

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.]

NOTE ON SPIRITUALISM.

[We have received permission from Mr. Laurence Oliphant to publish the following "Note," which may be of interest to our readers, as being by the author of "Sympneumata."]

Like in the regions closely connected with spiritual life of earthly man, those called the sub-surface world, the spiritual world, etc., are imperfect, impure, unreliable and confusing as a source of inspiration, and wholly unfitted for the association of true and noble manhood. The idea and the experience of acquaintance with these regions of life have at all times exercised a mighty fascination in the world; and facilities for conscious acquaintance with it appear to have marked at all ages, and in all nations, the high tide periods of development in religious, moral or intellectual enlightenment. When the palace doors of man's organism are thrown wide from time to time for royal visitation, idlers and beggars make a rush to share the entertainment. The same historic growth which, at recurring intervals, re-opens ever and again the mental and spiritual systems of some typical portion of the human family to fresh and higher truth, opens them to this invasion. There lies, therefore, with all those people who feel themselves to be charged with some responsibility in the progress of their age, a commensurate responsibility of acquainting themselves faithfully with all the phenomena of life incidental to progress, and of establishing that acquaintance by personal experience.

But serious danger is liable to assail all investigators of moral or spiritual forces, as fatal ignorance is liable to obscure the labours of those who turn away from their contemplation. Nevertheless, spite of the danger, the inward pressure felt by many natures to become the residence of acuter apprehensions about life than current doctrines recognise, is so irresistible now, that they persevere must run the danger even if they foresee it. Few thoughtful persons can fail to be aware that we of this century behold the peopled earth in a great crisis-period of its moral growth. Some few must surmise more definitely that a new thought out of the universal truths is being brought forth by this crisis, and should be received of man. Those who believe this will be obliged to institute with all conscience minute inquiries into the phenomena of the hour, and must expect to find that the sensitive communion with high potencies of knowledge that steal in, creates like sensitiveness to commerce with the chaotic spiritual regions that infest the neighbourhoods of life, hungering and begging at our doors. Neither, if we review our histories, should we be astonished that this inevitable commerce with

the spiritual world, which is an attending circumstance of periods of development, is as painful and distressing to all who face it in order to control it, as it is fascinating and enticing to all who yield irresponsibly to its influence.

The question appears to be,—How shall the phenomena called spiritualistic, be taken into account by each student of human nature—rationally, positively, sympathetically? How shall we repair in ourselves all cowardly ignorance of certain human facts, without allowing them to breed confusion, either moral or intellectual, within us? How pursue the heroic method of examination by personal experiment, without giving access to sensations of body, and impressions of mind, that we cannot afterwards control? How judge when to approach the madhouse of spiritualistic communication, and when to hold aloof? How avoid the dangerous determination to draw a limit to our knowledge of the things which agitate human hearts, and refuse to know beyond?

Man finds it difficult to-day to adopt a fixed and universal attitude towards his multiform possibilities of duty—an attitude which shall be common to men and women in all states of joy and suffering, in all conditions and circumstances and pursuits. Man with his present strength and freedom submits decreasingly to the various forms of dictation which formerly determined his attitude as a being owing duties. He stood, before, as one fearing for himself the consequences of his neglect of united duties, imposed the more generally by the various organizations of his fellow men. He took the injunctions of his State and his Church and his society to be, save on exceptional occasions, a sufficient indication of his amount of duty, and he took his obedience to their injunctions to be an all-sufficing protection to himself against misfortune here or hereafter. But the men who are hourly born refuse now more and more to accept as proper to their natures, this attitude of conformity to limited rules of duty, maintained by a sense of personal interest. The vigour of the impulses which fill them precludes the admission that duty can find a limit to its expansion; and they whose first sense is of the unity of man, deny all sense of duty to themselves. The stupendous growth in recent times of the higher moral instinct has taught man more than any of his religions or moralities would enforce, and he will do that now more faithfully, if he can, in scorn of their rewards. He is thus forced to adopt another attitude towards another law—one that descends again like all the light divine upon the shifting scenes of men, not to destroy the old, but to fulfil.

The why and the wherefore of the belief that in the opinion of many people man may allow to ripen within himself his clear sense of God's and man's bi-unity, with the access thereby engendered of deeper fountains of surer wisdom, were suggested in the volume called "Sympneumata." If people will venture to adopt these apprehensions as the concrete thought-forms best suited to lodge within the present capacity of the brain, the fresh seed out of the transcendent universe that projects itself among us, they will find the attitude of mind and spirit induced by that adoption, to be one in which they may satisfy the free and bold desires with which they are instinct.

They will have gathered by that act their scattering

faculties into the posture which receives life like that which generated their souls—as infants turn to the mothers from whom they came for sustenance of the organs built up by elements from theirs.

This attitude of receptivity to the best working idea of the age, is man's obedience to the special parental instruction under which, in his special century, he chances to appear in earth life. It is futile for him to question of this idea what measure of truth it holds. He can know nothing of quantity in truth. He can at best decide, by help of moral impulse, and of intellectual selection, to which thought among those that surge among the mental activities of his time, he shall conform his life, so as to exclude from it no ray of the full instruction that would bestow itself. The thoughts that served stupendous purposes of progress at various stages of the past, like those—to say nothing of the myriad teachings of minor potency—of Moses, Confucius, Zoroaster, Bhudda, the Greek Philosophers, Christ, or Mahomet, gave no more than the fresh and local light required for a stage of learning; but they gave, each one of them, no less; and how incalculable was the error of people living within the radius of any of these several teachings in their freshness, who refused to discern their own preparedness for rising with their time upon the pregnant doctrine. Those who can suppose that the idea of sympneumatic quality in the All is a form for highest life-inspirations now, will conform themselves, will assist all others to conform, will seek to train the young and tender to conform to all the impulses and desires and views which accompany and follow the acceptance of this supposition.

Now it will be found that holding the fact of dual personal existence as hypothesis, or as experience upon the constant plane of consciousness, and acquiring gradually that sense of actual touch upon heart and brain and fibre, of the complete divineness, each one will learn to act in every work, and study, and refreshment, as taking and giving personal confidence with God; as consulting for the minutest interests of God's and man's earth, the very divine essence that instructs; as being sure that he can know by constant readjustment of his faulty will to intimate impression, what is the Divine intention for his acts. Unless man can thus "walk with God" at this day of rich and tender sympathy for his fellows that grows upon him, he must be overwhelmed. The outer signs for action, the calls for service, the wants of all his kind, the sufferings of so many, are all too urgent and too multiform. How shall he select which things to do first, and which to leave undone, among the million, knowing the littleness of his full strength, the shortness of his longest probability of life, and the important chain of consequence that follows throughout the social mass on every impulse of simplest act performed? How can he guess rightly, guessing by blind instinct as of a mite arraying itself, originating capacity before the necessities of the universe to act upon them, without appeal towards the source of all the pity, the humane desire, the love of inmost truth that urge him still to act? And how can he think, as wisely as he would, which demand upon his modicum of power to answer hour by hour, what hourly is his best work? But like the central thought of other initiatory periods, the biune idea is iron unto the souls that rest with it, and whose conformity to it opens them to fullest participation in all humanitarian sympathies. Armed with this strength of iron, filled, to exclusion of all personal wish, with the desire to carry God's good to man, no one will suffer moral loss or victimization by error, who deeply proves the possibilities of instruction through spiritualistic phenomena, because that strength and love are touchstones alike to the propriety of the investigation and to the quality of the spirits that they meet. The serene presence, however faintly

apprized, of the sympneuma, acts upon states of association with the spiritual world, like the broad sunlight thrown into a cavern, revealing every part, and qualifying its very atmosphere. The nervous sensibility, which revives among many people at the present facilities for conscious intercourse with the sub-surface shades, is not peculiar to this age of advance into sympneumatic consciousness; it has been incidental, as before observed, to every time of stirring thought-impregnation in human history; and as this nervous sensitiveness now re-appears to afford ready access and issue through good men of fresh God-force to be received and given, so necessarily re-appears the importunity of the mere spirit-region, where better and worse among its sojourners, lay claim to man's more easily aroused attention, craving for earth vitality. When it is proper to receive infestation by spirits, now so easily incurred, can only be determined by each one according to his perceptions of his duty; as he determines when it is proper to face the emanations of disease in hospitals, the pollutions of degraded living among the swarms of the slums of cities, the chances of battles, or any other danger righteously embraced. The highly human attitude of recognition that he is a faithful organ of divine potency, serves for all action, and protects the actor. The grandest dangers, it is undoubtedly true, may result to anyone in whom the mediumistic faculties are consciously developed, and to all those who surround them,—the danger of obscuring the clear intercourse with God, the danger of being controlled by human wills, the danger of being told and telling untruth. Generally the discovery of sympneumatic facts or acceptance of the sympneumatic doctrine will arrest the habit of mediumistic possession, and destroy the interest of spiritualistic research, if they have been acquired, for there grows with the conscious growth of man's dual personality an inconceivable sense of intense and potent personality befriended and fed of God, which repels invasion, and which receives so imperatively from its great source instruction for definite and absorbing work with men, that it cannot be stayed by unimportant claims. These strong sons of men have no time nor any organic tissue to waste in admitting as a practice to their presence the dwellers in the spiritual world. Their inspiration tends invariably to spread throughout this earth.

