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EPIDEMIC DELUSIONS; WITH A REFERENCE TO SPIRITUALISTIC MANIFESTATIONS.

A LECTURE DELIVERED BEFORE THE SUNDAY LECTURE SOCIETY, BY
 W. B. CARPENTER, ESQ., M.D., &c., AT ST. GEORGE'S HALL,
 SUNDAY, JANUARY 14, 1872.

The Doctor commenced his lecture by saying that those of the audience who might have read the very masterly and suggestive little book called "A Journey Round my Room," would recollect that the author expresses his dissent from the doctrines of philosophers who divide man into soul and body. He says man should rather be distinguished by the terms *âme et bête*—or soul and beast, as we would render it, though the term beast does not convey the idea. *Bête* possesses the qualities of seeing, hearing, feeling and moving independently of the *âme*, or soul; the soul is the intellect, and the *bête* the executive faculty, so that at times the *bête* runs astray from the *âme*, the *âme* being engaged in a higher sphere of action by itself. This was really the same as was meant by the terms natural and spiritual man; the natural man being the *bête*, and the spiritual man the *âme*. He had had occasion, in his medical studies, to work out this difference rather accurately, and had come to the conclusion that the relation of the will to the brain is very much the same as its relation to the muscles, &c., and just as we have, in early childhood, to train our muscles to the act of walking, so we have to train the mental action. We have, in the course of our education, either under the influence of others or by our own mental discipline, to bring all the faculties of our intellects and the play of our feelings under the direction and control of our will, and in proportion as we succeed in doing this we may be said to be masters of ourselves. In fact, we might say that the human will in relation to the mind and the body is very much akin to the relation of the rider to a well-trained horse. The mind moves automatically, and this automatic action goes on in obedience to certain laws—forming, as it were, a mechanism of thought and feeling. There are states of mind in which this mechanism will go on of itself, and arrive at better results than by the determinate direction of the will. A lawyer had been known, in the somnambulistic state, not only to arrive at but to write down a perfectly clear and distinct judgment upon a matter which had been troubling him very much for several days previously. In the same manner a mathematician had done sums, and in a more simple way. These were things quite intelligible to those who had studied the workings of the mind. A consideration of these phenomena is fundamental in the study of mind, and it is by this condition that we come to an appreciation of the automatic mind, and the relation of the will to it. Sometimes a horse shies and escapes from the control of the rider, and sometimes it happens when a number of horses are together that one of them becomes alarmed, whereupon the others become alarmed also, and there is a "stampede." Now this was really a parallel case to the phenomena which he was about to bring before the audience, where not only individuals, but communities are attacked by similar strange impulses. Some of these impulses express themselves in bodily actions; others, again, tend to affect the state of mind—to take possession of the mind with certain dominant ideas. When the mind comes sufficiently under the control of these dominant ideas, there is really nothing too absurd to be done.

The reason he had brought this class of phenomena before the audience was, that at the present time a movement had taken possession of a section of the public mind which he believed to be an entire delusion. He believed it to be so, because he had paid a great deal of attention to the subject. He did not say it was a delusion; he only said he believed it to be so.

Now, in the first place, he would take one of the most familiar occurrences, which he supposed most persons had witnessed. He referred to the hysterical fit. Certain persons of a nervous temperament, men as well as females, under strong mental excitement, pass off into a form of convulsive action. This does not happen to entirely healthy persons; and where a number of persons are congregated together this tendency to convulsive action propagates itself. He remembered in his younger days, when a student at the Bristol Infirmary, there was a custom of placing young servant-maids together in one ward, so that they might not be contaminated by women of a much lower class. This was a great

advantage to the young women in most respects, but it was attended with this great disadvantage, namely, that when one of them fell into an hysterical fit, the others did the same. On these occasions he recollected that he had to go and "bully" them—threaten them with severe treatment, such as a shower bath, and tell them that everyone who went into a fit would be carried off and so treated, which put a stop to it. Plenty of such cases were recorded; one, however, in an Orphan Asylum in Amsterdam, took on a form of convulsive action much more severe, and nothing seemed to shake it until Boerhaave went to the hospital and found it was nothing more than a violent form of hysteria. He told the girls that the next who fell into a fit should be burned in the arm with a red-hot poker. It was not found necessary to apply the remedy. This was the *rationale*—it was the frightened horse. Another remarkable instance occurred in Lancashire towards the end of last century. A girl put down the dress of another a mouse, knowing the girl was very frightened of such things. The girl went into a fit, and this affection spread among the other girls. It even spread to some of the men, and the idea took hold of them that there was some emanation from a bale of cotton which caused these fits. Persons from other factories were affected, and it was becoming serious, when a medical man assured them that it was all nonsense, and brought a good electrical machine, saying he would give a shock to the next person who was attacked. But it was not necessary to administer a shock, no other person being affected.

These were some of the simpler forms in which this phenomenon operated in causing a convulsive action of the body rather than of the mind; but there were a great many instances of the other kind. We know perfectly well (said the lecturer) that all convulsive action of this kind is the result of two factors. There must be a certain morbid condition—it may be a natural condition, occurring in all states of life, which predisposes to the influence of some external irritation, or it may be a mere mental suggestion. The contagious tendency to yawning and stammering were familiar facts, and showed the influence of suggestion in producing a state of the nervous system.

The convulsive paroxysms in hydrophobia were brought on by the sound or sight of water, or even the sight of a picture representing moving water. Still another instance was the convulsive fits of children in teething. The exciting cause is the cutting of the teeth; but there must be a morbid condition of the nervous system to cause that excitement.

Take another instance. It occurred in a nunnery in France two or three centuries ago. There was no place in which these conditions are so likely to show themselves as in a nunnery, whose ordinary life is very unwholesome. The mind is thrown upon itself, when it ought to be brought in contact with the external world, and thus there is a tendency to the production of morbid ideas. In the nunnery in question one of the nuns began to mew like a cat, and all the other nuns took to the same habit, and there was a universal caterwauling. This was cured by the bringing of soldiers to the door with rods, and the threat of a whipping for the next who mewed. There was a similar outbreak in Germany of biting. It not only spread through that nunnery, but through others; and it became such a scandal that the authorities were called in to check it. It being looked upon as the work of evil spirits, exorcism was resorted to; but, the lecturer thought, the other method would have been much more effective. In Shetland, for about half a century there was a periodical tendency to paroxysms in the churches. It began with apoplectic fits in an attendant of the church. It spread from her to others, and occurred in different parishes for a very long period. At last a sensible minister came to the parish in which this occurrence had shown itself, and thinking it a great scandal, he very early informed the congregation that the best remedy would be to put the next person affected into the neighbouring lake, and gave directions for this to be carried out, and there was never any further exhibition. These were all examples of a very simple kind, not seriously affecting the mental condition.

But we should now come to a class of cases in which the mental state of individuals is so affected that they fall entirely under the dominion of the impulses which take possession of them, and which they could control if they used their will. In this condition they perform the most extraordinary actions in concert with one another.

He would not go further back than the period of the "Black Death," which ravaged the whole of Europe, and was severe in this country during the reign of Edward III. Its effects in Italy, France, Spain, Germany, and England were terrible. No plague since has produced such results. The most lamentable fact connected with it was that it seemed to overcome all human feelings: husbands left their wives to die, fathers and mothers left their children, dear friends those to whom they had been attached. There seemed to be a suspension of all human sympathy. But, on the other hand, there were some who were very strongly affected with a different emotion. They considered this pestilence as a special punishment for the sins of the times, and wished to make restitution for the frauds they had committed and for the injury they had done. The same idea took possession of a number of minds. These very earnest and sincere, but very mistaken individuals resolved to offer themselves up as sacrifices for the community. They assembled in bands, and went from town to town, armed with whips, and at a given signal from the leader they all flogged themselves severely. In every town they were joined by numbers of persons who were animated by the same impulse, and thus exercised an extraordinary influence over the public mind. They placed themselves in hostility to the priesthood, pretending that their evil lives were the cause of this visitation, and thus brought down upon themselves the fulminations of the hierarchy; and it was by the obstacles put in their way by the Church that the thing was put down. But it broke out again from time to time, even down to the 17th or 18th century. A band of these flagellants came to London about the middle of the reign of Edward III., in the year 1350, but made no converts. Either the faith of the Londoners was too weak or their skins too thin. Another manifestation of these epidemic delusions was called the "Dancing Mania." It began as early as the year 1374, in Aix-la-Chapelle, and rapidly spread to other towns in Germany and the Low Countries. A number of people formed circles and danced in the wildest manner until they fell to the ground exhausted. This mania seemed at first to attack those persons who had a tendency to St. Vitus's Dance—St. Vitus was, in fact, the patron saint of these dancers. St. Vitus's Dance, or chorea, in the moderate form in which we know it, is simply a tendency to jerking movements of the body, sometimes going on independently of all voluntary action.

As an instance of the tendency to dancing in various countries the lecturer mentioned the "tarantula," so prevalent in Italy. It is said that persons in this state have been known to go on for two or three days. They call on the musicians to go faster and faster, and then dance and leap in the most extravagant manner until they can go on no longer. The same thing has shown itself in Abyssinia. Now, in all these instances the individuals allow themselves to be possessed with the idea that they must dance. The idea was prevalent that they were controlled by spirits. This notion affected the popular mind, and others were drawn in by the dominant idea. The sight of other persons suggested the idea to them, and not struggling sufficiently against it, they were carried away by the ecstasy which prevailed in the band. We had, in modern times, seen precisely the same kind of dominating idea exhibit itself—in a very harmless manner, it is true, but really in exactly the same form. He alluded to the turning of tables, which was in vogue some twenty years ago. A number of persons assembled round a table and put their hands on it, when the table would move round, and the people with it, firmly believing that the table moved of itself, and that they were obliged to run round following its movements, whereas it had been clearly proved it was they themselves who moved the table. They were possessed with the idea that they must move with the table or follow it. This was really a possession of the mind by an idea as completely significant as the possession of the minds of the dancers who danced until they could dance no longer.

