply deplore, and it is our earnest hope that such a catastrophe may be averted. Certain it is, however, that the S. P. R., as represented by its working members, seem utterly oblivious of the extent in which Spiritualists and others, both in and out of the Society, are dissatisfied with its position, and in numerous instances openly speak of their dissatisfaction. Mr. Myers, in his letter in this issue, puts an "if" to this question—"if this . . . exists as a matter of fact." Does he regard the multiplicity of allusions which we have made to this deplorable fact as mere *façons de parler*? If so, we assure him he is mistaken. We know for certain that it is becoming more and more pressed on the consideration of a large number of members and associates as to whether they can consistently continue their connection with an organization occupying such an anomalous position as does the S. P. R. It claims irresponsibility for the utterances of any individual member, and yet in the eyes of the general public a pronouncement such as that of Mrs. Sidgwick's would be undoubtedly identified as representing the views of the corporate body.

We hoped for large things from the Society, and because we still retain hope, we have very unwillingly conceived it to be

our duty to enter the lists against their present attitude and methods. But our own conflict is purely impersonal; and we sincerely hope that the governing body and those more immediately concerned will not commit the great unwisdom of further shutting their eyes to the situation.

A copy of last week's "LIGHT" was sent under registered cover to Mrs. Sidgwick, to Mr. Podmore, and to "S. J. D." Up to the time of going to press we have received no communication from either of them.

A BASHFUL CONJURER.

I very much doubt whether there will be any reply to the questions addressed to Mrs. Sidgwick and Mr. F. Podmore, in the last number of "LIGHT." As long as the identity of the mysterious "Mr. A." with "S. J. D." is not explicitly acknowledged (however certain as an inference that is), it may perhaps be regarded as a point of honour not to treat the identity as established. I do not envy those who find themselves in that position in the circumstances. Meanwhile, I am myself better able to understand now what before rather puzzled me, namely, the solicitude that was shown to keep the name of the amateur conjurer, "Mr. A.," not only from publication, but even from becoming privately known.

One can, of course, very easily understand why "S. J. D." should have desired to remain anonymous in giving evidence for phenomena so much in discredit. Popular prejudice has reduced perhaps half the evidence to anonymity, and has altogether suppressed a great deal more. But why in the world should "Mr. A." shrink so timorously from such fame as might follow the publication of some successful experiments in amateur conjuring, avowed to be such, and turned to the highly popular and laudable use of putting people on their guard against imposition? Why are the privileged friends who witness such experiments bound to stringent obligations of secrecy as regards the name of the performer? What harm could it do him if a writer in *The Times*, for instance, getting hold of a copy of the *Proceedings* of the S. P. R., were to quote his name with a complimentary allusion to his services as an exposé of the tricks of mediums? Why this exceeding modesty, this anxious deprecation of the mildest and least prejudicial form of notoriety? How oddly is this bashful disposition associated with the assurance, the self-confidence, the habit of taking the measure of other people, and of success, which must characterise the accomplished conjurer. Surely a curious anomaly, were there no escape from it.

But it seems there is. For the explanation suggested by the identity of "Mr. A." with "S. J. D." does not consist in the modesty of "Mr. A.," but in a quality or in conduct perhaps not so naturally repugnant to proficiency in a cunning art, and for which it is difficult to find a polite name. For let no one suppose that it is a simple question of a change of S. J. D.'s opinions since he reported his sittings with Mr. Eglinton. It is with his *facts* that we are concerned, and only with his opinions, if he professes now to explain his evidence of those facts, and to maintain that such evidence as that can be honest, and at the same time inconclusive of what he now speaks of as "alleged" psychical phenomena. We care nothing about his "Spiritualistic theory;" we want to know whether he is the witness of truth. Something was said last week of his duty as an Associate of the Society for Psychical Research. But his own letter in reply to the Editor of "LIGHT" raises, or rather discloses, another duty, which is to the general public reader of "LIGHT." For he has been a reporter in these columns of facts in exact and particular detail; presumably he hoped to influence people's minds and beliefs by those reports; certainly any one who credited them must have had his belief influenced by them. But now, two years later, he talks of "alleged" psychical phenomena, and of modifications of his views. What are we to understand—we, who have been relying on his statements, who, for all he knows, may have had our views on subjects of the greatest interest profoundly "modified" by those statements? Has he, as a public witness, no sense of responsibility to the public, that in his petulant letter he gives the go-by to his own evidence with an allusion to quite collateral circumstances (as it would seem) which have been "brought to" his notice? This question, at least, is quite independent of his identity with "Mr. A.," for he

has now raised it himself by his own recent letter. Does he stand by his evidence or does he not? Are we or are we not to expunge it from collections which may hereafter be republished and may influence thousands who will never hear of this correspondence?

I must point out that, in the case of S. J. D.'s evidence, there is no room for the hypothesis of innocent misdescription, which might afterwards come to be recognised as such by the witness himself. As we know, Mrs. Sidgwick's idea is that "the juggler's art" can make facts which did not occur be imagined. Does S. J. D. agree with her as to any of the following facts, which I give in their sequence as described by himself in one of his accounts? I put them in separate lines that each may be appreciated with reference to the above suggestion.

"Taking a large slate,
After carefully cleaning it,
I placed it under the flap of the table
Holding it closely there,

And requested that, if possible, a lengthy message might be written; also hinting that if it were partly in Greek it would be very interesting.

Scarcely a minute elapsed before the pencil began to move and wrote with great rapidity.

I looked under the table,
Holding the slate firmly with my hands.

Mr. Eglinton's hand, which rested on mine, was perfectly quiescent."

(He then describes the continuance of the sound as of writing, and the pause, as if at the alteration to Greek. Then he gives the long message discovered, partly in Greek).

"When my ear was about an inch off the slate I was able to detect the variations of the writing."

Or take another account.

"I put a crumb of pencil on the slate,
And then put another slate over that;
Holding the two slates together myself,
I asked if I should ever become a medium.