Where their labours and the increasing consciousness that opens in them on subtle inner degrees, place them in contact with the unresting spirits, they hold themselves in earth-life as masters in their houses, neither inviting nor admitting entrance by those whose place is elsewhere; recognizing no necessary service that spirits can now perform to men; and none that men, by suffering them to press forth into the world, can perform for spirits.

But because this proves to be the case now that completer wisdom develops among the various efforts of men, no sweeping condemnation may be passed upon the tendency to desire sensational evidence of things supposed in the past confusion of ideas to be supersensual.

The multitude who have acted upon this tendency have been a multitude as mixed in respect of the value of their motives as those who have constituted the devotees of other sciences or arts. They have equally been mingled of the humane, the selfish, the pure, the gross, the rational, the credulous, the earnest, the inquisitive. In proportion to their will for good, their appeal to God, and their love for man, have the subjects of experiences, obtained by any mode of spiritualistic research, received through it more knowledge and less error. In proportion to those qualities have they had strength to eliminate a useful grain of information that they did not at first possess, and to reject the useless and the untrue; they were enabled by abnormal and extraordinary measures

to obtain evidence of facts not previously known, and to escape with moral life unharmed from the experiment, like a physician who tests the possible virtues of a poison. The value of that part that has been played by man's tendency to explore all mysteries, as much in directions he has thought immaterial, as in what he has called matter, should not be underrated because of mistakes attending it; it has been one of the mighty engines of general progress, and cannot at once become universally superfluous. Spiritualistic phenomena have yet, it may be, some cures to make on those who suffer from certain forms of mental sickness, though they may work much havoc still among those who mistake their malady, and fail to control the action of the remedy.

But the souls illumined with the fair daylight of their biune sense, are unaware of mysteries to probe or supersensual facts to prove.

The various experiences of inspiration which have always been common to strong and active temperaments, but which have never suggested mystery in their processes, become more and more familiar to these people. If they feel that they dare and must attribute to their faculties a stronger quality of biune humaneness than any which has at a previous age evolved, and which embodies a stronger quality of the divine life, they do not arrogate this to themselves as anything peculiar to persons or groups of persons, but as a fact which is the heritage of all the world.

They do not offer themselves as proofs that the biunity of man is true, nor display or seek to display their experiences of it to the public; for they believe that proof of it will spring spontaneously, with time and opportunity, in every individual experience. They perceive all the difference between health and malady,—between growth and accident,—in the contrast between sympneumatic sense and spiritualistic communications; but they cannot deny the services that these, in their own degree, have rendered to the world in its past conditions.

Nevertheless, in spite of the absolute difference which is to be appreciated, as the true result of faithful investigatory work, between the influences which descend to lift mankind up to another step of earth-condition, and the importunities of the spiritual world, it is without any doubt one of the most difficult of the duties incumbent now upon men to attain to true discrimination in these matters. It is easy to deny that what, in default of a more exact expression, may be thus called the spiritual world, exists; as easy to deny that any man is called upon to examine, or understand the nature of the impulses that set astir in him desires, emotions, aspirations, wills, pity, sympathy and love. This case of denial falls to the lot of many people, or they secure it by fixed intention; but others are endowed with natures which force them into acquaintance of some sort with the quality and form of a great part of the life which acts on them, and in them—the universal life in which their whole is but an atom. If it is true that their best comprehension must still be dim of the vast facts which they can neither regulate nor catalogue, it does not follow that they can safely and humanely refuse to testify to their acquaintance with them, because of its imperfection. The responsibilities of man would indeed be simplified, and his efforts reduced, if he could successfully refuse to contemplate or elucidate the facts of himself which he cannot clearly understand. Society at this hour, in its sore need of vivifying instruction, vibrates with the monotonous torture of its swing from pole to pole of dead level materialism of one sort or another, and of ill-regulated spiritualism of one sort or another; and those who swing to these abnormal extremes, suffer respectively in heart and brain. For the true heart of man cannot be satisfied

that science is complete which presents theories of the laws underlying the mechanisms of physical forms, and forbids all study of the movement that agitates it ceaselessly; and it resents the more this insult to the supreme interest that its existence should command, the more that it warps its growth, dethroning it from its place of empire among human faculties. So the true brain of man refuses to contemplate phenomena which result from any abdication by men of personality, responsibility or will; it cannot admit the propriety of his consciously acting as a tool to beings in another condition of life who would control his business here.

The frosts of Materialism and the fevers of Spiritualism must often be suffered nevertheless. Good men cannot all escape disease, and many attain to better moral health, both by the over-bracing of the one, and by the weakening of the other. But while they observe that this may be, wise men do not court malady in any form, nor the waste of time and tissue that it entails, and truer observation of the truths that man may grasp, as those vital to his time, the more surely may he save himself for the work to which that time has summoned him. Those who are tempted to be drawn in one direction or another towards extremes, should remember that no sciences, on the one hand, have ever produced moral instinct, and on the other hand, no spiritualistic instruction has ever produced scientific information. Materialists deal only with a portion of the existence which lies necessarily within the scope of men's activities; spiritualists deal with a part of it which they have not acquired the necessary power to dominate. Man who is in office here on earth by accident of birth in it, cannot by mere ignorance of the facts of spiritual infestation alter them; and the best men among those who ignore them, succeed in maintaining but an imperfect resistance to the desires discharged into them from the spiritual world, and do not avoid, as completely as their true natures would make them do, every personal narrow and impure tendency that plays through them.

But neither is the spiritualist who wonders at the materialist's denial of all evidence that spirits infest, possessed of any better wisdom while he proclaims them, as long as he offers to them the use of his external faculties, and permits their influence to act upon him. The world loses in either case by mismanagement of its all-important affairs, and the divine work entrusted to mankind, the work of constant progress, suffers in the hands of those who are exclusively attracted by either extreme.

Reflection, unbiassed by any tendency to these extremes, will at once convince the observer of the movements of contemporary society, that the forces of the hour move independently of their aberrations, and in spite of them. The pressure of the world's true thought is, in all the leading centres of its activity, towards the improvement, the purification, and the felicity of all men. The intelligent effort of the most highly gifted and most highly organised representatives of the time should properly be to adjust themselves to this driving movement, to take from it both courage and instruction as from the new law given once more through human voice to human ear; and to regard all personal experience as part of the education required for the performance of the age's law, and not as the basis of final instruction.

(To be continued.)

For Sale at the Office of this Paper, a perfect and clean copy of "Art Magic." This work has long been out of print, and is now very scarce. Price £5.

IN MEMORIAM—MARY FENN DAVIS.

By HESTER K. POOLE, in *The Religio-Philosophical Journal*.

The mysterious veil which separates this sphere from that above, has lifted, to let the sweetest of all sweet spirits pass upward into undying life and light. Through indescribable sufferings of body and soul, her character had been sublimated and refined, until, before the end, Mary Fenn Davis was called by many "Saint Mary," the "Mary Mother" of those who came within her influence.