He could give another form of the delusion which prevailed at a still later period, and which bore still more remarkably upon the special condition which had induced him to bring this matter before the notice of the audience. He meant the genuine belief in witchcraft which formerly prevailed very generally among the people. A belief in some kind of occult power dated back to a very ancient period. It came chiefly from the East, being brought thence by the wandering Jews, who pretended to cast out evil spirits. The belief in demoniacal possession was very prevalent in the Middle Ages, and the flagellation and dancing mania were attributed to the influence of evil spirits. In later times, even in the seventeenth century, it had fastened itself very strongly on the popular mind, especially in those countries which were under the tyranny of a gloomy religious fanaticism—for instance, in Calvinistic Scotland and Catholic Spain, extending itself at a later period to New England. The Pilgrim Fathers carried with them a very honest belief in the Calvinistic system. Not long after the settlement of New England there was an outbreak of belief in witchcraft there. A girl accused some persons of bewitching her. Proceedings were taken against them, and they were tried. Another person made the same accusation, and the number of persons who were thus accused was becoming very serious indeed, and the prosecutions were carried on with great vigour; but the more vigorously they were carried on—the more severe the punishment, imprisonment, and terror—the more this delusion seemed to spread, until, at last, those who considered themselves the elect found themselves in danger of being accused, and so thought it better to suspend all trials; and from that time there were no more accusations of witchcraft.

Now, the point of special interest and importance with respect to this witchcraft epidemic was, that if we were to believe in the testimony of anyone, and not allow ourselves to be the judges of our testimony, we must believe in witchcraft. Here was a case where sensible men and women voluntarily, or under torture, made the most ludicrous and revolting confessions. They confessed to having held witches' sabbaths, and evidence was given that they were seen riding the air on broomsticks.

The lecturer then instanced the Obi belief, so prevalent among the coloured population of the West Indies, of which he had been a witness.

This belief in witchcraft still lingered among the lower classes of our population; chiefly among agricultural labourers, who did not seem to be much removed above the Hottentot or Esquimaux in their intellectual character. Their common sense had not been developed to the extent of seeing the absurdity of charging some old woman with bringing murrain among their cattle. And the ignorant servant girl's belief that an old woman could tell her about her future husband,

induced her to steal some of her master's property. It was in these low stages of cultivation that this belief lingered; yet towards the end of last century it lingered amongst men of the highest education. Dr. Johnson had said that nothing proved the non-existence of witches, and John Wesley so firmly believed in the existence of witches that he said if we gave up the belief in witchcraft we must disbelieve the Bible. He (the lecturer) thought the decline of this feeling was caused by nothing more nor less than the growth of rationalism—what he called common sense. Witchcraft had died of neglect, by the gradual progress of the exercise of common sense—the faculty of judging of things self-evident. He believed this faculty not only capable of being improved, but capable of being improved in the race—that our instincts are gradually elevated—that the child of an educated ancestry was born with faculties better fitted for the manifestation of higher forms of intelligence and morality than could be trained in the child of the savage. He did not mean this as universal, but in general. We saw the indications of progress in our public actions and discussions. There was at the present time a much greater disposition to do things because they were right—because there was a claim that they should be done, and not merely because they were politic, whereas years ago they would have been staved off. The improvement during the last ten years was remarkable. He considered the Act of last session with reference to the Universities as one of the most remarkable instances of the advance of public opinion, when he remembered what public opinion was when he himself was debared from Oxford and Cambridge. And had he been told twenty years ago that he would live to see his own son able to wear a surplice in Trinity College, Cambridge, he would not have believed it.

(At this point the lecturer made more particular allusion to Spiritualism, and his remarks are reported in the first person.)

I have now, I think, given a sufficient number of instances to show the moral effect of this kind of suggestion—that the sight, or the sound, or the idea, call forth in a nervous system of an excitable kind a certain belief or notion of the necessity of action, and that this action is entirely involuntary; for when the excitement has attained a certain pitch the will cannot restrain it.

I have shown you that this tendency to strange beliefs is liable to take possession of the public mind, and to exert a most extraordinary influence upon the actions of individuals and communities. It is said that it has taken possession of millions of persons in the United States at the present time, and of a very large number of persons—rational minds—in this country. It is difficult to account for this unless we take into consideration the mental state with which it is connected. Now, I believe that this disposition to hold converse with the spirits of the departed—to obtain what we might call tangible evidence of the existence of departed spirits—is mainly connected with this; that at the present time there is a general unsettlement of the logical opinion; that there is a general disposition to an unsettlement of the whole fabric of traditional belief upon this subject, though in the United States the people incline to a still more material life than ourselves. All travellers tell you that they hear more talk of dollars than anything else. There can be no doubt that latterly there has been a great shaking down of traditional belief, and a more persistent searching after new modes of belief, or new attestations of old ones, than at any former period in the history of that country. Now, when I tell you that a scientific man, Dr. Hare, a Professor of Chemistry in Philadelphia, believed that he had experimentally demonstrated the immortality of the soul, I think you will see that there must be some very great perversion of reasoning which could induce him to come to such a conclusion as that. His extraordinary demonstration was that, by a machine which he had constructed, spiritual agency could operate to spell certain words. I believe that the source of the fallacy was perfectly obvious. The words were spelled out by a medium (as she was called), who could see his hands, his eyes, his face, and though not in view of the machine she could see it, so to speak, with his eyes, and could therefore tell when it should go and when stop. I do not mean to say that she was doing this intentionally, but many of these performances are automatic acts of the mind, and she was just influenced and directed by the expression of his countenance in a way that I remember perfectly well. A very excellent friend of mine, some twenty-five years ago, when Mrs. Haydon, the spirit-rapper, came over, used to let out most obviously to her what he was thinking of. She rapped out the letter that by his face she saw he expected. When he told me of the answers he had obtained with regard to a daughter that had died not long before, correctly setting forth when and where she died, and many attendant circumstances, I said to him—"Yes, and I could have told you exactly the same by the same method. You cannot help showing in your face what you are expecting." One lady, not undistinguished in the literary world, told me many years ago, when I was witnessing a so-called spiritual performance at her house, in answer to my objections, that she was perfectly satisfied medical and scientific men were inspired by the Devil to negative these spiritual influences; that the Devil saw that his reign on earth would come to an end if Spiritualism prevailed, because everybody would believe in immortality; that this perfect conviction of immortality must have a most important influence in regulating the conduct of life; and that seeing this, the Devil did his utmost to check it in every way. This is no joke at all; this I was seriously assured by a lady of considerable natural and poetical talent. She had given up all belief in future existence, but this new belief had been the greatest comfort to her possible. The notion that these departed spirits can give a rap upon a table, and lift tables in the air, or, still more, lift bodies in the air and carry them away out of one window into another at distances from the ground, seems to me most strangely repugnant to common sense. I do not say that these things have not happened, but what I do maintain is, that before this phenomenon is accepted it should be subjected to the most careful and rigid scrutiny. I am told, "Oh, you have no faith." I have the most unlimited faith in the doctrine of gravitation. I cannot believe that gravitation is suspended to let Mr. Home float in the air. If I am to believe in the phenomenon, I must see it; I must have every opportunity given me of scrutinising carefully and scientifically the manner in which it takes place.

Now, this fact to which I am alluding is certified by the testimony of one gentleman—a gentleman, I believe, most estimable, most truthful, not by any means deficient in general intelligence, and one who has paid particular attention to several departments of study—Lord Lindsay. He declares that he saw it—true, by moonlight; and only