No sooner was the question asked than I heard the pencil within begin to move.

I heard the crossing of the t's and the formation of the capital letters,
And in a few seconds three small raps were heard,
I removed the upper slate.
I found the following message:—

(Which is then given, an answer to the question, with other personal particulars—unknown to the medium, in 125 words.)

Now have we not a right to an answer from "S. J. D." to the questions where, in his present judgment, the defect in the above evidence comes in; which of the facts there alleged could have been imagined by him without being true, or whether he could have omitted to observe and describe some important fact breaking the apparent sequence of them, and invalidating the whole evidence? He has now joined the ranks of those who, in defect of personal experience, talk of psychical phenomena as "alleged," and of course ought to be able to tell us how his own allegations now strike him.

If he neglects to answer these questions, as he can hardly deny the right of any one who has read, and (as in my own case) even cited his evidence for the persuasion of others, to ask them, he must accept one of two alternatives. Either he knows that evidence to have been false, or his present attitude towards "alleged psychical phenomena" is not genuine, and would never have been openly assumed, had not the discovery of his identity with "Mr. A." driven him to pretend some excuse for allowing the suggestion, that his own conjuring tricks are on a par with Eglinton's psychography, to be put before the Society for Psychical Research without a word of protest or contradiction on his part.

C. C. MASSEY.

1, Albert Mansions, S.W.,
August 9th.

To the scientific Spiritualist, death loses all its old significance; it always has, always will follow birth, and like birth, is always the result of natural causes. The only new thing ushered into the world by birth is individuality; the only thing that leaves the world at death is individuality; as to whether individuality ceases to exist when it separates from the body, is an open question to all but the Spiritualist, so far as any reasonable theory goes.

"PSYCHICAL RESEARCH" IN AMERICA AND ENGLAND.

Since the publication of last week's "LIGHT," we have learned from Prof. Cones himself that our surmise is correct as to the authorship of the indictment (extracts from which we gave) of the American Society for Psychical Research, published under the initials of F. T. S. Prof. Cones has authorised us to associate his name with the document in question, which, on a more careful perusal, we are disposed to transfer, *in extenso*, to our own columns. His criticism of the A. S. P. R. seems to us to apply largely, *mutatis mutandis*, with equal force to the English Society. That this is not a solitary view may be gathered from the fact that no less than four different copies of the original paper have been sent to us, with urgent requests for its full publication in "LIGHT," and not the least significant fact is, that all these correspondents are recognised as profound students of Psychical Science, three of them being well-known members of the Society for Psychical Research.

(From the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*.)

A CRITIQUE OF PURE UNREASON,

Being the Theosophical Society's First Indictment of the "American Society for Psychical Research."

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.—Our love of truth is for its own sake, and we are no respecters of persons. Our will is to challenge untruth that is stamped with your eminent scientific authority. Our purpose is fixed; psychic science shall not become a toy in your distinguished scientific hands.

We define psychic science to be the knowledge of the human soul, and we define psychic research to be the investigation of the human soul as to its potencies and properties, its qualities and attributes, its origin, nature, and probable destiny. You have given us no evidence that you are officially informed of the existence of this object of investigation. Until you do so, we shall decline to recognize you as psychic researchers, and shall challenge your right to have or to hold, much more to express, any opinions upon the subject of psychic science.

We know that you cannot shuffle the requisite information out of your pack of cards, or juggle it out of your combined die-thrower and tally-keeper, or spell it out of the rebus which adorns the pages of your published proceedings, or cipher it out of your mathematical factorials or exponentials in any calculus of probabilities,* for the simple reason that there is no soul to speak of in such things, and consequently no psychic science to be got out of them. Meanwhile, be kind enough to focus your minds on the definition of psychic science we have given you, and do not forget for an instant that you pretend to be engaged in the investigation of the phenomena of Spiritualism. But are you, really?

We know that you are not, and we intend to make known to others the fact that you are not. We suspect your motives as much as we condemn your methods; and we are not disposed at present to condone your sins. We challenge your sincerity. We do not think that you are in earnest in this matter. We gravely doubt that you do not consider yourselves much wiser than others are, while we observe in your operations no trace of that humility which is the touchstone of wisdom. We question that your learned body, as an organization, either expects or desires spiritual enlightenment, or indeed is either ready or willing to receive spiritual instruction, or in fine is able to understand the simplest phenomena of Spiritualism. Our amazement would be—had we not long since given over wonder at any possible exhibition of human vanity and human ignorance, had we not learned to regard with indifference the curse of the commonplace, withholding contempt even from that which is contemptible—our amazement would be that among your number not one human soul has been found to flash out in flaming indignation at the publication of your proceedings. Had but a single ray of spiritual light illumined your learned body, gentlemen; had but a spark of the divine fire been kindled in your souls, you had not then published

* See Proceedings A. S. P. R., No. 1, pp. 12, 13, 15, 45.

those puerilities of yours which are beyond the possibility of peoration.

Under the respective circumstances of the Theosophical Society and of the American Society for Psychical Research, we can have no word of apology or personal explanation to offer for taking charge of your proceedings and assuming the censorship of your ostensible results. As between man and man, our tolerance of your individual opinions is absolute; our personal courtesy and all due deference is yours, one and several; our patience and forbearance you will find to be equal to the demands you may make upon it, and that is to call it practically inexhaustible. But as between our respective bodies corporate, we give and take no quarter. Our knowledge of your society is intimate, exact and comprehensive; we know you thoroughly, as we do other matters into which it may be our duty or our pleasure to inquire. Our knowledge of your affairs enables us to indict you before the public upon the following several specific counts against your learned and honorable body, as an organization, and without reference to individuals except as hereinafter named.

Preferring the general charge that you are not what you pretend to be, we specify:

1. That you know nothing of psychic science.
2. That you do not know how to conduct psychic research.
3. That you do not know what it is that you are in search of.
4. That you would not know a psychic result to be such if you reached it.
5. That you do not know how to judge the evidence upon which psychic phenomena rest.
6. That you do not know of anything really worth investigating in psychic science.
7. That you do not know how to learn and do really want to be taught.