The outward record of her life I shall not dwell upon at length. That will be done, later, by a worthier hand than mine. Suffice it to say that Mary Fenn was born in Clarendon, N. Y., April 17th, 1824. Her father, Chauncey Robinson, a farmer of unusual intelligence and worth, possessed much zeal in the cause of liberty and reform, and his excellent writings upon temperance, anti-slavery, &c., were privately printed for family use. His wife was his fitting companion. Of them it might be said that "the unremitting retention of simple and high sentiments in obscure duties, hardened the character to that temper which will work with honour, if need be, in the tumult or on the scaffold." Of such stock are the true nobles of our land.

There were children on either side by previous marriages of her parents, but Mary was the eldest of this union. Marked from her birth by unusual elevation and sweetness, it seemed as if her spiritual nature was open to Divine sources, even in childhood. The old neighbours remembered that they heard her devout utterances in their conference meetings with a feeling of awe. Having a thirst for knowledge and culture, which to the last was a portion of her being, Mary made strenuous exertions to secure scholastic education, and at the age of twenty-one, was graduated with honours at Ingham Institute, at Leroy, N. Y. At this date her name stands on the book as vice-president of the Alumni Association. The following year she became the wife of Gurley Love, then a teacher in Buffalo, N. Y., and at once took up her work with him. In 1854, for reasons which both considered sufficient, she secured a divorce from him in Indiana, and on April 15th, 1855, Mary Fenn became the lawful wife of Andrew Jackson Davis, then at the height of his career as seer and lecturer on the Harmonial Philosophy. According to his statements in the *Magic Staff*, she had been selected by his "Guides" as his eternal companion. During the next twenty-seven years they lived together in wonderful harmony and oneness of purpose, Mary being denominated "the Angel of the Household." She threw herself into all good works with an ardour and single-mindedness that bore fruits innumerable. Her clear and well-trained intellect, her warm and unselfish heart, were always tributary to the remarkable powers of Mr. Davis, which she reinforced and strengthened until, in consequence, her own vital forces were permanently exhausted. Her matchless sympathy for all the suffering and oppressed, her sunny and winsome gentleness, her unselfish love of service for others, created an atmosphere that attracted those even who could not comprehend the elevation, abnegation, and symmetry of a soul whose only faults were too great humility, generosity, and trustfulness. Year by year her character broadened and deepened, whilst multitudes, cherishing for her a marvellous affection, confided in her those sorrows and trials which she made her own, while she gave them of her choicest stores. Like some exquisite exotic, transplanted to the wayside to shed fragrance and beauty over the weary and heavy laden who toiled along life's dusty thoroughfare, Mary was an exhaustless source of comfort and inspiration. How many tender, heroic acts she performed for the humblest and poorest of her kind, none but the angels know. Were it fitting, deeds might be told that show how brave and grand she could be for others. For herself, she was a shrinking, non-assertive woman.

During all these years, Mary was an untiring worker for temperance, woman-suffrage, social purity,—in fact for all good things. She had a passion for serving others; above all she had a passion for woman. She understood the womanly soul, she believed in it, trusted it, wrought for its unfolding. She could hardly believe in perverse manifestations, being herself beyond all guile. She was one of the earliest members and

active workers in Sorosis, where she was honoured not only with official rank, but as a sainted mother and friend. At the last social meeting in June, she read the poem which appears in another column (p. 386), and which she afterwards sent to the *Index*. It was a bit of autobiography.

As a speaker, Mary was magnetic and delightful. With a pleasing and graceful delivery, and face fascinating as one through which shines immortal loveliness, a rare spell was cast upon her hearers. But for undue humility and a desire to put another in the foremost place, Mary Fenn might have won fame on the platform or by her pen. With a genuine literary instinct, her taste was chaste, refined, and discriminating. As editor of the *Herald of Progress* for several years, she did work that would have been creditable to any name among our authors. It is no exaggeration to say that here, almost for the first time, was to be seen a person having superior literary culture, and an equally fine culture of the soul. There was a balance between her powers that created a harmony only found in perfect music. Her rare soul soared into spiritual realms of being; it was a reservoir into which Divine inspiration poured in exquisite measure, that, in turn, became a living fountain for the uplifting of those less gifted or more grovelling. They were then touched with a curious electric sympathy, and helped to higher planes of thought and action.

After some years in the arduous work in the lecture field at the West, Mr. and Mrs. Davis purchased a pleasant home in Orange, N. J., and here, after a while, the two children of Mary, by Mr. Love, came to join her. For some years her time was spent either in work in the Children's Progressive Lyceum, on the *Herald of Progress*, with headquarters in Canal-street, New York, or in domestic duties at home. Hither came Mr. Davis's widowed sister and her three children, and here lived and died his venerable father. Harmony, serenity, and mutual affection, made this home a kind of Mecca to their acquaintances. Their burdens were many, but their faith large and unflinching. Mary's son, Charles G., grew up to be a devoted son, worthy of the mother he revered, and went to Washington, where he has ever since filled well a position in a governmental department. Fanny, the softened copy of her mother, was married in 1871, to Frank W. Baldwin, editor and proprietor of the *Orange Journal*, a young man respected by everyone. Mr. Davis's sister and her children made a home of their own, and Mr. and Mrs. Davis went to live with Mr. and Mrs. Baldwin, all afterward removing to the homestead. Little children came to gladden them, and the warm maternal heart of the grandmother threw its caressing mantle over those new lives. In a few years came the first blow; Fanny departed, leaving four little ones, the eldest scarce more than a babe. Between mother and daughter existed a love of the spirit rare even in this relationship, and bitter was the separation. But Mary became the loving mother, filling that place for ten years, with the same fidelity and thoroughness which she carried into every relation or work. In these arduous duties she was helped by their father, between whom and herself existed a remarkable relationship. Mr. Baldwin, devoted to the memory of his wife, regarded her mother with a reverence and affection that spoke volumes for his own character as well as hers. Never woman leaned upon a better or truer son.

In the year 1882, an astounding convulsion shook the very ground under the feet of Mary Fenn Davis, and in 1884, the domestic altar, reared twenty-nine years before, and cemented by mutual consecration, crumbled into dust and ashes. The foundations of love and life were shaken, and she withdrew from all old associations into unutterable loneliness and agony. She made every preparation for death which seemed imminent, and was ready to slip away, heart-broken, from a life where the most precious and real possession had proved to be only a shadow. But the grandeur of her nature and the healing power of Divine Love, were stronger than wish or will. The highest triumph of her strange life had yet to be attained. Slowly she came back, with shattered health, purer and more spiritualized than before. A host of friends gave to her their tokens of sympathetic affection, and gradually she took up her lines of work again, serene and patient, with the holy light of one set apart upon her madonna-like features. She held her peace to the world, and the public has never heard the story of her life, though it was fully confided to her friends. It was impossible for one so delicate and sensitive, to pour out her personal affairs for the delectation of the vulgar and the curious. Her life must stand for itself, against everything. She could not descend to contradiction.

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.]

Spiritualism at Home and Abroad.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—For nearly three weeks I have been travelling through Switzerland in company with two of my sons in the flesh, and frequently with our unseen group, who carried home news of us much faster than the post. One of the letters written by direct spirit power commences with a sentence in German, of which language the three remaining at home (my wife, daughter, and Mary, our medium) are ignorant, but as it is distinctly personal and private, I cannot transcribe it. One characteristic note of our little spirit-child 'Pompom,' written when some little natural longing to hear of us existed, runs as follows—it was written in my study, and on my own paper.

MY DEAR MAMA,—You must not bother about Pa or Tom, or anything about them, 'cause they is quite well and joving themselves. They like it lots. Papa say me wish me had got Mama with me. You is going to have a letter if you are good little mama to-morrow day, so be good girl.
Your little POMPOM.

Quite correct except in grammar! but this is here more faulty than usual. On one occasion my wife was unwell in the night, and when Mary went down she found a cup of *beef-tea*, hot, and ready to take up to her. Mary, thinking it was the usual cup of *tea*, was about to pour milk into it, when Pompom made her appearance and called out to stop her. Mary soon found out the mistake, and for the first time learned that my wife had been suffering during the night. These ministries, to which we have become so accustomed, continued daily during my absence, in addition to the usual fire-lighting, which has continued now for three years.