yesterday I learnt from a gentleman to whom the fact was stated by Lord Lindsay himself as no secret (a clergyman mentioned it to me), that Lord Lindsay assured him that his own state of mind when he saw this was a most distressing one; that he felt himself, as it were, paralysed; that he dared not speak a word, for he believed that if he spoke he would break, as it were, the charm, and Mr. Home would fall eighty feet to the ground. This is a truthful account of Lord Lindsay's state of mind at the time. Now, I will put it to you, when we have all this extraordinary evidence of the appearances, of testimony of self-delusion in the history of witchcraft, are we not justified in saying it is far more probable that Lord Lindsay should have been deceived by a condition of mind that rendered him liable to such self-deception practised upon him by a very clever—I will not use any stronger word than artist—an artist, be it remembered, that wheedled a silly old woman out of £60,000;—is it not more likely than that the laws of gravitation were suspended? This is the common-sense aspect in which it presents itself to me, and if this be our verdict in regard to this phenomenon, I believe it should be our verdict in regard to a great many other phenomena. I cannot here go into an analysis of all the cases that have been presented to me, of what I have seen, but I can tell you that I have carefully and systematically prosecuted inquiries during a long series of years—not of late years, it is true, because I found no good could result from it—my experience being that where I was allowed to use tests, there I found delusion; and where I could not employ tests I could suspect intentional delusion, or see intentional self-delusion. I believe all the phenomena resolve themselves into one or the other. There are, however, some very curious exhibitions of particular states of mind in those who thus lend themselves to these performances and allow themselves to be self-deluded, and in this condition of self-delusion lending themselves to the traffic of the actual performers. I may just mention, as a curious illustration of this state of mind, one that I dare say many of you will remember. A good many years ago attention was drawn to a curious exhibition in Alexandria by a notable magician there. He was said to have the power of causing any boy fetched from the streets, by looking into some ink placed in the palm of his hand, to see any person who was absent. It is rather curious that Lord Lindsay, the father of the present Lord Lindsay, should have published an account of a very remarkable performance of this kind. The most careful scrutiny was caused to be given to the matter, and it was found that the whole thing was a bold piece of jugglery—the boy was not fetched promiscuously; he was brought from the street, but he had been specially tutored. It was found out that he was quite up to the performance. The whole had been prepared beforehand, and we have heard nothing more of Egyptian jugglery. Now, we medical men and scientific men are said by the advocates of Spiritualism to be their opponents. I only say this—we are their opponents simply on the ground that our knowledge of these matters has been gained by careful personal experience, by investigation, by study. We have acquired habits of mind which lead us to seek for exact evidence. Science, as my friend Professor Huxley has said, is no more than educated common sense. A man of science habitually uses it in an exact and scientific manner—the method of investigation which people use in the ordinary concerns of life in an indirect manner: it is merely disciplined common sense. Well, then, if we are to surrender ourselves to the habits and training that we have acquired in our life in the culture of our scientific knowledge, in the habits of careful thought and scrutiny that a medical man employs in the diagnosis of his patient—a habit exercised, perhaps, by medical men in an almost higher manner than in any scientific investigation, where the facts are generally simpler—if we are to give up all this acquired knowledge, acquired habit, and bring ourselves down to the adoption of what the credulous or the ignorant are ready to embrace, we must set ourselves back in civilisation some four or five centuries—we must burn, as it were, our curious arts, and give up everything of mental progress that the last three or four centuries have brought us. One gentleman says he thanks Heaven he is not a scientific man; he is free, perfectly free, to believe anything. I can only say that my faith is quite as unlimited as his, only my faith is fixed upon a different set of doctrines—my faith is fixed upon the laws of Nature; I cannot believe anything that is flagrantly inconsistent with the laws of Nature. Do not suppose that I am saying that our faith is to be limited to our own knowledge of the laws of Nature; far from it. Newton said that he felt like a child picking up shells on the sea-shore. That is constantly my own feeling. But then we are in search of truth—not by the abandonment of all scientific methods, but by the honest employment of them—by taking advantage of all experience has brought us. My friend Mr. Wallace, than whom there is not a more valuable man in science, has given his scientific friends a rub for their incredulity. How should we proceed when a new fact is brought before us? Of course it is possible for us to be too incredulous in these matters. Gas was scoffed at 60 years ago, and telegraphy dismissed as utterly impracticable. If I were to tell you that a man can hold his hand in a stream of molten iron without injury to it, you might say that I was drawing on your credulity. But there is a striking difference between that statement and the statement of Lord Lindsay witnessing Mr. Home flying in the air. There is this difference, that this can be exhibited at any time and to anybody; you have only to go into a foundry, and you will find men who will show it to you. Then again, scientific men can give you the *rationale* of what they do, and that *rationale* is one that all can understand. I can bring it home to your own familiar experience. If you throw a few drops of water upon a rod of heated iron, they will assume a spherical form, as though they did not touch it; and they do not touch; there is an atmosphere of vapour between the water and the red-hot iron; so long as the iron is hot enough to keep up that atmosphere, so long the water will not touch it. When an ironer wants to see if her iron is too hot, she spits upon the iron; if it is too hot, the liquid will not wet it, it will roll off; if the liquid adheres to it and rises in a vapour, the iron is not too hot for her purpose. It is a simple explanation, well known and admitted; there is no reason why we should not believe it. Scientific men of the highest reputation who have witnessed this experiment all believe it; why should we not believe it? Not so with things which cannot be shown. I have waited hours and hours for the exhibitions which I had been promised, but have had to return without being able to see them; and when they cannot be shown, or can be shown only in the dark, it is “the atmosphere of

incredulity that you have brought with you” which prevents the manifestation. These things will not come when they are called for. “You must be patient; you must come again and again until you see them.” I consider it is much time wasted, and having given to it a great deal of time formerly, which I could very ill spare, I do not feel that scientific men are called upon to go to this or that seance until they can be assured that these things can be shown to them fair and aboveboard, and in a manner that shall satisfy a scientific scrutiny, which is no more than the exact application of common-sense methods.

In conclusion, it appears that our greatest safeguard against allowing our minds to be laid hold of by these epidemic delusions is the cultivation of our common sense, which mainly depends upon our steady determination to seek for truth, to seek for right; and if we train our minds in those habits, the more clearly we shall come to distinguish between the creations of the imagination and the actual things of experience.

HOW TO SUSTAIN THE SUNDAY SERVICES.

To the Editor of the Medium and Daybreak.

DEAR SIR,—When I read Mr. Robson's letter in your last issue, I felt proud of mediums. The Spiritualists of this great metropolis cannot afford to sustain the Sunday evening services; and Mr. Robson, a medium, proposes that his brethren come to the rescue, and do that for the Spiritualists which they appear unable to do for themselves. I am a Spiritualist, Sir—a poor one, but an earnest one nevertheless; and I must say that Mr. Robson's suggestion makes my face tingle and burn with shame. As far as I know anything of mediums, there is not one of them that can afford to do anything of the kind. They are all hard-working and struggling men and women, doing all they can to keep soul and body honestly together, and to take one hour of their time or one handful of their strength to sustain the Sunday services would be a greater injustice than to allow those services to be discontinued. If the Spiritualists of London cannot afford to sustain such useful and instructive meetings as those held in the Cavendish Rooms, it would serve them right if the spirit-world allowed them to relapse into blind Materialism; and the letter of Mr. Robson is the most stinging rebuke which they have received for many a day. It would simply be preposterous to ask these servants of Spiritualism—the poor mediums and the Spiritual Institution—to hold seances at their own expense for the support of such meetings. I hope that the letter alluded to will have the desired effect of bringing our London Spiritualists to their senses, and that the meetings will be then sustained by those whose duty it is to do so.—I am, Sir, respectfully yours,

JACOB RIVERS.

[This letter should have appeared last week.—Ed. M.]

MR. JOHN REGINALD OWEN (*alias* “Apemantus”) writes a caustic letter in reply to Mr. Banks, but as we have already allowed both sides to speak on to the verge of personalities, we do not intend to let such matters proceed further through our mediumship. Mr. Owen desires his “remarks to be considered *à priori*,” and thinks his suggestion as to the scheme for a telegraph has been overlooked. He declares himself “on very good terms personally with the members of this society, and on very bad terms with its system of management.” Such are the practical features of our correspondent's letter, after whom our readers have repeatedly read with pleasure and profit. As we stated before, he is an entire stranger to us, but none the less respected on that account. We have observed in his communications a desire to criticise the working of the Liverpool Society, and have suggested that such a course could be more usefully pursued in committee than in our pages. Our Liverpool friends are gentlemen of ripe judgment and much experience, and therefore more likely to receive any suggestion tendered in a kindly spirit. All will be ready to admit that the acme of perfection has not yet been reached anywhere, and we hope a due proportion of self-examination will occur on both sides and in all quarters along with any remarks that may be made on others.

[Since the above paragraph was in type, we have received a long and searching letter from “An Investigator,” severely censuring the conduct of “Apemantus.” We withhold it from publication for the reasons given above. It successfully defends the Liverpool Psychological Society from any imputations which “Apemantus” may have cast upon it. But such a defence is now unnecessary, as that gentleman has declared that his intentions were not of that kind. If our correspondent will reproduce his excellent remarks on the conduct of the circle, irrespective of personal considerations, we will insert them, as instructive to the great body of Spiritualists.—Ed. M.]

TOLHURST'S “RUTH.”—On Thursday evening of last week selections from this oratorio were performed at Weigh House Chapel, at the termination of a course of lectures on the Book of Ruth by the minister of the place, Rev. W. Braden, successor to Rev. Thomas Binney. The composition affords a very pleasing entertainment, which was much enjoyed, although it was heard to great disadvantage, the accessories for doing it justice being wholly wanting. At the close a most flattering vote of thanks was passed to the composer, who conducted the music, and to the principal vocalists and choir who aided him. It will be observed that Mr. Tolhurst is organist to the Sunday Services at Cavendish Rooms, and we would recommend Spiritualists to promote a performance of this oratorio in London on a scale commensurate with its merits. A new edition of the work has just appeared, and amongst the names of subscribers we are pleased to observe that of Sir Charles Isham, a truly liberal Spiritualist and patron of music. The names of Lady Grey (two copies) and Charles Dickens (two copies) also appear on the list.

COWMS, NEAR HUDDERSFIELD.—It gives us much pleasure to report the following facts, communicated by Mr. George Bentley:—The Spiritualists who meet at the house of Mrs. Asquith on Wednesday and Sunday evenings are ministered to through two or three trance-mediums, and their cause is in a prosperous condition. On Saturday evening last they sat down with a number of their friends to an excellent tea, provided at the house of Mr. Walter Bentley, who is a member of the circle. After tea a very pleasant evening was spent. We cannot commend too highly the course adopted by our friends at Cowms, and hope to hear that social evenings of the kind are frequently repeated there and elsewhere.

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induced her to steal some of her master's property. It was in these low stages of cultivation that this belief lingered; yet towards the end of last century it lingered amongst men of the highest education. Dr. Johnson had said that nothing proved the non-existence of witches, and John Wesley so firmly believed in the existence of witches that he said if we gave up the belief in witchcraft we must disbelieve the Bible. He (the lecturer) thought the decline of this feeling was caused by nothing more nor less than the growth of rationalism—what he called common sense. Witchcraft had died of neglect, by the gradual progress of the exercise of common sense—the faculty of judging of things self-evident. He believed this faculty not only capable of being improved, but capable of being improved in the race—that our instincts are gradually elevated—that the child of an educated ancestry was born with faculties better fitted for the manifestation of higher forms of intelligence and morality than could be trained in the child of the savage. He did not mean this as universal, but in general. We saw the indications of progress in our public actions and discussions. There was at the present time a much greater disposition to do things because they were right—because there was a claim that they should be done, and not merely because they were politic, whereas years ago they would have been staved off. The improvement during the last ten years was remarkable. He considered the Act of last session with reference to the Universities as one of the most remarkable instances of the advance of public opinion, when he remembered what public opinion was when he himself was debarring from Oxford and Cambridge. And had he been told twenty years ago that he would live to see his own son able to wear a surplice in Trinity College, Cambridge, he would not have believed it. (At this point the lecturer made more particular allusion to Spiritualism, and his remarks are reported in the first person.)