And yet you are pleased to style yourselves "The American Society for Psychical Research." We say to you, gentlemen, that being what you are, your very name is an insult to psychic science, and would be, were it known, a just cause of offence to hundreds of thousands who have reached that goal toward which you have resolutely turned your backs. In discussing the charges which we bring against you, we shall take occasion to show you that you are not in the line of psychic evolution, but surely tending in the opposite direction. If you do not heed our warning, if you do not desist and turn to the rightabout before it is too late, every hope that you entertain will be frustrated, your every endeavour will yield you shame and confusion, your goal will prove to be the pillory of public opinion, and your first real lesson in psychic science will have been learned when psychic research let into your own souls shows you what it is to be made a laughing stock.

We doubt that you are of such heroic stuff, that you court martyrdom as the price of any spiritual enlightenment you might acquire by personal experiences of the above description. We mistake the scientific temper entirely if it would not decline with thanks the spiritual wisdom of Jesus or of Gautama, were even wounded vanity the penalty of its possession. If you are so very sensitive, gentlemen, if a sense of your dignity and consequence rounds the circumference of your psychic horizon, we advise you to abandon psychic research, for otherwise you will awake to that sense of the ridiculous which can only be experienced by those who make themselves objects of ridicule.

That you know nothing of psychic science is obvious from the composition of your society. Not that you have not two or three members whom we know to be profound psychists, more or less prominently identified with Spiritualism, and well versed in its phenomena. But it is that these gentlemen are almost necessarily silent in your midst. They are not your recognized leaders. You do not look to them for advice and counsel and instruction. You are not where you ought to be, as a body, at their feet, there to learn the wisdom you so sorely need. We doubt that you would bend your stubborn necks to the yoke of instruction from even one of your own number. When, in the possible future, you shall have painfully toiled through the alphabet of psychic science, and become able to spell its early words, the members of whom we speak will converse with you in the terms of psychic science, but not till then. They are too theosophical to play with you in the nursery of your psychic nativity, perhaps, or have important business elsewhere just now. The upshot is, that you are left to your own devices. Let us see what some of these have been.

With the exceptions above noted you have jealously excluded psychists from your Society for Psychical Research. With the exceptions noted, psychists are conspicuous by their absence from your body. We do not know a psychist among you who is there

as such. What prominent spiritualists have you? When you meet, is there one of your number who has ever seen even a ghost? Or if there be one who has held intercourse with a disembodied spirit, is he one who is ready and willing to state so to you? Will he write a paragraph for your proceedings describing a phantom he has investigated? Has he any definite information to offer you over his name and upon his personal authority? Is there a man among you who has satisfied himself of spirit-rappings and table-turnings? Is there one who has witnessed levitation? Has any phenomenon of dematerialization ever come under observation? Have you ever practised mesmerism, or been subjected to currents of akasic fluid? Is there a clairvoyant or a clairaudient among you? Did you ever see a case of somnambulism? Did you ever witness the trance state? Did you ever see a spirit light? Did you ever hear a spirit voice? Have you ever been aware of the presence of the astral double of a living person? Have you ever had experience of a mechanical force that physics cannot explain? Have you ever witnessed the result of conscious intelligence and volition in the production of phenomena for which you could not account? How many mediumistic organisms have been the subjects of your experiments in psychics? How many spiritualistic séances have you attended in the aggregate, do you think? Can you even pretend to discriminate between a genuine and a spurious spiritualistic manifestation? Have you any knowledge of the existence of any state of matter that is not described in text-books of chemistry and physics? Do you know any way of exciting and controlling currents of biogen? Did you ever see or find a person who could see a current of od? Have you ever practised self-magnetization?

If you must say "no" all along this little impromptu catechism, then tell us, gentlemen, in the name of psychic science, what do you know about psychic science [or psychic research? And if you know nothing, why in the name of knowledge do you not ask somebody who does know? Why not get somebody to tell you about these things, and show them to you, and discuss them with you, and explain them to you, and try to make you understand them? Are you afraid of exposing your ignorance? Do not fear that—it is impossible; *cela va sans dire*—and it is no disgrace to be ignorant if you really are anxious to learn, and have formed yourselves into a society for that purpose. The trouble with you is that you appear to want to *teach*, else, surrounded as you are by hundreds of thousands of persons who are competent to instruct you, you would seek them for that purpose, and not seek them for an audience to hear what you have to say, as you virtually do when you rush into print about what you are profoundly ignorant of.

The real reason why you have made yourselves up into that singular conglomeration of ineffectuality which you now present to our wondering eyes as a spectacle to be admired, is not far to seek. The reason is compounded of vanity and cowardice. You are vain enough to suppose that the moment you bend your benign yet penetrating gaze upon a ghost he will be kind enough to vanish and relieve you of the incubus which his further presence would entail. And you are cowardly enough to be afraid of being called cranks if you admit to your number people who know about ghosts and other objects of psychic research. You prefer to guess cards and throw dice with your little machine in the parlour where all is safe and polite. You prefer, then, to sit in your study and cipher out the rest of your psychic researches. You prefer next to print your sage conclusions. And when your proceeding falls under the eye of some man or woman who, while you were thus amusing yourselves, was conducting some delicate experiment in psychic science with perfect success, can you wonder to find yourself an object of merriment? Very probably you would not be seen in the company of the person who has just successfully exploited where you have signally failed; for that person's views you would entertain profound contempt; he or she would be for you a crank, and you would remain for yourself a scientist. Supposing, now, just for a little experiment in psychic science, you could prevail upon that person to be offensively candid in the expression of an opinion regarding yourselves. It would be a valuable lesson, conveying vast psychic nutriment for you, if you could digest and assimilate it. You might even make a salutary discovery if you persisted in such a course. You might discover, to your profound astonishment, that a great many people know a great deal more about psychic research than you do.