We, in our travels, had occasional hints of the presence of spirit friends; and on one occasion at the house of our friends by Lake Lucerne, who are old spiritualists.

But my object in writing this paper is mainly to direct the attention of friends who are interested in the healing phase of mediumship to a visit we paid to the *Zouave Jacob*. If any spiritualists who can speak or understand the French language elect to pay a visit to his séances, I am sure they will be greatly interested. He holds séances for healing every day at 3 o'clock at his humble dwelling, situate No. 20, Rue de Montenotte, L'Etoile, which is a few minutes' walk, by the Rue de Macmahon, from the Arc de Triomphe. I had several conversations with him through the interpretation of my son, who can converse in French, and to whom I am indebted for all that was conveyed to me in that language.

M. Jacob is an enthusiast in his work, and he may well be so, on account of the great successes which have attended it. He lives alone, cared for and attended by a lively girl, who has no friends, and whom he rescued from death, for she came to him in the last stage of consumption, suffering from continual hæmorrhage. She lives with him on the footing of a daughter, cooks for him and attends to his wants; besides which she is *clairvoyante*, and is able to assist him often *en séance*.

M. Jacob professes to impart his gift of healing to receptive people—those whose lives are pure and who have faith in God and His angels. He is corresponding with several, and it is his intention shortly to bring out a paper, weekly or fortnightly, containing records of the healing power under his and his agents' hands.

We had a pleasant evening of music at M. Jacob's, where we met an enthusiastic composer of songs, and a lady who was there to try them over in MS., for in a summer-house in his garden M. Jacob has a good piano, and a trombone upon which instrument he himself is no mean performer. Genial in manner, pure at heart, and with grateful memories of England (where I first saw him during the time of the Franco-Prussian war) we thus found him. And now let us attend one of his séances—the work of his life.

At half-past two we found his outer gate open. This is always at other times shut and guarded by two large dogs. We walk down a short avenue of trees, and find already a few poor women, who are among the halt and the lame, sitting on green forms

placed under the shade of trees. But the sun is hot, and we enter the cooler *séance* room and take our seats opposite the entrance door in order to watch the comers in. The light is dim here, for the *jalousies* are closed over the three windows which run alongside a low pitched room of about 20 feet long by 12 feet wide. Around the chocolate-coloured walls, which are relieved by busts in white of ancient heroes, are forms for the invalids to sit upon.

At three o'clock over 30 poor sick folks, mostly women, had assembled. Here was one doubled up with rheumatism, another with her hand, evidently the seat of pain, bandaged up; a man tottered in and sat down with difficulty, a boy with a face swollen by abscess, and so on. I noticed nearly all the women had brought a handkerchief or some other garment, which they spread carefully open upon their knees for the reception of the healing "*fluide émanant des esprit supérieur*." I could but say to myself, "Oh woman great is thy faith," for it was apparent.

Now M. Jacob enters, and in stern tones commands *silence*: the place becomes like a Quaker's meeting! A spirit of prayer seems to pervade the assembly. M. Jacob stands in the midst, hands folded in front, for a while engaged in silent prayer, and at intervals casting such piercing glances at each one, individually in turn, as seem to flash fire from his eyes. I am sensibly affected by an unseen force. I feel bathed in spirit power, such as I recognise at séances, when our invisible friends are at work; but it is soothing and less exhausting to me. My son feels it intensely, and twitches. Some around us seem to be utterly oblivious to any power; others are nervously twitching, and two writhing under it. For about twenty minutes M. Jacob thus stood quietly, alternately praying and surveying his group of sick folk around him; and then he visited one by one individually, asking each what was the ailment, and then touching or stroking the part affected for a few seconds only. On going up to a man, who hobbled in with difficulty, he rubbed his knees and legs, and commanded him in military tones to walk. The man rose and walked, to his utter amazement, up and down the room, apparently without pain, and exclaimed, "C'est bien!" On going to the woman with her hand bandaged up, he told her to remove the covering, when a frightfully swollen hand, and a large whitlow on one finger was revealed. I trembled for the woman as M. Jacob took hold of the finger, and asked for a pin. But without a flinch from her he probed it, and squeezed the matter out upon the floor. A large quantity of blood and matter was thus extracted *without any pain*; to me it was marvellous, but there was no mistake about it, and that one case alone would, to my mind, establish the healing gift. But I need not—in fact I could not—recount all the cases. These were the worst. The little boy laughed as Jacob pinched the abscess upon his cheek, and women calmed down as he approached them. As he passed me he simply stroked my forehead and touched me in the pit of my stomach, where I had felt fatigue from overwork, but he could not make "a case" of me! The séance ended by M. Jacob walking round with some of his magnetized photographs, which the poor people bought of him for what they could afford to give. Some took one and gave him half-a-franc, others gave a franc; and I never had more pleasure in my life than in casting more than they all into the treasury, although I am convinced if the *Master* had been there his verdict would have been as of old to many a poor woman, "Of a truth I say unto you that *this poor widow* hath cast in more than they all."

MORELL THEOBALD.

Dr. Herschell's Suggestion.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—As Dr. Herschell has done me the honour to mention me as a suitable colleague with himself in his suggested observation of "S. J. D.'s" trick-writing performance, for the purpose of comparing it with the conditions under which Mr. Eglinton's psychography is obtained, I will venture to submit to him that the proposed trial is unnecessary. "S. J. D." has himself described the conditions under which he observed the writing with Mr. Eglinton, and nothing can be more essentially unlike the conditions of Mrs. Sidgwick's conjurer "Mr. A." (*alias* "S. J. D."), which she described, and characterised as the same as Mr. Eglinton's.—Your obedient servant,

C. C. MASSEY.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.—Several communications stand over until next week.

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC.

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

Light:

SATURDAY, AUGUST 21ST, 1886.

THE CHARM OF SPIRITUALISM.

It is difficult for those who openly or covertly oppose Spiritualism, to conceal their impatience and chagrin at the rapid and universal diffusion of belief in the new philosophy, perceptible in all intelligent communities throughout the civilized world. They see that the frauds and impostures practised in the name of Spiritualism, and at times exposed or silenced, are no bar to its progress. They dare not challenge public debate or contest with it, because they are conscious of great uncertainty as to the issue, and they could not afford to be discomfited. They are not at all indifferent to its spread and growth. On the contrary, they are watching it intently and measuring its strides with much alarm and ill-nature.

These people are to be found chiefly in the religious sects as teachers and leaders, and also in those intrenched conservative circles of every community who are content with rut and routine, and who hate change and disturbance in any of their social fixtures. And so it has come to pass that Spiritualism is quietly forging ahead, happy in the enjoyment of the "let alone" policy. It is considered the wisest course to let Spiritualism severely alone, particularly so as it is embracing the most respectable and intelligent. The acquisition of unquestionable intellect and character in the ranks of spiritualistic believers, is an effective damper to opposition.

In view of the foregoing, the pertinent inquiry comes almost unsolicited, What is the cause of this remarkable growth of Spiritualism? How does it happen that spiritualistic doctrines are enjoying such prosperous and increased adoption? If our active and semi-active opponents could only bring themselves to the task of a candid and impartial examination of these questions, we affirm that satisfactory answers would be forthcoming. They would doubtless find many explanations. But chief among them would be the charm of Spiritualism. We use the word "charm," because the reasonableness of the claims of Spiritualism act like a charm on the intelligent understanding that accepts them.

Just as soon as a thorough investigation of the phenomena has been made they are accepted as the most realistic of all evidence offered at the bar of the individual judgment. And acceptance of the phenomena is followed closely by a full belief in the logical teachings deduced therefrom. There is nothing preposterous or enigmatical in the doctrines of Spiritualism. They appear to the mind thus prepared the most natural and reasonable doctrines in

the world for man to believe. And so they truly are. Their reasonableness then is their charm, because they are thoroughly consistent with the phenomenal facts. Facts are, or ought to be, the foundation of every temple of truth, and conspicuously so of the majestic, heaven-domed temple which, for want of a better name, is called Spiritualism.