I have now, I think, given a sufficient number of instances to show the moral effect of this kind of suggestion—that the sight, or the sound, or the idea, call forth in a nervous system of an excitable kind a certain belief or notion of the necessity of action, and that this action is entirely involuntary; for when the excitement has attained a certain pitch the will cannot restrain it.

I have shown you that this tendency to strange beliefs is liable to take possession of the public mind, and to exert a most extraordinary influence upon the actions of individuals and communities. It is said that it has taken possession of millions of persons in the United States at the present time, and of a very large number of persons—rational minds—in this country. It is difficult to account for this unless we take into consideration the mental state with which it is connected. Now, I believe that this disposition to hold converse with the spirits of the departed—to obtain what we might call tangible evidence of the existence of departed spirits—is mainly connected with this; that at the present time there is a general unsettlement of the logical opinion; that there is a general disposition to an unsettlement of the whole fabric of traditional belief upon this subject, though in the United States the people incline to a still more material life than ourselves. All travellers tell you that they hear more talk of dollars than anything else. There can be no doubt that latterly there has been a great shaking down of traditional belief, and a more persistent searching after new modes of belief, or new attestations of old ones, than at any former period in the history of that country. Now, when I tell you that a scientific man, Dr. Hare, a Professor of Chemistry in Philadelphia, believed that he had experimentally demonstrated the immortality of the soul, I think you will see that there must be some very great perversion of reasoning which could induce him to come to such a conclusion as that. His extraordinary demonstration was that, by a machine which he had constructed, spiritual agency could operate to spell certain words. I believe that the source of the fallacy was perfectly obvious. The words were spelled out by a medium (as she was called), who could see his hands, his eyes, his face, and though not in view of the machine she could see it, so to speak, with his eyes, and could therefore tell when it should go and when stop. I do not mean to say that she was doing this intentionally, but many of these performances are automatic acts of the mind, and she was just influenced and directed by the expression of his countenance in a way that I remember perfectly well. A very excellent friend of mine, some twenty-five years ago, when Mrs. Haydon, the spirit-rapper, came over, used to let out most obviously to her what he was thinking of. She rapped out the letter that by his face she saw he expected. When he told me of the answers he had obtained with regard to a daughter that had died not long before, correctly setting forth when and where she died, and many attendant circumstances, I said to him—"Yes, and I could have told you exactly the same by the same method. You cannot help showing in your face what you are expecting." One lady, not undistinguished in the literary world, told me many years ago, when I was witnessing a so-called spiritual performance at her house, in answer to my objections, that she was perfectly satisfied medical and scientific men were inspired by the Devil to negative these spiritual influences; that the Devil saw that his reign on earth would come to an end if Spiritualism prevailed, because everybody would believe in immortality; that this perfect conviction of immortality must have a most important influence in regulating the conduct of life; and that seeing this, the Devil did his utmost to check it in every way. This is no joke at all; this I was seriously assured by a lady of considerable natural and poetical talent. She had given up all belief in future existence, but this new belief had been the greatest comfort to her possible. The notion that these departed spirits can give a rap upon a table, and lift tables in the air, or, still more, lift bodies in the air and carry them away out of one window into another at distances from the ground, seems to me most strangely repugnant to common sense. I do not say that these things have not happened, but what I do maintain is, that before this phenomenon is accepted it should be subjected to the most careful and rigid scrutiny. I am told, "Oh, you have no faith." I have the most unlimited faith in the doctrine of gravitation. I cannot believe that gravitation is suspended to let Mr. Home float in the air. If I am to believe in the phenomenon, I must see it; I must have every opportunity given me of scrutinising carefully and scientifically the manner in which it takes place.

Now, this fact to which I am alluding is certified by the testimony of one gentleman—a gentleman, I believe, most estimable, most truthful, not by any means deficient in general intelligence, and one who has paid particular attention to several departments of study—Lord Lindsay. He declares that he saw it—true, by moonlight; and only

yesterday I learnt from a gentleman to whom the fact was stated by Lord Lindsay himself as no secret (a clergyman mentioned it to me), that Lord Lindsay assured him that his own state of mind when he saw this was a most distressing one; that he felt himself, as it were, paralysed; that he dared not speak a word, for he believed that if he spoke he would break, as it were, the charm, and Mr. Home would fall eighty feet to the ground. This is a truthful account of Lord Lindsay's state of mind at the time. Now, I will put it to you, when we have all this extraordinary evidence of the appearances, of testimony of self-delusion in the history of witchcraft, are we not justified in saying it is far more probable that Lord Lindsay should have been deceived by a condition of mind that rendered him liable to such self-deception practised upon him by a very clever—I will not use any stronger word than artist—an artist, be it remembered, that wheedled a silly old woman out of £60,000—is it not more likely than that the laws of gravitation were suspended? This is the common-sense aspect in which it presents itself to me, and if this be our verdict in regard to this phenomenon, I believe it should be our verdict in regard to a great many other phenomena. I cannot here go into an analysis of all the cases that have been presented to me, of what I have seen, but I can tell you that I have carefully and systematically prosecuted inquiries during a long series of years—not of late years, it is true, because I found no good could result from it—my experience being that where I was allowed to use tests, there I found delusion; and where I could not employ tests I could suspect intentional delusion, or see intentional self-delusion. I believe all the phenomena resolve themselves into one or the other. There are, however, some very curious exhibitions of particular states of mind in those who thus lend themselves to these performances and allow themselves to be self-deluded, and in this condition of self-delusion lending themselves to the traffic of the actual performers. I may just mention, as a curious illustration of this state of mind, one that I dare say many of you will remember. A good many years ago attention was drawn to a curious exhibition in Alexandria by a notable magician there. He was said to have the power of causing any boy fetched from the streets, by looking into some ink placed in the palm of his hand, to see any person who was absent. It is rather curious that Lord Lindsay, the father of the present Lord Lindsay, should have published an account of a very remarkable performance of this kind. The most careful scrutiny was caused to be given to the matter, and it was found that the whole thing was a bold piece of jugglery—the boy was not fetched promiscuously; he was brought from the street, but he had been specially tutored. It was found out that he was quite up to the performance. The whole had been prepared beforehand, and we have heard nothing more of Egyptian jugglery. Now, we medical men and scientific men are said by the advocates of Spiritualism to be their opponents. I only say this—we are their opponents simply on the ground that our knowledge of these matters has been gained by careful personal experience, by investigation, by study. We have acquired habits of mind which lead us to seek for exact evidence. Science, as my friend Professor Huxley has said, is no more than educated common sense. A man of science habitually uses it in an exact and scientific manner—the method of investigation which people use in the ordinary concerns of life in an indirect manner: it is merely disciplined common sense. Well, then, if we are to surrender ourselves to the habits and training that we have acquired in our life in the culture of our scientific knowledge, in the habits of careful thought and scrutiny that a medical man employs in the diagnosis of his patient—a habit exercised, perhaps, by medical men in an almost higher manner than in any scientific investigation, where the facts are generally simpler—if we are to give up all this acquired knowledge, acquired habit, and bring ourselves down to the adoption of what the credulous or the ignorant are ready to embrace, we must set ourselves back in civilisation some four or five centuries—we must burn, as it were, our curious arts, and give up everything of mental progress that the last three or four centuries have brought us. One gentleman says he thanks Heaven he is not a scientific man; he is free, perfectly free, to believe anything. I can only say that my faith is quite as unlimited as his, only my faith is fixed upon a different set of doctrines—my faith is fixed upon the laws of Nature; I cannot believe anything that is flagrantly inconsistent with the laws of Nature. Do not suppose that I am saying that our faith is to be limited to our own knowledge of the laws of Nature; far from it. Newton said that he felt like a child picking up shells on the sea-shore. That is constantly my own feeling. But then we are in search of truth—not by the abandonment of all scientific methods, but by the honest employment of them—by taking advantage of all experience has brought us. My friend Mr. Wallace, than whom there is not a more valuable man in science, has given his scientific friends a rub for their incredulity. How should we proceed when a new fact is brought before us? Of course it is possible for us to be too incredulous in these matters. Gas was scoffed at 60 years ago, and telegraphy dismissed as utterly impracticable. If I were to tell you that a man can hold his hand in a stream of molten iron without injury to it, you might say that I was drawing on your credulity. But there is a striking difference between that statement and the statement of Lord Lindsay witnessing Mr. Home flying in the air. There is this difference, that this can be exhibited at any time and to anybody; you have only to go into a foundry, and you will find men who will show it to you. Then again, scientific men can give you the *rationale* of what they do, and that *rationale* is one that all can understand. I can bring it home to your own familiar experience. If you throw a few drops of water upon a rod of heated iron, they will assume a spherical form, as though they did not touch it; and they do not touch; there is an atmosphere of vapour between the water and the red-hot iron; so long as the iron is hot enough to keep up that atmosphere, so long the water will not touch it. When an ironer wants to see if her iron is too hot, she spits upon the iron; if it is too hot, the liquid will not wet it, it will roll off; if the liquid adheres to it and rises in a vapour, the iron is not too hot for her purpose. It is a simple explanation, well known and admitted; there is no reason why we should not believe it. Scientific men of the highest reputation who have witnessed this experiment all believe it; why should we not believe it? Not so with things which cannot be shown. I have waited hours and hours for the exhibitions which I had been promised, but have had to return without being able to see them; and when they cannot be shown, or can be shown only in the dark, it is “the atmosphere of

incredulity that you have brought with you” which prevents the manifestation. These things will not come when they are called for. “You must be patient; you must come again and again until you see them.” I consider it is much time wasted, and having given to it a great deal of time formerly, which I could very ill spare, I do not feel that scientific men are called upon to go to this or that seance until they can be assured that these things can be shown to them fair and aboveboard, and in a manner that shall satisfy a scientific scrutiny, which is no more than the exact application of common-sense methods.

In conclusion, it appears that our greatest safeguard against allowing our minds to be laid hold of by these epidemic delusions is the cultivation of our common sense, which mainly depends upon our steady determination to seek for truth, to seek for right; and if we train our minds in these habits, the more clearly we shall come to distinguish between the creations of the imagination and the actual things of experience.