Not to protract our banter, let us be blunt now. Gentlemen of

the psychical society, there are thousands of persons all about you who are competent to instruct you in that which you have yet to learn—the first principles—the very rudiments of psychic science, the alphabet of psychic research. Where are these people? Why, walk out on the street, anywhere, and right there, every twentieth person you meet will be one who can tell you more in a minute about psychic research than you have ciphered out since you have been a psychic society. Who are these people? These people, gentlemen, are the entire body of enlightened, progressive Spiritualists of America, whom you call cranks, and who know what they know, and who have found it out without your assistance, and who know what you do not know yet—that the cranks are your scientific selves—yes, your most respected selves, dear sirs, who have been caught napping, and have not quite opened your eyes yet, and cut a most ridiculous figure of hopeless anachronism.

The utmost that you can hope to do, gentlemen, is to catch up with the times. Until you do so, we pray you spare us the spectacle of your antique psychic furniture. Do not parade it in public. Keep it in the privacy of your own homes. Keep it for your own use. It suits you, apparently; and certainly no more harmless diversion than a pack of cards and a dice-thrower combined with a tally keeper could be devised. But when you have played with your toys till you are tired, why write a book to tell us how much you have enjoyed yourselves? That we are willing to take for granted; and besides, if you will excuse the remark, it is what we used to do in our own childhood.

F. T. S. (PROF. ELIOT COUES, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, U.S.A.)

THE RELIGIO-PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNAL ON PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

THE *Religio-Philosophical Journal* for July 31st, says:—"The differences which have been slowly gathering force in the English Psychical Research Society for two years past have at last become sharply defined, as well as public. That the Spiritualist members of that organization have so long held the conflict in abeyance, speaks well for their forbearance and patience. It is devoutly to be hoped that now when the issue is on, they will, while stoutly maintaining their ground, never be driven to hot blood, nor to judgments coloured by partisan feeling. The matters at issue there, are of equally vital importance on this side of the Atlantic; hence we this week republish from 'LIGHT' the very lengthy paper by Mr. C. C. Massey. No one having the slightest interest in psychical research can afford to neglect a study of Mr. Massey's able consideration of the possibilities of mal-observation."

Speaking in another place of Prof. Coues's arraignment of the American S. P. R., it says:—"A terrific indictment of the American Society for Psychical Research appears on this page.* The *Journal's* columns are at the service of the Society to answer the charges. We are glad to bear testimony to the frank and cordial attitude of some members of the Society's committee on phenomena, and to their honest and persistent efforts in the task assigned them; a task beset by peculiar difficulties, both in its prosecution and in presentation of reports to the body to whom the committee is responsible. The Society unfortunately, in the judgment of all competent to express an opinion, handicapped itself at the start by electing as president a distinguished astronomer who had already prejudged the whole subject, and publicly announced his disbelief as to the existence of the phenomena which the Society was organized to investigate. But it is not impossible that the animus which seems to have moved the originators of the A. S. P. R. may give way to a more sensible course. The policy of the managers was no doubt honest, but rested upon assumptions of ignorance. Having grown wiser, as we hope, these gentlemen may have the manliness to admit their early mistakes and make a fresh start. Should they do so, we earnestly advise the author of 'A Critique of Pure Unreason,' and all others interested, to meet them half way and join in a work, than which none other can be more important or pressing."

THE DUTY OF WEALTHY SPIRITUALISTS.—Whenever a wealthy Spiritualist finds a really useful medium battling with adverse conditions, and too weak to stem the current of opposing forces, if he will step in and engage that medium to give sésances under his auspices, inviting only such persons as he knows to be honourable and upright, the manifestations will soon assume such proportions as to do more good in a single evening than is now accomplished by many a hundred ill-directed sésances.

* See current issue of "LIGHT," page 373.

THE LAST DAYS OF D. D. HOME.

LADY CAITHNESS, writing to the Editor of the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, gives the following interesting account of the last days of this celebrated medium. She says:—

"I saw Mr. Home several times during the last sad days, and was with him on the day previous to his departure. He knew me perfectly and seemed glad to see me, calling me by an endearing name. He also spoke to my son in the same affectionate manner, saying that his grandfather (my own dear father) was present, which showed how perfectly he remembered old times and the wonderful sésances we had had with him when my father manifested through him in a most impressive and solemn manner as I recorded at the time in the English spiritual papers.

"We feared to tire him by remaining too long, so retired into the sitting-room with his almost heart-broken wife, who threw herself sobbing into my arms, for we all saw but too well by the faint voice, the feeble pulse and the difficult breathing, that our dear friend was sinking fast. But he could not bear to be parted from his devoted wife even for this brief moment, and we heard him feebly call, 'Queenie, Queenie,' one of the pet names he delighted to call her, and she returned to his side to hang over and minister to him to the last, as she has been doing for more than eighteen long months, during which time she has not once known what it was to sleep in a bed, to remove her clothes or enjoy a night's rest. Indeed, she told me she had no bed in the cottage where they then were, and pointed to the arm-chair beside her husband's pillow, when I asked her where she slept.

"If ever there was a saint on earth, our dear friend Dan has had that saint for his wife for the last fourteen years, during all of which time I have seen her untiring devotion to him without ever having one thought for herself or even a care for her health, which was not of the strongest. During the latter part of his long illness Mrs. Home tells me she was wonderfully,—nay, perhaps miraculously, sustained, for though she has not known what it is to sleep in a bed, or enjoy a night's repose, and she could not eat, and only sustained herself with a little soup or a cup of tea at long intervals, yet she felt well and able to go through the great fatigue.