So rational and so harmonious with the needs and hopes of human nature is Spiritualism that if the highest combined wisdom and intellectuality of the race should be called upon to devise a destiny commensurate with the present and future of man, it seems as if the inevitable result of such a task would be the unanimous adoption of the essential truths of Spiritualism. The charm and reasonableness of spiritualistic philosophy, we repeat, is that it is natural. Indeed, Spiritualism is nothing more or less than a continuation of human nature, from the present visible and tangible order to the enlarged, refined, and spiritualized order of a higher life.

A DISCLAIMER FROM "S. J. D."

I wish to contradict the impression that seems to be gaining ground to the effect that, at the time of witnessing certain slate-writing experiments with Mr. Eglinton in 1884, I was a skilled conjurer and therefore competent to record the same from a conjurer's point of view.

Such an impression is erroneous.

I went to Mr. Eglinton on June 30th, 1884, and I do not remember ever having previously performed a single conjuring trick as applied to slate-writing, and also the question of conjuring in any other form had in no way interested me.

Previously to my second séance, October 9th, 1884, I made some three or four attempts with a thimble, pencil, and a slate held under the table, and with a trick slate made of cardboard, with a movable flap and blotting paper.

This limited experience would scarcely entitle me to be ranked as one who had "specially studied and practised the art of simulating the slate-writing under conjurer's conditions."

In 1884 my powers of observation also must have likewise been very limited, for the fact has been brought to my notice, that certain "manifestations" which I was then led to believe proceeded from my "developing mediumship" turned out to be simple hoaxes imposed upon me by two persons who have since confessed to the methods they adopted in order to deceive me.

With my present extended experiences, when I now consider my two séances recorded in "LIGHT" in conjunction with the testimony of other witnesses, I cannot escape the conclusion that my own accounts were vitiated by the very want of that knowledge which Mr. Eglinton's letter lately published in your columns seems to lead people to suppose I then possessed.

But, with respect to these questions, I understand the Society for Psychical Research will shortly deal.

S. J. D.

August 14th, 1886.

[We accept S. J. D.'s correction with regard to his conjuring capabilities two years ago. But as to Mr. Eglinton's statement of what S. J. D. told him on this point—probably on the visit of the 9th October—we must point out that there is no contradiction in the above letter. Nor does it seem to have occurred to S. J. D., after he had attained his "present extended experience," that it would be only commonly fair to the public and to Mr. Eglinton to revisit the latter before lending himself to a comparison completely opposed to his own unretracted testimony. This omission would be censurable without more; but the fact that he took particular care to remain unknown in the part he was playing, and still avoids explanation by not avowing it, cannot but produce a far more unfavourable impression of his conduct. And as he makes no attempt to deal with his own evidence, or to show how this is at all consistent with conjuring possibilities, the sincerity of his present doubts, if indeed we can understand his language as distinctly alleging them, must be open to question.—ED.]

The recent fire completely upset the arrangements for the production of this Paper; consequently we have to request the indulgence of subscribers for any omissions in the dispatch of their copies, the sending out of the Paper having been entrusted to new hands.

THE PROGRESS OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM IN GERMANY.

(From the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*.)

BY DR. G. BLEEDE.

As American Spiritualists, as a rule, hear very little of the present state of our cause in Germany, I may be allowed to briefly refer to this matter, the more so, as it will give pleasure to all true adherents to learn that the cause is progressing most favourably in the "Country of the Thinkers." That there, in the fatherland of learning and deep philosophical thought, the development of modern Spiritualism would be a different one from the course it took in our own practical land, the country of facts, could be expected. Although modern Spiritualism is based on plain sensual facts—some of them looking as if more destined to the amusement of children than to throwing light on the highest truths—we could expect that these facts, even if proved as such, would not satisfy the minds of German thinkers, but would rouse their innate tendency to philosophical penetration and speculation. This was soon illustrated by the example of Prof. Fred. Zöllner, who, as soon as he became convinced of the "miraculous" facts occurring in the presence of Henry Slade, took eagerly hold of them as props of his already conceived physical theory of a "fourth dimension." What the effect of Zöllner's conversion to the "transatlantic humbug" on the scientific as well as unscientific minds of his countrymen was, is known enough to be here repeated. He was scorned and ridiculed, and would speedily have met a worse fate, if death had not unexpectedly removed him to a higher sphere of action. When this deep and intrepid thinker left only his memory, sacred to all true lovers and explorers of truth, we were afraid that the traces of the path he had struck for modern Spiritualism in Germany would soon be abolished again, and that another generation might pass before the fuller dawning of spiritual light upon the errors of materialism. In this apprehension we have fortunately been mistaken. Slade and Zöllner—brief as their co-operation was—had not worked in vain, their example had taken a deeper root in the German mind. They had just come in time; Spiritualism was in the air, and the mantle, which the great astronomer, physicist, and philosopher had untimely dropped, has fallen on the shoulders of other clear and fearless explorers of the realm of the unseen, who promise to continue the work of Zöllner, and to lay at least the foundation for a grand scientific dome, to comprise and reduce to order and system the enormous masses of a disorderly substructure of facts.

There is good ground for the hopes that Germany will soon form an important link in the development of modern Spiritualism, and not only—as some may be inclined to fear—in the way of metaphysical speculation, but under the guidance of sound logical reasoning, based on induction and sustained by undeniable facts. This hope is justified by the recent appearance of a new German monthly, devoted to spiritual matters and—as its title says—destined "to give to the supernatural conception of the world upon a monistic basis, an historical and experimental foundation."

The editors gave their periodical the appropriate name of *Sphinx*. The fable of that antique monster, one half a beautiful woman, the other a ferocious lion, ready to tear to pieces those who came her way and could not solve the riddles she proposed to them, is well known. It is a fine allegory of the grand and awful enigma of life, or in a wider scope, nature. For nature and life are synonymous. There is nothing outside of nature as there is nothing outside of life. Both are grand and beautiful beyond conception, both mysterious, full of riddles, both loving mothers extending their bountiful breasts, both stern judges and inexorable avengers of every disobedience to their laws (every failure to solve their riddles).

The editor of the *Sphinx*, Dr. Hübbe Schleiden, very fittingly, therefore, introduces his preface by saying:—

"To-day still, as in olden times, the Sphinx is sitting at the life-course of man, and the riddle she to-day offers to him for solution is himself and his relation to nature, to the kosmos."

The new periodical, which is got up in elaborate, faultless style, has the promise of co-operation of the most noted names in modern Spiritualism, such as Mr. Alf. R. Wallace and others in England, Prof. Coues of Washington, Councillor of State Alex. Aksakof, Baron Lazar Hellenbach, Dr. V. Kiesenwetter, who is singularly posted in the magical phases of former times, while as

its principal and most valuable contributor in the numbers of the first half-year, appears Dr. Carl Du Prel of Munich, a gentleman of high respectability and literary note, whose studies on magical and spiritual topics, published a few years since in the most popular German periodicals, as *North and South*, *Over Land and Sea*, &c., could not fail to make a serious impression on the general as well as the scientific public. Dr. Carl Du Prel is pre-eminently fitted to become the apostle of modern Spiritualism in Germany by his metaphysical endowments, and his deep and complete learning in history and philosophy. He, too, like the lamented Zöllner and Baron Hellenbach, is a disciple of the greatest philosophical genius of modern times, Immanuel Kant, who, with the intuition of genius, had a foresight and premonition of the signs which, a century after him, were to become the objects of scientific research.

With whatever pseudonyms or euphonisms the tendencies of *Sphinx* may be palliated, that its editor and contributors are "modern Spiritualists" in the sense of Hare, Wallace, Crookes, Varley, Flammarion and many others, appears certain. [By a modern Spiritualist we understand one who is convinced (knowledge not belief) of the reality of a Spirit-world and our intercourse with it, and therefore sure of a conscious individual existence of a man in a life after this.]

The principal contribution of Dr. Du Prel to *Sphinx*, running through five numbers, was an elaborate essay on "The Astral Body," in which the author tried to prove that the "soul" was not only the feeling and thinking, but also the organizing principle of nature. This article, besides showing the general tendency of our author's argument, establishes at the same time his stand-point in regard to the most mooted and assaulted fact of modern Spiritualism, namely, materialization.