HOW TO SUSTAIN THE SUNDAY SERVICES.

To the Editor of the Medium and Daybreak.

DEAR SIR.—When I read Mr. Robson's letter in your last issue, I felt proud of mediums. The Spiritualists of this great metropolis cannot afford to sustain the Sunday evening services; and Mr. Robson, a medium, proposes that his brethren come to the rescue, and do that for the Spiritualists which they appear unable to do for themselves. I am a Spiritualist, Sir—a poor one, but an earnest one nevertheless; and I must say that Mr. Robson's suggestion makes my face tingle and burn with shame. As far as I know anything of mediums, there is not one of them that can afford to do anything of the kind. They are all hard-working and struggling men and women, doing all they can to keep soul and body honestly together, and to take one hour of their time or one handful of their strength to sustain the Sunday services would be a greater injustice than to allow those services to be discontinued. If the Spiritualists of London cannot afford to sustain such useful and instructive meetings as those held in the Cavendish Rooms, it would serve them right if the spirit-world allowed them to relapse into blind Materialism; and the letter of Mr. Robson is the most stinging rebuke which they have received for many a day. It would simply be preposterous to ask these servants of Spiritualism—the poor mediums and the Spiritual Institution—to hold seances at their own expense for the support of such meetings. I hope that the letter alluded to will have the desired effect of bringing our London Spiritualists to their senses, and that the meetings will be then sustained by those whose duty it is to do so.—I am, Sir, respectfully yours,

JACOB RIVERS.

[This letter should have appeared last week.—Ed. M.]

MR. JOHN REGINALD OWEN (*alias* “Apemantus”) writes a caustic letter in reply to Mr. Banks, but as we have already allowed both sides to speak on to the verge of personalities, we do not intend to let such matters proceed further through our mediumship. Mr. Owen desires his “remarks to be considered *à priori*,” and thinks his suggestion as to the scheme for a telegraph has been overlooked. He declares himself “on very good terms personally with the members of this society, and on very bad terms with its system of management.” Such are the practical features of our correspondent's letter, after whom our readers have repeatedly read with pleasure and profit. As we stated before, he is an entire stranger to us, but none the less respected on that account. We have observed in his communications a desire to criticise the working of the Liverpool Society, and have suggested that such a course could be more usefully pursued in committee than in our pages. Our Liverpool friends are gentlemen of ripe judgment and much experience, and therefore more likely to receive any suggestion tendered in a kindly spirit. All will be ready to admit that the acme of perfection has not yet been reached anywhere, and we hope a due proportion of self-examination will occur on both sides and in all quarters along with any remarks that may be made on others.

[Since the above paragraph was in type, we have received a long and searching letter from “An Investigator,” severely censuring the conduct of “Apemantus.” We withhold it from publication for the reasons given above. It successfully defends the Liverpool Psychological Society from any imputations which “Apemantus” may have cast upon it. But such a defence is now unnecessary, as that gentleman has declared that his intentions were not of that kind. If our correspondent will reproduce his excellent remarks on the conduct of the circle, irrespective of personal considerations, we will insert them, as instructive to the great body of Spiritualists.—Ed. M.]

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The lecturer then instanced the Obi belief, so prevalent among the coloured population of the West India, of which he had been a witness.

This belief in witchcraft still lingered among the lower classes of our population; chiefly among agricultural labourers, who did not seem to be much removed above the Hottentot or Esquimaux in their intellectual character. Their common sense had not been developed to the extent of seeing the absurdity of charging some old woman with bringing murrain among their cattle. And the ignorant servant girl's belief that an old woman could tell her about her future husband,

induced her to steal some of her master's property. It was in these low stages of cultivation that this belief lingered; yet towards the end of last century it lingered amongst men of the highest education. Dr. Johnson had said that nothing proved the non-existence of witches, and John Wesley so firmly believed in the existence of witches that he said if we gave up the belief in witchcraft we must disbelieve the Bible. He (the lecturer) thought the decline of this feeling was caused by nothing more nor less than the growth of rationalism—what he called common sense. Witchcraft had died of neglect, by the gradual progress of the exercise of common sense—the faculty of judging of things self-evident. He believed this faculty not only capable of being improved, but capable of being improved in the race—that our instincts are gradually elevated—that the child of an educated ancestry was born with faculties better fitted for the manifestation of higher forms of intelligence and morality than could be trained in the child of the savage. He did not mean this as universal, but in general. We saw the indications of progress in our public actions and discussions. There was at the present time a much greater disposition to do things because they were right—because there was a claim that they should be done, and not merely because they were politic, whereas years ago they would have been staved off. The improvement during the last ten years was remarkable. He considered the Act of last session with reference to the Universities as one of the most remarkable instances of the advance of public opinion, when he remembered what public opinion was when he himself was debarring from Oxford and Cambridge. And had he been told twenty years ago that he would live to see his own son able to wear a surplice in Trinity College, Cambridge, he would not have believed it.

(At this point the lecturer made more particular allusion to Spiritualism, and his remarks are reported in the first person.)

I have now, I think, given a sufficient number of instances to show the moral effect of this kind of suggestion—that the sight, or the sound, or the idea, call forth in a nervous system of an excitable kind a certain belief or notion of the necessity of action, and that this action is entirely involuntary; for when the excitement has attained a certain pitch the will cannot restrain it.

I have shown you that this tendency to strange beliefs is liable to take possession of the public mind, and to exert a most extraordinary influence upon the actions of individuals and communities. It is said that it has taken possession of millions of persons in the United States at the present time, and of a very large number of persons—rational minds—in this country. It is difficult to account for this unless we take into consideration the mental state with which it is connected. Now, I believe that this disposition to hold converse with the spirits of the departed—to obtain what we might call tangible evidence of the existence of departed spirits—is mainly connected with this; that at the present time there is a general unsettlement of the logical opinion; that there is a general disposition to an unsettlement of the whole fabric of traditional belief upon this subject, though in the United States the people incline to a still more material life than ourselves. All travellers tell you that they hear more talk of dollars than anything else. There can be no doubt that latterly there has been a great shaking down of traditional belief, and a more persistent searching after new modes of belief, or new attestations of old ones, than at any former period in the history of that country. Now, when I tell you that a scientific man, Dr. Hare, a Professor of Chemistry in Philadelphia, believed that he had experimentally demonstrated the immortality of the soul, I think you will see that there must be some very great perversion of reasoning which could induce him to come to such a conclusion as that. His extraordinary demonstration was that, by a machine which he had constructed, spiritual agency could operate to spell certain words. I believe that the source of the fallacy was perfectly obvious. The words were spelled out by a medium (as she was called), who could see his hands, his eyes, his face, and though not in view of the machine she could see it, so to speak, with his eyes, and could therefore tell when it should go and when stop. I do not mean to say that she was doing this intentionally, but many of these performances are automatic acts of the mind, and she was just influenced and directed by the expression of his countenance in a way that I remember perfectly well. A very excellent friend of mine, some twenty-five years ago, when Mrs. Haydon, the spirit-rapper, came over, used to let out most obviously to her what he was thinking of. She rapped out the letter that by his face she saw he expected. When he told me of the answers he had obtained with regard to a daughter that had died not long before, correctly setting forth when and where she died, and many attendant circumstances, I said to him—"Yes, and I could have told you exactly the same by the same method. You cannot help showing in your face what you are expecting." One lady, not undistinguished in the literary world, told me many years ago, when I was witnessing a so-called spiritual performance at her house, in answer to my objections, that she was perfectly satisfied medical and scientific men were inspired by the Devil to negative these spiritual influences; that the Devil saw that his reign on earth would come to an end if Spiritualism prevailed, because everybody would believe in immortality; that this perfect conviction of immortality must have a most important influence in regulating the conduct of life; and that seeing this, the Devil did his utmost to check it in every way. This is no joke at all; this I was seriously assured by a lady of considerable natural and poetical talent. She had given up all belief in future existence, but this new belief had been the greatest comfort to her possible. The notion that these departed spirits can give a rap upon a table, and lift tables in the air, or, still more, lift bodies in the air and carry them away out of one window into another at distances from the ground, seems to me most strangely repugnant to common sense. I do not say that these things have not happened, but what I do maintain is, that before this phenomenon is accepted it should be subjected to the most careful and rigid scrutiny. I am told, "Oh, you have no faith." I have the most unlimited faith in the doctrine of gravitation. I cannot believe that gravitation is suspended to let Mr. Home float in the air. If I am to believe in the phenomenon, I must see it; I must have every opportunity given me of scrutinising carefully and scientifically the manner in which it takes place.