"Poor woman, now that she has lost him, she seems broken-hearted, and yet she alone has made all the arrangements for the funeral, and when I went to see her a few hours after receiving her sad telegram, I saw how active she had been, for I found the rooms already hung with crimson draperies and transformed into a *chapelle ardente*, brilliant with roses, flowering plants and palms, and lighted by many tapers—placed around the pale, wax-like form which reposed on a crimson canopy of state, with fresh sweet roses strewn all over the white drapery and lace which veiled his features without concealing them. I have since learnt from Mrs. Home that this lace which thus covered him was her bridal veil and dress! The eyes were open, and the doctor who was there told me they had found it impossible to close them, which a Sister of Charity who was also present, and who had helped to attend him, assured me sometimes happened; but strange to say this did not give him a painful appearance, on the contrary, it was more life-like, only very sad, for the eyes had a sad but sweet expression, and I hope I shall not be considered irreverent when I say that we all agreed he reminded us of some pictures we have seen of Christ.

"But let me turn from dwelling on this sad remembrance, to the lovely and impressive ceremony I witnessed the next morning, Wednesday, the 23rd of June, at the Russian church, the very church in which they had been married.

"At nine o'clock in the morning I had reached the sweet little cottage in the shady gardens in which poor Dan had breathed his last, and where I hoped to have been in time to convey and accompany his wife, the chief mourner, to the church, but found she had been there already since 8 A.M., and with her own fragile hands had again arranged all the flowers around the casket, which stood in the centre of the beautiful building, raised on a dais, and surrounded by very tall wax candles in high gilt sconces, exactly under the great central dome and facing the altar, which in the Greek church is closed in by high gilt doors through whose rich arabesque fretwork and tracery it can still be seen. The pavement of the church is entirely covered with a rich soft carpet of bright colours, and its general appearance is gorgeous in the extreme, in the Byzantine style, rich in gold and colouring. But the principal feature the eye rested upon on entering on this occasion was the altar of a lone woman's devotion, on which

reposed the cold remains of her beloved one, covered for ever from human sight by the narrow walls of its rich mahogany casket under a spreading cloth of white and gold, which almost disappeared under the wealth of bright fresh roses his wife had heaped upon it, and to which I added my own, and my son's floral offerings. All around stood the spreading palms and the flowering plants she had caused to be transported from the room of the villa in which the beloved remains had lain during the previous twenty-four hours, which, with many other rare plants and shrubs, formed a barrier all around the raised and brilliantly illuminated platform on which the casket reposed; and a magnificently robed priest continually walked around swinging a golden censur of fragrant incense from side to side as the imposing service proceeded.

"Mrs. Home had particularly requested that no signs of mourning should appear, in accordance with the wishes of her husband, otherwise the priests on such occasions are, it appears, robed in black; but behold them now, as they walk in procession and ascend the steps of the altar. Nothing can be more striking than their golden-fringed and embroidered white robes, a high gold mitre on the head of one (the Arch High Priest). The bereaved one herself wore her usual dress. Her mourning was wholly inward, the only outward tokens of it were the choking sobs I occasionally heard from her as I knelt by her side, each with a lighted taper in our hands according to the ceremony of the Greek, or Greco-Russian church at a certain part of the ritual.

"A magnificent fresco adorned the whole side of the wall opposite where we knelt, representing the broad dark sea, with one solitary fishing-boat tossing on its broad bosom, toward which the brightly illuminated figure of the Christ was advancing, walking on the waves, as if coming from a distant shore to bring light, peace, and happiness to the troubled group in the boat. The whole effect was grand, solemn, and suggestive, and I gazed long at it as the full voices of the choir rose and fell in solemn cadence, and the rich soft strains of swelling harmony filled the building, dying away in distant echoes repeated from dome to dome. Nothing can surpass the religious effect of these grand Gregorian chants without any instrumental accompaniment; but each voice, from the highest treble to the deepest base, is fully trained and highly cultivated, besides being of the sweetest tone.

"And now the solemn, beautiful, and impressive service being over, the High Priest who has been for sometime praying at the head of the casket, blessed it. The newly made widow advances and presses her lips on the hard cold wood of the outer case, and it is lifted from the dais and borne to the carriage that was awaiting it at the door—a travelling carriage of a peculiar make, consisting of two compartments, for the living and the dead, which is much employed in France for the purpose of conveying the remains of the departed to any distance. The door is closed on the sacred contents, and the bereaved one, after a hasty farewell to the few faithful friends who had come without need of any invitation to render this last sad tribute of affection and esteem to the departed, takes her seat in the coupé or chariot above it, accompanied by a single attendant. The coachman is already on the box, and so it is driven off, followed by a carriage containing the four officiating priests still clothed in their rich white and gold vestments. They have a two-hours' journey before them at the rate at which they will travel, although it is only to the American and Russian cemetery at Saint Germain, where the remains of the much-beloved and world-wide celebrated medium now reposes surrounded by American and Russian graves.

"My task is now over, although I might still add one more episode which those who knew him may feel interested in hearing. I went to the sylvan cottage at Auteuil in the evening to see Mrs. Home after her return from Saint Germain, and she described to me how she had herself arranged the flowers over the casket in its last resting-place, in which also repose the remains of her only child, a baby girl born in the first years of their marriage.

"This sweet, highly intellectual and refined lady is the second wife of Mr. Home, and like her predecessor, by whom he leaves one son, is of a highly distinguished and noble Russian family. She had a handsome fortune in her own right, sufficient at all events to enable them to live with every comfort and even luxury, for otherwise it is well known that the celebrated medium had no means, never having made a profession of his truly remarkable supermundane gifts, or ever received a fee. The few handsome presents consisting in rings, studs and pins, which he has received from kings and emperors, he has religiously kept as mementoes of the happiness he has been able to confer on those who, though rich in this world's goods, and occupying the highest stations this world has to offer, have yet yearned to know something of a still higher life to which their dear ones had gone before!"

CRITICISM OF EVIDENCE.

In my communication last week on "Some Periods of Continuous Observation," by either a misprint or a slip of the pen I appear to have said "No sceptic can claim the *presumption* of inaccuracy in the use of plain words by a witness, though it is open to anyone to seek to verify a subjective doubt on this point by cross-examination." I should have said "*possibility*" (not *presumption*), because the critic does not require a presumption but only a possibility, when that is left open by the evidence. My contention was, that in the case referred to, even this is not open to him *prima facie*, and that the *onus* is shifted upon him to show that language in the mouth of a witness has not its natural and proper meaning. I hold, for instance, that Mrs. Sidgwick's suggestion that the word "instantly," as used in the account criticised, did not really mean instantly, was illegitimate, though it would have been quite open to her to satisfy a private misgiving on this point *before* proceeding to criticise.