His arguments are of wide bearing, practically as well as logically, and which, coming from one of the leading philosophical minds of present Germany, proved not only the deep conviction of their author, but also his practical training to this conviction. Dr. Du Prel is a frequenter and leader of spiritual circles, as will appear from the report of remarkable séances held at Munich at the time of the death of King Ludwig I., which we give below. No wonder that our author is not only inspired with the paramount importance of modern Spiritualism, but publicly declares his confidence in its grand and victorious future. He wrote a short time ago in No. 22 of the popular illustrated monthly, *Ueber Land und Meer* (Over Land and Sea):—

"One can, therefore, be bold enough to prophesy, that before our century will come to an end, Spiritualism will have conquered the chairs of our Universities!"

The *Neue Wiener Tageblatt*—New Daily of Vienna—recently published the following communication of its Munich correspondent:—

"For my entertainment after my arrival at Munich a spiritistic séance was arranged for the 5th of June. On that day there was in the city not the least presentiment of the events which soon after were to follow with the speed of lightning. Allow me a short description of the scenery: The actors consisted of a spiritistic president of a celebrated name (Dr. C. Du Prel), my brother, three ladies, and myself. After my brother, the medium, had taken his seat on a divan, we, joining hands, formed a group around him. Thus the "chain," according to the rules of Spiritism, was closed. After about four minutes the eyes of my brother closed, his head fell backwards, his arms and feet stretched out and became rigid, his hands were icy-cold, and with a forcible push the stiff body slid down from the divan as far as only the shoulders and the back of the head to touch it. Suddenly a convulsive twitching of the arms set in; the breast heaved with quick and powerful inspirations, and hissing sounds came from the mouth. 'A spirit is present!' the president uttered in a whisper. At once the medium began to speak. I must confess that I shrank from more than amazement, for—I heard speak Ludwig I.* That was his voice, his hasty, precise manner of talking. With the most touching words he lamented the fate of his house and of Bavaria. Then all was quiet again. I had scarcely had time enough to consider what I had witnessed, when the medium commenced again. This time it was Maximilian I., the father of the King, who spoke. Here, too, the character of the late King was unmistakable. He spoke in the same mild and heart-winning way as he was wont to do in life. The topic of his lament was the unfortunate and un-

* The grandfather of the ill-fated King.

deserved fate of his son. As there was at Munich a general apprehension that King Ludwig I. would succumb to a stroke of apoplexy at the brain or the heart, I could not refrain from putting to the spirit the question, whether the King would die in such a way? In answer to this question there came only the one word: 'Unnatural,' then all was quiet; the medium did not move any more, and he was brought back by the usual fanning. I have only to remark to this occurrence that my brother does not in the least possess the talent to imitate any person in voice and speech, least of all the two Kings, with whom, being a child during their reign, he never met. This was the first séance.

"The second, in which the table had to act as interpreter between us and the spirits, took place on the very day of the death of King Ludwig I.; that is exactly at the hour when, according to the despatches of Baron Washington from Castle Berg, the King had entered upon the last fatal promenade with Dr. von Gudden. The same circle, but without the former spiritistic president, had taken seats at a little round table, resting on three feet, on which the hands of the sitters were placed in expectation of something to happen. It did not last long before the tripod commenced to make a good deal of noise. In this case the doctrines of the Spiritists enjoin to put questions. I suggested jokingly: Perhaps the lady in black will pay us a visit? At this remark the table in the fullest sense of the word began to rave. As I would not let slip the opportunity of interviewing such a lady, I directed a question to her: 'Can you tell me how long the King will live yet?' Two weighty blows were the answer. 'Does that mean years?' No sign. 'Months?' No sign. 'Days?' No sign. 'Hours?' There the table broke into almost a galloping motion, so that we were scarcely able to keep our hands on it. Two hours, then! We went to bed. At the dawn of the morning the terrible news of the King's death swept tremblingly through Munich! According to the official despatch the time at which in the evening we had sought information from the spirits, exactly coincided with that when the royal tragedy at Berg reached the catastrophe. As simply as my observation was made, I have related it here."

(We refrain from entering upon any critical remarks concerning these two interesting manifestations, of which the first one, which occurred in the presence of Dr. Du Prel, bears all the stamps of genuine spirit action, by complete possession of a medium, whilst the second may be explained by mere clairvoyance.)

We make the above extended quotations in order to give the American reader some idea of the present state of Spiritualism in Germany, a more correct one, anyhow, than he could gather from the ordinary German press in this and in the old country. Here, being mostly in the hands of materialists, atheists, and nihilists, it continues, with only a few exceptions, its persecution of modern Spiritualism, being as venomous as it is ignorant, or rather, venomous because ignorant. Our report, stating but a few scattered facts, reveals a very promising state of our cause in Germany; it shows that the "nation of thinkers" is neither devoid of interest in the matter, nor without able leaders and well-conducted organs, nor neglecting that most important means of propaganda—the private circle. It is not to be doubted, that the great truths of modern Spiritualism will conquer the German mind in a somewhat different way, by means of scientific persuasion, but we must remember that "many ways lead to Rome."

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.

* Allusion to a popular belief in Munich, that before any important or fatal event in the royal family of Bavaria the apparition of a "lady in black" is seen in the royal residence.

THE MEDIUMSHIP OF J. V. MANSFIELD.

DR. WOLFE, a veteran investigator, spent several months investigating Mr. Mansfield's phase of mediumship, and unqualifiedly endorses him. He says:—

"I will anticipate the desire of the candid reader, and state fairly what I know about this singularly endowed man and medium. It is not expected, of course, that I should speak of his private character further than to say, if I had detected anything upon which I could have rested a suspicion that his mediumship was a human contrivance, and in any sense unworthy the great cause to which it is devoted, I should have relentlessly exposed the fraud, and abated not a jot or tittle of my zeal in condemnation of the man. I believe Mr. Mansfield to be an honest man; and that he is a genuine medium for the spirit-world to communicate with this I have ample proof. . . . It will be seen from Mr. Mansfield's card, that his specialty is to answer sealed letters. Hence he is known far and wide as the spirit-postmaster. . . . It is a curiosity to look over the outsides of the letters Mr. Mansfield receives. On the supposition that he is a trickster, the writers frequently seal their letters with Spalding's glue, cover them with paint or varnish, smear them with wax, and I have seen them stitched by a sewing-machine, until the decimal of every square inch of the envelope was secured with thread.

. . . . Mr. Mansfield and myself would take 'turn and turn about' in fetching the mail from the post-office, he bringing my letters and I his. I have by this arrangement been the first to handle the letters sent to the 'spirit-postmaster.' . . . The letters I would bring to Mr. Mansfield very rarely got out of my sight before they were answered, and returned with the answer to their authors. The people for whom Mr. Mansfield performed this service exhibited by their method of sealing their letters, a suspicion of fraud, or that their letters were opened or tampered with. I failed to make any discovery that would tend in the least to confirm such impressions, and I certainly did not lack opportunity to detect such practice, if any had been attempted. It may be of general interest to know exactly how the 'spirit-postmaster' answers sealed letters.

"Being seated at his desk, I would put before him a half-dozen letters, bearing post-marks, perhaps, from as many different States in the Union. The outside envelopes are now removed, and thrown in the waste-basket. He has now before him a half-dozen securely sealed letters, without a mark or superscription to afford the slightest clue to the authors, or to the name of the spirit addressed. Over these he now passes, very lightly, the tips of his fingers, mostly of the left hand. He touches them so delicately that you could fancy him picking up gold-dust, a grain at a time. He passes from one to the other until all have been touched. If no response is elicited, he puts them in a drawer and locks them up. In half an hour or more, he renews the effort to obtain an answer to the letters. They are again before him, and like a bee passing from flower to flower, his finger-tips pass from one to the other of the letters. He turns them over and senses every part of the envelope. The glue, the paint, or wax, has almost destroyed the magnetic relation of the writer; but he finally gathers it up, when his left hand closes with a spasm. That is the signal of success. The spirit addressed in the letter, that exerted this strange influence on his hand, is present, and is prepared to answer it. The other letters are now pushed aside, and this particular one remains before the medium, with the forefinger of the left hand touching it. He has in a convenient place long slips of white paper and a pencil, to be ready for the emergency. All is now ready for the writing—the pencil at rest in the right hand. The point of interest is now in the finger of the left hand touching the letter. It begins to tap on the letter like the motion of a telegraph key, making like irregular sounds. Simultaneous with this tapping the writing begins with his right hand, and, without intermission, continues until the communication is finished. There is no rest after the influence begins until the completion of the work. I have seen as many as twelve strips of paper closely written upon at one sitting, though three or four, perhaps, would be a fair average of the length of the communication received. The writing is very rapidly executed; and varies in penmanship, but not much.