Now, this fact to which I am alluding is certified by the testimony of one gentleman—a gentleman, I believe, most estimable, most truthful, not by any means deficient in general intelligence, and one who has paid particular attention to several departments of study—Lord Lindsay. He declares that he saw it—true, by moonlight; and only

yesterday I learnt from a gentleman to whom the fact was stated by Lord Lindsay himself as no secret (a clergyman mentioned it to me), that Lord Lindsay assured him that his own state of mind when he saw this was a most distressing one; that he felt himself, as it were, paralysed; that he dared not speak a word, for he believed that if he spoke he would break, as it were, the charm, and Mr. Home would fall eighty feet to the ground. This is a truthful account of Lord Lindsay's state of mind at the time. Now, I will put it to you, when we have all this extraordinary evidence of the appearances, of testimony of self-delusion in the history of witchcraft, are we not justified in saying it is far more probable that Lord Lindsay should have been deceived by a condition of mind that rendered him liable to such self-deception practised upon him by a very clever—I will not use any stronger word than artist—an artist, be it remembered, that wheedled a silly old woman out of £60,000;—is it not more likely than that the laws of gravitation were suspended? This is the common-sense aspect in which it presents itself to me, and if this be our verdict in regard to this phenomenon, I believe it should be our verdict in regard to a great many other phenomena. I cannot here go into an analysis of all the cases that have been presented to me, of what I have seen, but I can tell you that I have carefully and systematically prosecuted inquiries during a long series of years—not of late years, it is true, because I found no good could result from it—my experience being that where I was allowed to use tests, there I found delusion; and where I could not employ tests I could suspect intentional delusion, or see intentional self-delusion. I believe all the phenomena resolve themselves into one or the other. There are, however, some very curious exhibitions of particular states of mind in those who thus lend themselves to these performances and allow themselves to be self-deluded, and in this condition of self-delusion lending themselves to the traffic of the actual performers. I may just mention, as a curious illustration of this state of mind, one that I dare say many of you will remember. A good many years ago attention was drawn to a curious exhibition in Alexandria by a notable magician there. He was said to have the power of causing any boy fetched from the streets, by looking into some ink placed in the palm of his hand, to see any person who was absent. It is rather curious that Lord Lindsay, the father of the present Lord Lindsay, should have published an account of a very remarkable performance of this kind. The most careful scrutiny was caused to be given to the matter, and it was found that the whole thing was a bold piece of jugglery—the boy was not fetched promiscuously; he was brought from the street, but he had been specially tutored. It was found out that he was quite up to the performance. The whole had been prepared beforehand, and we have heard nothing more of Egyptian jugglery. Now, we medical men and scientific men are said by the advocates of Spiritualism to be their opponents. I only say this—we are their opponents simply on the ground that our knowledge of these matters has been gained by careful personal experience, by investigation, by study. We have acquired habits of mind which lead us to seek for exact evidence. Science, as my friend Professor Huxley has said, is no more than educated common sense. A man of science habitually uses it in an exact and scientific manner—the method of investigation which people use in the ordinary concerns of life in an indirect manner: it is merely disciplined common sense. Well, then, if we are to surrender ourselves to the habits and training that we have acquired in our life in the culture of our scientific knowledge, in the habits of careful thought and scrutiny that a medical man employs in the diagnosis of his patient—a habit exercised, perhaps, by medical men in an almost higher manner than in any scientific investigation, where the facts are generally simpler—if we are to give up all this acquired knowledge, acquired habit, and bring ourselves down to the adoption of what the credulous or the ignorant are ready to embrace, we must set ourselves back in civilisation some four or five centuries—we must burn, as it were, our curious arts, and give up everything of mental progress that the last three or four centuries have brought us. One gentleman says he thanks Heaven he is not a scientific man; he is free, perfectly free, to believe anything. I can only say that my faith is quite as unlimited as his, only my faith is fixed upon a different set of doctrines—my faith is fixed upon the laws of Nature; I cannot believe anything that is flagrantly inconsistent with the laws of Nature. Do not suppose that I am saying that our faith is to be limited to our own knowledge of the laws of Nature; far from it. Newton said that he felt like a child picking up shells on the sea-shore. That is constantly my own feeling. But then we are in search of truth—not by the abandonment of all scientific methods, but by the honest employment of them—by taking advantage of all experience has brought us. My friend Mr. Wallace, than whom there is not a more valuable man in science, has given his scientific friends a rub for their incredulity. How should we proceed when a new fact is brought before us? Of course it is possible for us to be too incredulous in these matters. Gas was scoffed at 60 years ago, and telegraphy dismissed as utterly impracticable. If I were to tell you that a man can hold his hand in a stream of molten iron without injury to it, you might say that I was drawing on your credulity. But there is a striking difference between that statement and the statement of Lord Lindsay witnessing Mr. Home flying in the air. There is this difference, that this can be exhibited at any time and to anybody; you have only to go into a foundry, and you will find men who will show it to you. Then again, scientific men can give you the *rationale* of what they do, and that *rationale* is one that all can understand. I can bring it home to your own familiar experience. If you throw a few drops of water upon a rod of heated iron, they will assume a spherical form, as though they did not touch it; and they do not touch; there is an atmosphere of vapour between the water and the red-hot iron; so long as the iron is hot enough to keep up that atmosphere, so long the water will not touch it. When an ironer wants to see if her iron is too hot, she spits upon the iron; if it is too hot, the liquid will not wet it, it will roll off; if the liquid adheres to it and rises in a vapour, the iron is not too hot for her purpose. It is a simple explanation, well known and admitted; there is no reason why we should not believe it. Scientific men of the highest reputation who have witnessed this experiment all believe it; why should we not believe it? Not so with things which cannot be shown. I have waited hours and hours for the exhibitions which I had been promised, but have had to return without being able to see them; and when they cannot be shown, or can be shown only in the dark, it is “the atmosphere of

incredulity that you have brought with you” which prevents the manifestation. These things will not come when they are called for. “You must be patient; you must come again and again until you see them.” I consider it is much time wasted, and having given to it a great deal of time formerly, which I could very ill spare, I do not feel that scientific men are called upon to go to this or that seance until they can be assured that these things can be shown to them fair and aboveboard, and in a manner that shall satisfy a scientific scrutiny, which is no more than the exact application of common-sense methods.

In conclusion, it appears that our greatest safeguard against allowing our minds to be laid hold of by these epidemic delusions is the cultivation of our common sense, which mainly depends upon our steady determination to seek for truth, to seek for right; and if we train our minds in those habits, the more clearly we shall come to distinguish between the creations of the imagination and the actual things of experience.

HOW TO SUSTAIN THE SUNDAY SERVICES.

To the Editor of the Medium and Daybreak.

DEAR SIR,—When I read Mr. Robson's letter in your last issue, I felt proud of mediums. The Spiritualists of this great metropolis cannot afford to sustain the Sunday evening services; and Mr. Robson, a medium, proposes that his brethren come to the rescue, and do that for the Spiritualists which they appear unable to do for themselves. I am a Spiritualist, Sir—a poor one, but an earnest one nevertheless; and I must say that Mr. Robson's suggestion makes my face tingle and burn with shame. As far as I know anything of mediums, there is not one of them that can afford to do anything of the kind. They are all hard-working and struggling men and women, doing all they can to keep soul and body honestly together, and to take one hour of their time or one handful of their strength to sustain the Sunday services would be a greater injustice than to allow those services to be discontinued. If the Spiritualists of London cannot afford to sustain such useful and instructive meetings as those held in the Cavendish Rooms, it would serve them right if the spirit-world allowed them to relapse into blind Materialism; and the letter of Mr. Robson is the most stinging rebuke which they have received for many a day. It would simply be preposterous to ask these servants of Spiritualism—the poor mediums and the Spiritual Institution—to hold seances at their own expense for the support of such meetings. I hope that the letter alluded to will have the desired effect of bringing our London Spiritualists to their senses, and that the meetings will be then sustained by those whose duty it is to do so.—I am, Sir, respectfully yours,

JACOB RIVERS.

[This letter should have appeared last week.—Ed. M.]

MR. JOHN REGINALD OWEN (*alias* “Apemantus”) writes a caustic letter in reply to Mr. Banks, but as we have already allowed both sides to speak on to the verge of personalities, we do not intend to let such matters proceed further through our mediumship. Mr. Owen desires his “remarks to be considered *à priori*,” and thinks his suggestion as to the scheme for a telegraph has been overlooked. He declares himself “on very good terms personally with the members of this society, and on very bad terms with its system of management.” Such are the practical features of our correspondent's letter, after whom our readers have repeatedly read with pleasure and profit. As we stated before, he is an entire stranger to us, but none the less respected on that account. We have observed in his communications a desire to criticise the working of the Liverpool Society, and have suggested that such a course could be more usefully pursued in committee than in our pages. Our Liverpool friends are gentlemen of ripe judgment and much experience, and therefore more likely to receive any suggestion tendered in a kindly spirit. All will be ready to admit that the acme of perfection has not yet been reached anywhere, and we hope a due proportion of self-examination will occur on both sides and in all quarters along with any remarks that may be made on others.

[Since the above paragraph was in type, we have received a long and searching letter from “An Investigator,” severely censuring the conduct of “Apemantus.” We withhold it from publication for the reasons given above. It successfully defends the Liverpool Psychological Society from any imputations which “Apemantus” may have cast upon it. But such a defence is now unnecessary, as that gentleman has declared that his intentions were not of that kind. If our correspondent will reproduce his excellent remarks on the conduct of the circle, irrespective of personal considerations, we will insert them, as instructive to the great body of Spiritualists.—Ed. M.]

TOLHURST'S “RUTH.”—On Thursday evening of last week selections from this oratorio were performed at Weigh House Chapel, at the termination of a course of lectures on the Book of Ruth by the minister of the place, Rev. W. Braden, successor to Rev. Thomas Binney. The composition affords a very pleasing entertainment, which was much enjoyed, although it was heard to great disadvantage, the accessories for doing it justice being wholly wanting. At the close a most flattering vote of thanks was passed to the composer, who conducted the music, and to the principal vocalists and choir who aided him. It will be observed that Mr. Tolhurst is organist to the Sunday Services at Cavendish Rooms, and we would recommend Spiritualists to promote a performance of this oratorio in London on a scale commensurate with its merits. A new edition of the work has just appeared, and amongst the names of subscribers we are pleased to observe that of Sir Charles Isham, a truly liberal Spiritualist and patron of music. The names of Lady Grey (two copies) and Charles Dickens (two copies) also appear on the list.

COWMS, NEAR HUDDERSFIELD.—It gives us much pleasure to report the following facts, communicated by Mr. George Bentley:—The Spiritualists who meet at the house of Mrs. Asquith on Wednesday and Sunday evenings are ministered to through two or three trance-mediums, and their cause is in a prosperous condition. On Saturday evening last they sat down with a number of their friends to an excellent tea, provided at the house of Mr. Walter Bentley, who is a member of the circle. After tea a very pleasant evening was spent. We cannot commend too highly the course adopted by our friends at Cowms, and hope to hear that social evenings of the kind are frequently repeated there and elsewhere.

THE CIRCULATION OF THE MEDIUM, AND TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION.