I must, however, admit that Mrs. Sidgwick's reply to me in the *Journal* seems good (as against me) in the case of the figure 4, so far as the question is not as to the meaning of "instantly," but as to the point of time to which that word applies in the account, *i.e.*, whether to the moment when the request for the figure was made by Mrs. Brietzke, or to the moment after the slate was in position. Mrs. Sidgwick shows successfully as against me, I think, that the position in the sentence of the words "and the slate was again placed," proves that the period of observation is not in that case measurable by that of the sound of writing, but must include an interval between the request for the figure and the slate being in position. In the case of a single figure or word, which might be written in a second or two, it does seem very important to know whether the question or request was put before or after the slate was in position. In the case of longer writings we have only to be assured, for the purpose of estimating the total period of observation, that there was no delay in putting the slate in position after question asked, though it is always better, as du Prel suggests, that the question should not be put till the slate is already in position, and this was a condition certainly satisfied in most of the cases I adduced last week. I believe it is nearly always so in fact when questions, &c., are put *vivâ voce*. But it seems to me intolerably unfair that evidence of this sort sent to the Society should not receive the same preliminary treatment as all the rest of the evidence so carefully dealt with by the Literary Committee, and that the witnesses should not have the same opportunity afforded them of explaining or supplementing their statements, though of course they would never be allowed to *alter* them so as to make the evidence better after a positive defect in it had been pointed out.

I do hope, now that the Society for Psychical Research is arriving at a very critical stage in its progress—the verification of objective phenomena—that members of it will wake up to an attitude of vigilance, and will not leave the battle for the reception and fair treatment of evidence to be fought by a few unsupported individuals, who will certainly have to retire if their efforts are unavailing. That is very different from angry retirement during the course of discussion, because truth seems for the moment overweighed by influence and authority. The *Journal* and the meetings are open to all members and associates, who can make their influence felt if they will do so. C. C. M.

GERALD MASSEY'S WEEK-NIGHT LECTURES. — Mr. Gerald Massey has been invited to deliver a Series of Lectures on Week-nights in St. George's Hall. These are to be given on Tuesdays and Fridays, commencing Tuesday, August 31st, and concluding October. The Course consists of:—The man Shakspeare himself; Robert Burns, Poet and Freethinker; Charles Lamb, the most Unique of English Humourists; A Plea for Reality—the Story of our English Pre-Raphaelite Painters; a Lesson in Evolution—From Gesture-Signs to the Alphabet; the Devil of Darkness in the Light of Evolution; the Historical Jesus and the Mythical Christ; Pre-Christian and Egyptian Origin of the Sayings and Teachings assigned to Jesus; Paul the Gnostic, not a Witness for Historic Christianity; the Coming Religion. Season Ticket, 10s. 6d. for specially-reserved Seat. May be obtained at the Office of "LIGHT," 16, Craven Street.

WHAT IS SAID OF PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

PROFESSORS TORNEBOM AND EDLAND, THE SWEDISH PHYSICISTS.—“Only those deny the reality of spirit phenomena who have never examined them, but profound study alone can explain them. We do not know where we may be led by the discovery of the cause of these, as it seems trivial occurrences, or to what new spheres of Nature's kingdom they may open the way; but that they will bring forward important results is already made clear to us by the revelations of natural history in all ages.”—*Aftonblad* (Stockholm), October 30th, 1879.

BARON CARL DU PREL (Munich) in *Nord und Süd*.—“One thing is clear; that is, that psychography must be ascribed to a transcendental origin. [We shall find: (1) That the hypothesis of prepared slates is inadmissible. (2) The place on which the writing is found is quite inaccessible to the hands of the medium. In some cases the double slate is securely locked, leaving only room inside for the tiny morsel of slate-pencil. (3) That the writing is actually done at the time. (4) That the medium is not writing. (5) The writing must be actually done with the morsel of slate or lead-pencil. (6) The writing is done by an intelligent being, since the answers are exactly pertinent to the questions. (7) This being can read, write, and understand the language of human beings, frequently such as is unknown to the medium. (8) It strongly resembles a human being, as well in the degree of its intelligence as in the mistakes sometimes made. These beings are therefore, although invisible, of human nature, or species. It is no use whatever to fight against this proposition. (9) If these beings speak, they do so in human language. (10) If they are asked who they are, they answer that they are beings who have left this world. (11) When these appearances become partly visible, perhaps only their hands, the hands seen are of human form. (12) When these things become entirely visible, they show the human form and countenance. . . . Spiritualism must be investigated by science. I should look upon myself as a coward if I did not openly express my convictions.”

J. H. FICHTE, THE GERMAN PHILOSOPHER AND AUTHOR.—“Notwithstanding my age (83) and my exemption from the controversies of the day, I feel it my duty to bear testimony to the great fact of Spiritualism. No one should keep silent.”

PROFESSOR DE MORGAN, PRESIDENT OF THE MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.—“I am perfectly convinced that I have both seen and heard, in a manner which should make unbelief impossible, things called spiritual, which cannot be taken by a rational being to be capable of explanation by imposture, coincidence, or mistake. So far I feel the ground firm under me.”

DR. ROBERT CHAMBERS.—“I have for many years known that these phenomena are real, as distinguished from impostures; and it is not of yesterday that I concluded they were calculated to explain much that has been doubtful in the past; and, when fully accepted, revolutionise the whole frame of human opinion on many important matters.”—*Extract from a Letter to A. Russel Wallace*.

PROFESSOR HARE, EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.—“Far from abating my confidence in the inferences respecting the agencies of the spirits of deceased mortals, in the manifestations of which I have given an account in my work, I have, within the last nine months” (this was written in 1858), “had more striking evidences of that agency than those given in the work in question.”