"When the writing is completed, the left hand, which has been closed all the time with a spasm, now opens, and the influence is gone. It is only for a few seconds, for it returns again to write the address of the person to whom the letter is to be sent, on the envelope. This being done, the letter and answer are imme-

diately inclosed in the directed envelope, and promptly mailed. The whole thing is business-like, orderly and straight.

"I have watched this operation closely, and have seen it repeated a thousand times. If there are many letters to answer, Mr. Mansfield very rarely spares the time to read what he has written; but if he has a little leisure he reads the communications carefully, and seems to study them with the interest of a student. I have seen him for an hour at a time trying to understand the exact sense of one of these strange missives, using an 'unabridged Webster' to assist him to comprehend the definition of words, strange and unknown to him. When names were given in the communication, the fact was always of more than usual interest to him. These were what he called his tests. While reading a letter, I have seen his eyes fill with tears, as the pathetic story of a spirit would be read, in which perhaps the first announcement of its transition would be communicated to friends in the form: I remember the letter of a young man who, in the early excitement, went to California to obtain gold. He was an only son, and the stay and support of a widowed mother. He had been successful in his object, and had transmitted the evidence of his success, in handsome amounts, to his far-away home in the East. His preparations for leaving were completed, and the last letter written to his anxiously awaiting parent. Day by day he was expected home. The little cottage was kept in order, to give him a pleasant welcome; whilst a doting mother's heart was warm with love to greet his return. He did not come. The distance was long, very long; he must have been detained; perhaps he had changed his mind, and gone into the mountains again. Weary months passed away, and still that mother awaited the return of her manly son. But he came not.

"One day she received a letter. It was not in familiar writing, but the language was couched in the same affectionate terms with which her son was wont to address her. It was the story of his death, by fever, on the isthmus, with all the particulars attending it. He had hoped to comfort her old age; and be with her in the closing hours of life, but it was not so ordained; but he wanted his mother to be comforted, and reconciled to the will of his Heavenly Father who doeth all things well. He was happy, and would meet her first when she entered the spirit-world, and would take her to a beautiful home he was preparing for her.

"A recital like the above would affect him to tears. He would say, 'Wolfe, I'd give anything to be assured that the story in this communication is true!'

"Do you doubt it, Mr. Mansfield?' I would ask.

"Oh, no; I have no reason to doubt it. I have never known a statement to be false that came in this way; and yet this thing is so marvellous that I cannot comprehend it at all. I sometimes feel that my life is a dream and my existence a myth, and that there is nothing real or substantial in all we see. Yesterday, a little boy wrote to his mother trying to comfort her in his absence. To complete his identity, he recalled the particulars of his death by drowning; how he had gone into the creek to bathe, and by accident got into deep water; how he struggled to save himself, but felt no pain as he quietly yielded up his life. He spoke of the discovery of his body; named the person who found it; how the news of his death caused his mother to swoon; in what condition she again beheld him, and of her loud lamenting over his lifeless body; how she kissed his cold lips and forehead again and again, crying 'O, my son, my son!' Then again, he spoke of her placing her picture on his pulseless heart, and filling the coffin in which his body lay with flowers. It was a pitiful letter, and has made me feel sad ever since I mailed it.

"Perhaps it will be a comfort to the mother to learn that her child still lives, and is able to return and watch over her,' I said.

"That is very true,' he replied; 'perhaps it is all right, as friend Childs puts it; and we ought not to feel so.'

"I have known Mr. Mansfield to be suddenly influenced to write; and without a break in the conversation, he has seated himself at the table, when a long letter has been written. I say influenced to write. This is known by a slight muscular spasm of the arm, which will generally show itself when he folds his arms across his breast, or clasps his hands, or rests them on his knees. These positions form what the spirits term an electro-magnetic circuit, enabling them to approach and influence the nerve-centre of his motor system. He seems, at such times, to be inadequate to the exercise of his will-power over the motor nerves; but his thinking faculties are as lucid as when not under any influence at all. Blind Tom I have seen with his right hand

playing, in a very clever manner, a piece of difficult music; while at the same time he performed with his left hand another intricate composition, and set in different time. While thus engaged differently on his right and left, he sings a song different in time, the sentiment of which he must memorize. In like manner, I have seen Mr. M. writing two communications at the same time, one with the right hand, the other with the left, and both in language of which he had no knowledge. While thus engaged, he has conversed with me on matters of business, or continued conversation begun before this dual writing commenced. It may thus be seen that while Mr. M. himself talked in a very sensible manner, as men ordinarily talk, both his right and left arms and hands were engaged talking too. On one occasion, I remember distinctly, while Mr. M. was writing with both hands, in two languages, he said to me, 'Wolfe, did you know a man in Columbia by the name of Jacobs?' I replied affirmatively; when he continued, 'He is here; and wants to let you know that he passed from his body this morning.' This announcement proved to be true. But what we are most interested in, is the triple manifestation presented on this occasion: Both hands engaged, not on the same subject, but each differently, writing, one in a back hand, the other straight, as we ordinarily do; the matter written differing in character; the language different; and yet, while our very senses ache to think of it, a third man speaks, and announces a startling fact which had occurred, since we were seated in that room, several hundred miles distant! What solution can be offered to this triple manifestation of intelligence, power, and organization?"

THE OPINIONS OF A BUSINESS MAN ON SPIRITUALISM.

(From *The Beacon Light*.)

"Yes, the subject of Spiritualism is full of problems of the deepest interest," said a gentleman who is well-known in business circles the other day. "I do not bother my neighbours with them, however; in fact, I seldom mention the subject to unbelievers,—firstly, because those who are ignorant in the matter regard a man who knows something about it as a kind of lunatic; and secondly, because I think that people who really wish to learn the facts will investigate for themselves instead of arguing."

"Then you really believe that the dead return?"

"Why not? If you come to think of it, the only strong *prima facie* reason for discrediting it comes from theological prejudice. The clergy has instilled into Protestants that when they die they are stowed away 'under the altar' to wait 'the day of judgment.' Do away with that utterly gratuitous supposition, which is contrary to the whole course and continuity of nature, and you get rid of the mental difficulty which so many people experience in accepting as a fact their own continued existence, which they mechanically profess to believe."

"But is not Spiritualism contrary to the whole course and continuity of nature? Those whose lives have been devoted to a study of nature declare it to be so. 'Crede expertum.' Ask Huxley, Tyndall and company."

"The scientists, as a class, have put themselves out of court in the matter, by declaring, without examining the evidence, that the spiritual world has no real existence, and that even if it had it would present no interest to science, whose province it is to deal with material things. The scientists, however, have got their hands pretty full already, for the material universe is a very wonderful and beautiful one; and a thousandth part of it is not yet explored. Science has got its own work to do, and you do not perhaps realise how difficult it is for a man who has just read an elaborate paper before a learned society upon 'The inner layer of epithelium (cells of the cuticle of the abdominal wall of a mouse)' to settle his mind down to the consideration of the immortal life of man."

"Still a grain of fact is worth a ship-load of fancy."

"The belief of all ages, my dear sir, has been that the spiritual world is not a matter of fancy. You must not forget that materialism in its present form is a growth almost as new in the world as modern spiritualism itself, and has to-day probably much fewer adherents. The main question between Materialism and Spiritualism is, after all, an exceedingly simple one, namely: whether the whole of nature is comprised in what we can perceive by our external senses, or whether there is a part of nature, and

probably by far the larger part, of which at present we have hardly any cognizance—not having been endowed with the organs and faculties necessary to perceive it spontaneously during our earth-life; but which is just as real as the part of nature of which we have now an everyday experience.”

“Is it not hard to believe that if this other part of nature had any real existence, people would not long ago have found out about it?”