THE Publisher is instituting the greatest facilities for circulating this paper, and submits the following Scale of Subscriptions:—

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The Publisher is desirous of establishing agencies and depots for the sale of other Progressive periodicals, tracts, and standard works, and will be glad to receive communications from such as feel disposed to enter this field of usefulness.

WILL OUR SUBSCRIBERS WHO HAVE NOT REMITTED THEIR SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1872 KINDLY DO SO WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY? THE SCALE OF SUBSCRIPTIONS AS ABOVE.

CONTENTS OF LAST No. OF "THE MEDIUM."

A Trip to London, and my Experiences amongst the Spiritualists—Pandora or Christ—A Lecture on Spirit-Drawings and Trance-Paintings—Seance at Mrs. Makdougall Gregory's—The Discussion on Spiritualism—The Sunday Services—The Liverpool Psychological Society—The Donors are Thanked—Man and his Origin—A Suggestion towards Organisation—The Spirit Messenger—Anniversary at Dalston—Dis-honest Mediums—An Atheist on Spiritualism, &c., &c.

SEANCES AND MEETINGS DURING THE WEEK, AT THE SPIRITUAL INSTITUTION, 15, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, HOLBORN, AND CAVENDISH ROOMS.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 19, Seance at 8 o'clock. Mr. Morse, Trance-Medium. Admission 1s.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, Service at Cavendish Rooms, Mortimer Street, at 7. J. J. Morse will speak in the trance under spirit-influence.

MONDAY, JANUARY 22, Seance at 8 o'clock. Messrs. Herne and Williams, Mediums for the Spirit-Voice. Admission 2s.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, Miss Lottie Fowler, Clairvoyante and Test-Medium, at 8 p.m. Admission 2s. 6d.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, Middle. Hual's Seance at 8. Admission 1s.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 25, Seance 8 o'clock. Messrs. Herne and Williams, Mediums for the Spirit-Voice. Admission 2s. 6d.

* Other Seances in London and the Provinces may be found on the last page but one.

THE MEDIUM AND DAYBREAK.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 19, 1872.

DR. CARPENTER'S LECTURE.

We give a very full and faithful report of Dr. Carpenter's lecture on Sunday evening. He spoke for upwards of an hour and a half, and we do not pretend to give all his talk, as he reiterated and wandered about in a very random manner; but his leading statements and arguments, if any, are faithfully reproduced. We do not suppose our readers will learn anything from the report presented, but they will have the opportunity of seeing what an opponent of Spiritualism, and that an eminent man, can say in opposition to Spiritualism and in favour of his own position. Dr. Carpenter has been delivering a similar discourse in other places, and as many Spiritualists have applied for the form of the lecture already published, we think this report may satisfy their curiosity, and save them the trouble of procuring additional publications. Next week we hope to give a popular review of the Doctor's lecture, from the pen of a gentleman who is well acquainted with those studies which are most intimately connected with the subject. Meanwhile our readers may think and judge for themselves, and it will afford them some congratulation that such a mighty mountain should give birth to such an extremely diminutive mouse.

THE DISCUSSION ON SPIRITUALISM BETWEEN THE REV. JOHN JONES, CONGREGATIONALIST, LIVER- POOL, AND THE EDITOR OF THE MEDIUM.

The following letter, which was mislaid for two weeks, has happily been recovered, and we have great pleasure in giving it publicity:—

To the Editor of the Medium and Daybreak.

SIR,—Your statement addressed to myself in this day's MEDIUM leaves my position unaltered, as expressed in my letter of the 19th December, viz., "as you ignore the Divine inspiration of the Bible, I must decline your offer." I do not gather that you have in the least receded from your views on that point, as given by you in the following extract:—

"All of the Bible is not 'holy writing.' Much of it is a mere record of events, the same as may be found in any other history, and has to be judged by its consistency or value. In this light we attribute no authoritative importance to the statements respecting Jesus recorded in the gospels, and we do not profess to endorse them all, or accept them all as of equal value."

I must therefore again decline the discussion, for the reasons given in my first letter.

But I infer from the above extract that there are some portions of the Bible by whose authority you will abide. I beg, then, to say that if

you will point out such of them as embody, in your opinion, the theories of modern Spiritualism, I will undertake to reply to the same. —I am, Sir, faithfully yours,
JOHN JONES.

Liverpool, December 29, 1871.

To the Rev. John Jones, Congregationalist, Liverpool.

REV. SIR,—Your letter presents several noteworthy features. Firstly, you entertain a notion respecting the "divine inspiration of the Bible;" secondly, another which is like unto it, namely, that the Bible is an irrevocable authority; thirdly, that in the event of our repudiating these notions, you confess your inability to discuss with us. And thus, dear friend and fellow-worker for humanity, in the midst of a land overflowing with ministers, churches, and their accredited literature, we have, according to your own confession, an overwhelming antagonism of bald infidelity, practical Atheism, and degrading immorality, all because you and your reverend brethren will enforce dogmas which you cannot substantiate. But, on the other hand, after deliberately making heretics of millions by your personal opinions, you coolly gather up your spotless garments, and heartlessly leave the victims of your theological judiciary to their horrible fate in your estimation.

Now, we have been earnest students of the Bible since our earliest school days, and never yet to this moment could we gather from its contents one tittle of evidence to support your three positions. On the other hand, we call your attention to the report of a discourse on the "Word of God" published in another column, where you will find evidence to the contrary. Perhaps you would not object to state briefly your reasons for entertaining the three notions above quoted, seeing that you took the initiative in respect to them. We do not want to go to a sectarian hell, if we can help it, and seeing that you raise the obstacles which place us beyond the pale of your sympathies, our blood be upon your head if you do not make every effort to save us.

But we forgot another point connected with you. You are a "Congregationalist," and as we learn nothing of these sectic distinctions from the Bible, we may perhaps be allowed to suppose that you derive your theological tenets from some Congregational source, and not from the Bible at all. If such be the case, we would earnestly recommend you to stick to your Congregational traditions and leave the Bible alone, or else adopt the Bible and be governed by its spirit. As we have said before, we take the Bible—nay, even the gospel of Jesus, as our basis in discussing with you, and this we do, not because of our entertaining any undemonstrable dogmas respecting it, but simply because everything we may adduce therefrom we shall indisputably establish the truth of. If your Congregationalism cannot enable you to go and do likewise, then we hope, for the sake of the Bible and the souls of men, you will sacrifice your educational traditions, and come over to us. We shall ask you no impertinent questions as to what you believe, or what you do not believe, but, accepting you as an honest man, heartily extend to you the outstretched arms of fellowship.

THE MEDIUM.

SEANCES AT THE SPIRITUAL INSTITUTION.

Notwithstanding the unfavourable weather, the physical mediums, Messrs. Herne and Williams, are in fine power, and highly satisfactory phenomena have occurred in their presence. The attendance has been select, which no doubt has facilitated the experiments.

During these last two weeks Miss Lottie Fowler has, in public seance, given some most satisfactory tests, describing with great accuracy the death-scenes of persons who died violent deaths in Australia and New Zealand. In some cases she gave names with great accuracy, and many details of a private character. Such facts occurring at each sitting amply establish the certainty of the power exhibited, and aid investigators in arriving at psychological truths.

THE SUNDAY SERVICES.

On Sunday next the platform at Cavendish Rooms will be occupied by Mr. J. J. Morse, trance-medium, who will give an address in the unconscious trance state under spirit influence.

The principal hymn will be No. 1, "Spiritual Lyre"—tune, "Rousseau."

Our first issue in February will contain twelve pages, being four pages extra, and will be occupied with literary matter of an interesting description. We would recommend our friends to order extra supplies for introduction to those likely to become subscribers. Such supplies should be bespoke in advance, so that a sufficient number may be prepared.

WE HAVE seen a very elaborate direct drawing through the mediumship of Mr. Duguid, of Glasgow, which is being lithographed as an illustration for the February number of *Human Nature*. Those interested in the sale of Mr. Duguid's tickets should lose no time in promoting their work, as the drawing takes place early next month.

FOR SOME TIME a large number of copies of Mr. Massey's work, "Concerning Spiritualism," has been in the hands of the reviewers. We will thank our friends to keep a look-out for notices of the same, and to be kind enough to forward copies of such to our office.

A NUMBER of communications unavoidably stand over until next week.

MR. COGMAN'S JUBILEE.

Information has reached us of a coming event, the participation in which will no doubt give pleasure to many. It appears that seven years ago Mr. Cogman commenced holding his series of seances which have extended in unbroken succession to the present time. On the first occasion a lady, who was a medium, was present, and assisted in forming the first circle. She is still a medium of remarkable powers, and was recently requested by the spirits to go to Mr. Cogman and suggest that the termination of the first seven years' labours should be celebrated by a tea party. A ladies' committee is accordingly in course of formation, and its first meeting will be held on Wednesday evening, at Mr. Cogman's residence, 22, New Road, Commercial Road East. Mrs. Carlisle, Mrs. Powell, Mrs. Maltby, Mrs. Burns, and other ladies have already consented to co-operate, and those who feel interested are cordially invited to be present on Wednesday evening. Several ladies have also proposed to furnish trays, and any assistance of this kind would be gladly accepted. This is a fine opportunity for a social gathering, the influences connected with which are so much required at the present time. We hope that Spiritualists and mediums will eagerly participate in making it a grand success.

EDUCATION OF THE CHILDREN OF SPIRITUALISTS.

Mr. S. Ball, of Uttoxeter, writes deploring the want of suitable schools to which Spiritualists might send their sons and daughters. When in London in summer he met Mr. Atkins and heard much of his proposed Industrial and Scientific Educational College, and regrets that such an institute is not already in existence. He says—"I am sure the time is ripe to get it filled with pupils. I have half-a-dozen good intelligent boys, and it is a pity to have them spoiled under the tuition of orthodox persons, when we know that some of their teachings will have to be unlearned. My friend Mr. Flint is in the same fix as myself as regards education." The question is a very important one, and was discussed in *Human Nature* some years ago. Children's Lyceums should be formed everywhere to superintend their religious education, and gradually progressive teachers might be located in the various towns, and not only superintend the education of the children of Spiritualists, but of the enlightened portion of the public generally. Meantime, what can our friend Mr. Bengough say as to the best means of providing a high-class education for those who may be able to avail themselves of it?