PROFESSOR CHALLIS, THE LATE PLUMERIAN PROFESSOR OF ASTRONOMY AT CAMBRIDGE.—“I have been unable to resist the large amount of testimony to such facts, which has come from many independent sources, and from a vast number of witnesses. . . . In short, the testimony has been so abundant and consentaneous, that either the facts must be admitted to be such as are reported, or the possibility of certifying facts by human testimony must be given up.”—*Clerical Journal*, June, 1862.

PROFESSOR GREGORY, F.R.S.E.—“The essential question is this. What are the proofs of the agency of departed spirits? Although I cannot say that I yet feel the sure and firm conviction on this point which I feel on some others, I am bound to say that the higher phenomena, recorded by so many truthful and honourable men, appear to me to render the spiritual hypothesis almost certain. . . . I believe that if I could myself see the higher phenomena alluded to I should be satisfied, as are all those who have had the best means of judging of the truth of the spiritual theory.”

LORD BROUGHAM.—“There is is but one question I would ask the author, Is the Spiritualism of this work foreign to our materialistic, manufacturing age? No; for amidst the varieties of mind which divers circumstances produce are found those who cultivate man's highest faculties; to these the author addresses himself. But even in the most cloudless skies of scepticism I see a rain-cloud, if it be no bigger than a man's hand; it is modern Spiritualism.”—*Preface by Lord Brougham to "The Book of Nature."* By C. O. Groom Napier, F.C.S.

THE LONDON DIALECTICAL COMMITTEE reported: “1. That sounds of a very varied character, apparently proceeding from articles of furniture, the floor and walls of the room—the vibrations accompanying which sounds are often distinctly perceptible to the touch—occur, without being produced by muscular action or mechanical contrivance. 2. That movements of heavy bodies take place without mechanical contrivance of any kind, or adequate exertion of muscular force by those present, and frequently without contact or connection with any person. 3. That these sounds and movements often occur at the time and in the manner asked for by persons present, and, by means of a simple code of signals answer questions and spell out coherent communications.”

CAMILLE FLAMMARION, THE FRENCH ASTRONOMER, AND MEMBER OF THE ACADEMIE FRANCAISE.—“I do not hesitate to affirm my conviction,

based on personal examination of the subject, that any scientific man who declares the phenomena denominated ‘magnetic,’ ‘somnambule,’ ‘mediumic,’ and others not yet explained by science to be ‘impossible,’ is one who speaks without knowing what he is talking about; and also any man accustomed, by his professional avocations, to scientific observation—provided that his mind be not biased by pre-conceived opinions, nor his mental vision blinded by that opposite kind of illusion, unhappily too common in the learned world, which consists in imagining that the laws of Nature are already known to us, and that everything which appears to overstep the limit of our present formulas is impossible—may acquire a radical and absolute certainty of the reality of the facts alluded to.”

CROMWELL F. VARLEY, F.R.S.—“Twenty-five years ago I was a hard-headed unbeliever. . . . Spiritual phenomena, however, suddenly and quite unexpectedly, were soon after developed in my own family. . . . This led me to inquire and to try numerous experiments in such a way as to preclude, as much as circumstances would permit, the possibility of trickery and self-deception.” He then details various phases of the phenomena which had come within the range of his personal experience, and continues: “Other and numerous phenomena have occurred, proving the existence (a) of forces unknown to science; (b) the power of instantly reading my thoughts; (c) the presence of some intelligence or intelligences controlling those powers. . . . That the phenomena occur there is overwhelming evidence, and it is too late now to deny their existence.”

ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE, F.G.S.—“My position, therefore, is that the phenomena of Spiritualism in their entirety do not require further confirmation. They are proved, quite as well as any facts are proved in other sciences, and it is not denial or quibbling that can disprove any of them, but only fresh facts and accurate deductions from those facts. When the opponents of Spiritualism can give a record of their researches approaching in duration and completeness to those of its advocates; and when they can discover and show in detail, either how the phenomena are produced or how the many sane and able men here referred to have been deluded into a coincident belief that they have witnessed them; and when they can prove the correctness of their theory by producing a like belief in a body of equally sane and able unbelievers—then, and not till then, will it be necessary for Spiritualists to produce fresh confirmation of facts which are, and always have been, sufficiently real and indisputable to satisfy any honest and persevering inquirer.”—*Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*.

DR. LOCKHART ROBERTSON.—“The writer” (i.e., Dr. L. Robertson) “can now no more doubt the physical manifestations of so-called Spiritualism than he would any other fact, as, for example, the fall of the apple to the ground, of which his senses informed him. As stated above, there was no place or chance of any legerdemain, or fraud, in these physical manifestations. He is aware, even from recent experience, of the impossibility of convincing anyone, by a mere narrative of events apparently so out of harmony with all our knowledge of the laws which govern the physical world, and he places these facts on record rather as an act of justice due to those whose similar statements he had elsewhere doubted and denied, than with either the desire or hope of convincing others. Yet he cannot doubt the ultimate recognition of facts of the truth of which he is so thoroughly convinced. Admit these physical manifestations, and a strange and wide world of research is opened to our inquiry. This field is new to the materialist mind of the last two centuries, which even in the writings of divines of the English Church, doubts and denies all spiritual manifestations and agencies, be they good or evil.”—From a letter by Dr. Lockhart Robertson, published in the *Dialectical Society's Report on Spiritualism*, p. 24.