“There never has been any age or country in which men have not had glimpses of the invisible world. All sacred books are full of it; so, even, is sacred history. It is only a spiritualist, however, that can understand these illusions, and separate the wheat from the chaff. The naturalist dismisses them all as stupid inventions, and each religionist swallows his own marvels on the half shell and turns up his nose at those of his neighbours. New things are sometimes true; however, you must remember that ever since man appeared on the earth until a few years ago, he believed that when he looked at the rainbow he saw all there was of it; but lastly, as you know, scientists have discovered that beyond the visible spectrum of the sun there is a far larger invisible spectrum which has a much more powerful effect, both chemical and vitalizing. Now suppose that you or I were to say to the scientist: ‘I cannot see your spectrum or feel it, or smell it, or taste it, or hear it. Bah! what ridiculous nonsense you scientists talk about new-fangled invisible spectrums!’ Would not the scientist answer: ‘My friend, the invisible spectrum requires certain conditions to become perceptible; its real existence, however, is easily demonstrated to the candid inquirer, and moreover its action in the universe accounts for many phenomena which were inexplicable before?’ But when any one says to Mr. Scientist that there is an invisible universe whose existence he could, if he took the trouble, verify even more easily than that of his invisible spectrum, he fails to perceive what a simpleton he makes of himself by asserting that an invisible universe cannot exist because it requires unusual conditions in order to make itself evident, and does not at all hours spontaneously affect his five senses.”

“But you must allow that the existence of hitherto unknown forces in nature is a very different thing to the ephemeral appearance of solid materialized forms.”

“Our belief in both comes from the same source, namely: what our senses tell us and what we infer from the information thus received. There seems, however, to be something in the human mind to accept the reality of a hypothetical force rather than an unexplained but actual phenomenon, for which reason I would not advise any investigator to witness materialization before he has passed through an elementary course of the minor details. These he will of course attribute to psychic force or some such power, and therefore he will be able to believe them to be facts. It is wonderful how long some investigators cling to psychic force. I have known a table to follow a man around the room by itself, and intelligent messages to be rapped out on any article of furniture indicated, and then was solemnly assured that it was nothing but psychic force that did it. When the neophyte begins to get direct slate-writing, and his hair stroked by a detached hand, he finds his psychic-force theory getting shaky; but it is too late to go back then, for a belief in the phenomena has crept into his mind under the psychic force pretence. When he sees an old friend whose funeral he had perhaps attended, and that old friend comes to him apparently as much alive and as solid as he is himself; shakes hands, slaps him on the back, laughs and chats, and then quietly says good-bye, and sinks bodily into the carpet at his feet, I tell you his psychic force theory dematerializes also.”

“Where is one to get his first lesson in table-rapping?”

“At home, my dear sir. You would be astonished if you knew how many thousands of families all over the world now sit for the phenomena—and hundreds of them get manifestations equalling if not exceeding those of the public mediums. It is kept profoundly secret, however, as a rule. You have doubtless heard of the philosophers who were enjoying a joke together when one of them said: ‘We must be serious now, here comes a fool.’ The opponents of Spiritualism don’t seem to be aware that if they succeed to-day in suppressing every public medium, and destroy the whole enormous literature on the subject, they would not check the development of Spiritualism to an appreciable degree, for the simple reason that people now know that latent mediumship is comparatively common. Even as lately as ten years ago a medium was supposed to be a very exceptionally endowed person—a kind of natural human loadstone who had a

monopoly of the mysterious power of attracting spirits; now, however, it has been discovered that just as artificial magnets can be made out of a piece of steel, so can mediumship be artificially induced in a considerable proportion of persons. Spontaneous mediumship is, no doubt, extremely rare, but there are probably very few families in which one or more members would not develop some degree or phase of the power were they to give as much time and patience to it as would be required to learn some trivial accomplishment.”

“It is a pity that men of science don’t take the subject up.”

“Perhaps so; but for my part I regard any appeal to men of science to pass judgment on Spiritualism as a complete farce. It is the only instance I ever heard of in which people who are absolutely and confessedly ignorant of a subject are called upon to give a verdict about it. What kind of a scientist, pray, would you have take Spiritualism up? A geologist? a mathematician? a botanist? a philologist? Go through the whole list and you will not find one whose accumulation of special knowledge entitles his opinion in this case to any more value than yours or mine.”

“It is the scientific method of treating things that men acquire who devote their lives to science, that would be valuable in estimating Spiritualism?”

“Each science has got its own set method of dealing with its subject matter, and its own particular apparatus and set of rules of procedure, which are generally inapplicable to any other. In this case we have to deal with an entirely novel set of phenomena, and to estimate evidence of a new kind; and a legal training would, to my mind, be a better preparation for the investigation of Spiritualism than scientific studies; but an intelligent man goes further in the séance-room than either lawyer or scientist. He is more inclined to observe than to experiment, and to wait and let the manifestations develop without interruption; moreover, he is not so wise in his own conceit, and has fewer pet theories to defend, and is therefore more open to receive the evidence as it comes. As to its being necessary to have had a scientific training in order not to be fooled by mediums, that is all rubbish. Scientists have no monopoly of common sense. There are lots of firm believers in Spiritualism who could double discount most scientists in knowledge of human nature, capacity to detect fraud, and hard-headed all-round shrewdness. In fact, it is an open secret that the man of science is generally more or less of a simpleton outside of his laboratory or lecture-hall. He would quickly find out what a stiff-jointed ignoramus he is in some things were he to enter a newspaper office or other live business; and my experience has been that he is the biggest kind of a blunderer in the séance-room. No one has more respect for men of science in their own sphere than I have. The only pity is that when they modestly confess, as they generally will, that they know but little after all—they should mentally add, as they sometimes do: ‘But what we don’t know isn’t worth knowing.’”

AFTER THE STORM.

At night the sky was black with sullen clouds,
In swaying torrents fell the hoarded rain;
The lightning’s flash revealed the misty shrouds
Of wind-swept trees, writhing as if in pain.

At morn, the blackness vanished from the sky,
O’er the glad meadows golden sunlight poured,
Leaves glanced, flowers bloomed, bright song-birds floated by,
And far and fair the infinite heaven soared.

O heart on which the bitter blast has blown,
On which at dead of night the lightning fell;
O human heart, appalled, bereft, and lone,
While waves of anguish darkly surge and swell,—

Let the storm rage, nor fear its turbulent roar,
Though sorrow’s whirlwind bow thee to the dust,
Round thee are sheltering arms unfelt before,
And thou shalt rise into diviner trust.

Peace lies in wait for thee, grief-stricken one!
Morning shall dawn, and soft airs fan thy brow;
And rays will reach thee from the Eternal Sun,
Turning to good the ills that pain thee now.

Trust in the Love Divine that circles thee,
And on thy heart will drop its healing balm,
Till sweeter than thy dreams of heaven shall be,
After the storm, the spirit’s inner calm.

MARY FENN DAVIS.

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 those 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 contemporaneous, 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 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 séances, 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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The Cardiff Spiritualist Society (President,
W. REES LEWIS; Secretary, R. BROOKS, 3, ANGEL-STREET, CARDIFF).—Meetings are held at MR. COOPER'S, CROCKHERBTOWN, on SUNDAYS, at 6.30 p.m.

Newcastle-on-Tyne Spiritual Evidence Society,
130, Pilgrim-street.—President: THOS. THOMSON, 3, Ryehill, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Glasgow Association of Spiritualists, 2, Carlton-
place, Glasgow.—President: J. ROBERTSON, Esq. Permanent Lecturers: Mr. and Mrs. E. W. WALLIS; Secretary, Andrew Drummond, 8, Newhall-terrace, Glasgow.

Exeter.—Free Spiritual Research Society.—
Reading and Séance Rooms at 13, The Mint, open every evening; also Sunday services at 10.30 and 6.30.—Sec., R. SHEPHEARD, 57, Howell-road, Exeter.

Camberwell and Peckham Association of In-
quirers into Spiritualism.—81, WELLS STREET, CAMBERWELL, S.E.—Friends and Inquirers are cordially invited to join the Association; applications for Membership to be forwarded to the Secretary at the above address, where every information will be given; "LIGHT" and the Medium can be had.

Miscellaneous.

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