NASSAU WILLIAM SENIOR.—“No one can doubt that phenomena like these (Phrenology, Homœopathy, and Mesmerism) deserve to be observed, recorded, and arranged; and whether we call by the name of mesmerism, or by any other name, the science which proposes to do this, is a mere question of nomenclature. Among those who profess this science there may be careless observers, prejudiced recorders, and rash systematisers; their errors and defects may impede the progress of knowledge, but they will not stop it. And we have no doubt that, before the end of this century, the wonders which perplex almost equally those who accept and those who reject modern mesmerism will be distributed into defined classes, and found subject to ascertained laws—in other words, will become the subjects of a science.” These views will prepare us for the following statement, made in the *Spiritual Magazine*, 1864, p. 336: “We have only to add, as a further tribute to the attainments and honours of Mr. Senior, that he was by long inquiry and experience a firm believer in spiritual power and manifestations. Mr. Home was his frequent guest, and Mr. Senior made no secret of his belief among his friends. He it was who recommended the publication of Mr. Home's recent work by Messrs. Longmans, and he authorised the publication, under initials, of one of the striking incidents there given, which happened to a dear and near member of his family.”

CONJURERS AND PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

Mediums, who are the instruments of an external agency, have, more than once, been confronted with conjurers who deceive by sleight of hand; and in the same manner that no man of science who has thoroughly and fairly investigated the phenomena has failed to become convinced of their reality, so no conjurer who has been confronted with the same facts has been able to explain their occurrence by prestidigitation. Houdin, Jacobs, Bellachini, Hermann, Kellar, and others have already confessed their powerlessness to produce under the same conditions what occurs without human intervention in the presence of a medium. We give the testimony of one of them:—

Harry Kellar, a distinguished professor of legerdemain, investigated the slate-writing phenomena which occurred in the presence of Mr. Eglinton, at Calcutta, regarding which he said:—

“In conclusion, let me state that after a most stringent trial and strict scrutiny of these wonderful experiences I can arrive at no other conclusion than that there was no trace of trickery in any form; nor was there in the room any mechanism or machinery by which could be produced the phenomena which had taken place. The ordinary mode by which Maskelyne and other conjurers imitate levitation or the floating test could not possibly be done in the room in which we were assembled.”

ADVICE TO INQUIRERS.

The Conduct of Circles.—By "M.A. (Oxon.)."

If you wish to see whether spiritualism is really only jugglery and imposture, try it by personal experiment.

If you can get an introduction to some experienced Spiritualist on whose good faith you can rely, ask him for advice; and, if he is holding private circles, seek permission to attend one to see how to conduct sances, and what to expect.

There is, however, difficulty in obtaining access to private circles, and, in any case, you must rely chiefly on experiences in your own family circle, or amongst your own friends, all strangers being excluded. The bulk of Spiritualists have gained conviction thus.

Form a circle of from four to eight persons, half, or at least two, of negative, passive temperament and preferably of the female sex, the rest of a more positive type.

Sit, positive and negative alternately, secure against disturbance, in subdued light, and in comfortable and unconstrained positions, round an uncovered table of convenient size. Place the palms of the hands flat upon its upper surface. The hands of each sitter need not touch those of his neighbour, though the practice is frequently adopted.

Do not concentrate attention too fixedly on the expected manifestations. Engage in cheerful but not frivolous conversation. Avoid dispute or argument. Scepticism has no deterrent effect, but a bitter spirit of opposition in a person of determined will may totally stop or decidedly impede manifestations. If conversation flags, music is a great help, if it be agreeable to all, and not of a kind to irritate the sensitive ear. Patience is essential, and it may be necessary to meet ten or twelve times, at short intervals, before anything occurs. If after such a trial you still fail, form a fresh circle. Guess at the reason of your failure, eliminate the inharmonious elements, and introduce others. An hour should be the limit of an unsuccessful séance.

The first indications of success usually are a cold breeze passing over the hands, with involuntary twitchings of the hands and arms of some of the sitters, and a sensation of throbbing in the table. These indications, at first so slight as to cause doubt as to their reality, will usually develop with more or less rapidity.

If the table moves, let your pressure be so gentle on its surface that you are sure you are not aiding its motions. After some time you will probably find that the movement will continue if your hands are held over, but not in contact with it. Do not, however, try this until the movement is assured, and be in no hurry to get messages.

When you think that the time has come, let some one take command of the circle and act as spokesman. Explain to the unseen Intelligence that an agreed code of signals is desirable, and ask that a tilt may be given as the alphabet is slowly repeated at the several letters which form the word that the Intelligence wishes to spell. It is convenient to use a single tilt for No, three for Yes, and two to express doubt or uncertainty.

When a satisfactory communication has been established, ask if you are rightly placed, and if not, what order you should take. After this ask who the Intelligence purports to be, which of the company is the medium, and such relevant questions. If confusion occurs, ascribe it to the difficulty that exists in directing the movements at first with exactitude. Patience will remedy this, if there be a real desire on the part of the Intelligence to speak with you. If you only satisfy yourself at first that it is possible to speak with an Intelligence separate from that of any person present, you will have gained much.

The signals may take the form of raps. If so, use the same code of signals, and ask as the raps become clear that they may be made on the table, or in a part of the room where they are demonstrably not produced by any natural means, but avoid any vexatious imposition of restrictions on free communication. Let the Intelligence use its own means; if the attempt to communicate deserves your attention, it probably has something to say to you, and will resent being hampered by useless interference. It rests greatly with the sitters to make the manifestations elevating or frivolous and even tricky.

Should an attempt be made to entrance the medium, or to manifest by any violent methods, or by means of form manifestations, ask that the attempt may be deferred till you can secure the presence of some experienced spiritualist. If this request is not heeded, discontinue the sitting. The process of developing a trance-medium is one that might disconcert an inexperienced inquirer. Increased light will check noisy manifestations.

Lastly, try the results you get by the light of Reason. Maintain a level head and a clear judgment. Do not believe everything you are told, for though the great unseen world contains many a wise and discerning spirit, it also has in it the accumulation of human folly, vanity, and error; and this lies nearer to the surface than that which is wise and good. Distrust the free use of great names. Never for a moment abandon the use of your reason. Do not enter into a very solemn investigation in a spirit of idle curiosity or frivolity. Cultivate a reverent desire for what is pure, good and true. You will be repaid if you gain only a well-grounded conviction that there is a life after death, for which a pure and good life before death is the best and wisest preparation.

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