A GOOD "TEST" BY MISS FOWLER.

A gentleman from Lancashire, who knows of Spiritualism by its literature rather than by its facts, visited London a week or two ago with a determination to have some personal experiences, if that were possible. He attended at the Spiritual Institution with a relative, who was, like many others new to the subject, prepared to "denounce the humbug."

The two visitors were among the first of the numerous company to whom Miss Fowler gave attention. She said, taking the hand of one of the inquirers, "There is a lady here; she is not very tall, and she has nice light, curly hair. Her face is very red; she looks healthy, but internally she is very ill. Stay, she is going to show me how she died." Turning full on the one who had come prepared to "denounce" the "impostor," the young lady went on to say, "She is in her night-dress, and she died in your arms—in this way" (spreading out her fingers and hands convulsively). The picture was so accurate that the gentleman ejaculated, "It's our —." The spirit described was the deceased wife of one of the gentlemen, and the sister-in-law of the other. She lived in the country, but came up to London to consult an eminent physician as to the state of her lungs. She stayed at the house of her brother-in-law, and whilst there expired in the manner delineated by Miss Fowler, who, we need hardly state, had never before seen either of the two gentlemen who sought for a test, and received one of so startling, but at the same time so satisfactory a character.

NUTS FOR MR. PITT TO CRACK, OR JOSEPH PANDRA.

Mr. Pitt candidly informs the readers of the *MEDIUM* how and why he lost faith in the Bible; the God of the Bible was too cruel—too much like a devil. What does he think of the God of Nature? Who made the tiger and the wolf to slaughter kids and lambs to feed upon their flesh? Who made cruel man himself (in the image of God) to murder kids and lambs, or pay a butcher to slaughter them, that we may feed on venison and mutton?

Is there any love or wisdom in man, so gentle or so cruel his victims; or does man justify himself at the tribunal of Love and Wisdom? Is there love and wisdom in man? in Nature? in God? Yes, or no?

Is it wise that animals or man should die at all, either prematurely or by natural death? Are premature deaths by famine, pestilence, and war, compatible with love and wisdom in Nature or in God? If compatible with laws of necessity or reality in Nature, why not with love and wisdom (the highest wisdom) in the God of Nature and of the Bible?

H. D.

CURATIVE ELECTRICITY.

To the Editor of the *Medium and Daybreak*.

SIR,—Electricity being now so generally used as a curative agent. I was induced, by a paragraph in the *MEDIUM*, to purchase one of Mr. Whiting's best magneto-electric machines, and find it far superior to any other similar apparatus, though I have purchased several. My object, however, in writing is not to extol any particular machine, but to ascertain, if possible, in which way the electric current passes through the patient's body from one pole to the other; for instance, in the case of a diseased heart or liver, requiring one pole to be placed in front and the other at the back of the patient, does the current pass direct from one pole to the other, or take a circuitous route by the skin, muscles, or nerves, or bow? As you have one of Mr. Whiting's machines in your library, and are often visited by clairvoyantes, it is possible one of these ladies might be able to trace the course of the current in the dark, or perhaps our friend Tien-Sien-Tie might give us some information on the subject.

SEXEN.

Bagshot, January 13, 1872.

A SEANCE AT MR. CHAMPERNOWNE'S.

To the Editor of the *Medium and Daybreak*.

DEAR SIR,—I have often read with interest and pleasure the accounts given in the *MEDIUM AND DAYBREAK* of Mr. Champernowne's highly-developed circle, especially in the musical phase of the spiritual phenomena, and knowing that the invisibles (at this circle) had to be consulted before any new sitters were admitted, I was delighted on receiving a special invitation, along with Mrs. and Mr. T—, a vocal celebrity of the highest reputation, to meet them at 2.30 p.m. on the 7th inst. There were present Mr. Champernowne, Mrs. Constable, Mr. Russell, Mr. Pilborough, Master Turketine, the medium, and us three. We all sat on one side of the room, hands joined, there being no necessity for sitting round a table; after a few minutes in the dark, we heard the concertina taken out of its case, and commenced to play in the softest, all but inaudible tones, that gradually increased in power until the full force of the instrument came swelling out, then dying away to the long-sustained, beautiful chords. It is impossible to convey an idea of the passion, pathos, and purity of the tones of the instrument, produced by the invisible executants, who came to give us a foretaste of the divine strains from "beyond the river, whence many travellers now return." We then heard a symphony played with a firm touch on the piano, and were startled by the tones of a rich, powerful baritone voice, of a ringing quality, which sang in an excellent style two verses of a song; then followed another grand display on the concertina, after which another song by the same voice. We also heard Mr. Champernowne's son, "invisible Willie," speak to his father, while I had a grasp of a spirit-hand, and Mr. T— was several times touched. We hear much from those that won't investigate these great truths, and especially from the clerical element, that demons are the performers; if so, they cannot be unhappy beings that discourse such soul-stirring, heaven-breathing strains. We were also much interested in viewing Mrs. Champernowne's trance crayon-drawings of the spiritual spheres, many of them harmonious in colour, beautifully drawn, and all remarkable in composition.

ALEX. KEITH.

53, Oxford Terrace, Hyde Park.

EIGHT DAYS WITH THE SPIRITUALISTS.

To the Editor of the *Medium and Daybreak*.

SIR,—I have been much interested in reading your remarks on the above in the *MEDIUM*. I happened to be present at the second seance which Mr. Gillingham has attempted to describe, and can only express my utter astonishment that any sensible person should have put into print such arrant trash. My own decided impression at the time was, that Mr. G. was so full of his own mighty ideas of himself, that he was trying the whole evening to draw the attention of all the spirits, in the body as well as out—to that wonderful person who had written that little book full of statements, "The Seat of the Soul," and it occurred to me at the time, that if the two young men, Herne and Williams, were likely to meet with many such egotistical visitors, the sooner they closed their public seances the better for themselves and the cause too. If Mr. G. did really get a knock-down by the "Gentleman in Black" (as he suggests) or "by the mediums," as an impartial judge I should say, served him right.—Yours, &c.

W. WHITLEY.

TO EXTEND THE MEDIUM.

"To keep the *MEDIUM* at One Penny," two sovereigns from Thomas Blackburne, Esq., Manchester. Mr. R. Fitton, Manchester, encloses 10s., "as a small contribution towards your valuable weekly, the *MEDIUM*, at the old price of One Penny." Dr. Madden, the proceeds of books sold, 7s.; Mr. John Thomson, Darlington, 10s.

SINCE the beginning of the year, we have experienced considerable increase in the circulation of the *MEDIUM*, due in a large degree to the industry of our friends in appointing local agents in provincial towns. Certain of the wholesale London houses refuse to supply the *MEDIUM*, but if any difficulty is experienced by country agents, we shall gladly make such arrangements as will ensure them supplies.

MORE ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.—The committee of the Kilburn Park Temperance Hall and Reading Rooms beg to acknowledge the receipt of four volumes of *Human Nature*, through Mr. Austin, as a present from the Progressive Library; also ten shillings' worth of books upon Spiritualism given by Mrs. Makdougall Gregory, through Mr. Ashman. The committee beg to tender their warmest thanks for the very unexpected gifts, and hope that other friends will follow so good an example.—WM. APLIN, Secretary. P.S.—The subject of Spiritualism is attracting a good deal of attention amongst us, and many who were its greatest opponents have been induced to investigate the subject, and, as a natural consequence, have been convinced of its truth. I have no doubt that the books we have received will greatly aid us in our search after truth.—W. A. 21, Salisbury Road, Kilburn Park, N.W., January 16, 1872.

"LIFE LECTURES," BY THE AUTHOR OF "ALPHA."—We can very highly recommend this book to thoughtful readers, although "Alpha" contains the essence of the contents of this more elaborate volume. The author of these works, the late Edward N. Dennys, we regard as second to no moralist, perhaps we should say Spiritualist, whose words have ever reached us. His "precepts" are on a tone with the Sermon on the Mount, while his "philosophy" is much more coherent and logical than any system propounded in the New Testament. The volume before us contains twenty-eight religious essays, which may be called "sacred reading;" but they strike us as mere efflorescence in comparison with the rich and ripe philosophy of the "Alpha." Both works will afford real feasts to all minds of religious proclivities.—*The Cosmopolitan*.

W. H. BUTTS, Esq., of Memphis, Tenn., in writing, briefly referred to passing events—"We had large meetings here during Mr. Peebles's stay with us, and I regret it was not longer. He had from 800 to 1,000 to listen to his lectures. There is a great interest in this country in regard to the communion with our departed friends." Mr. Butts also orders copies of the *Dialectical Report*, Tolhurst's "Ruth," and the illuminated "Ten Spiritual Commandments."

The Spirit Messenger.

[A seance is held every Friday evening, at eight o'clock, at the office of the Medium; J. J. Morse, Trance-Medium. By our reports of these or other circles we do not endorse or stand responsible for the facts or teachings given by the spirits. Our desire is, in brief, to give a faithful representation of what takes place, for the benefit of those who cannot attend.]

January 12.

The first control was by TIEN-SIEN-TIE.

No questions being prepared, the spirit made a few remarks upon the value and utility of spirit-manifestations. It was said that they demonstrated to the senses human immortality, but they did more. They revealed the interior constitution of the human mind, and the divine possibilities connected with man, showing how man may progress infinitely. The reflection followed that the cause which sustains all this action must be infinitely beyond human comprehension, and such considerations foreshadowed the nobility of the human intellect in the great problems it had to grapple with in the future.

The spirit was then asked to make some remarks on the beauty of the spirit-world. He remarked that our conceptions of beauty depended upon our intellectual development and moral state. We could only elevate ourselves to the enjoyment of beauty by leading spiritual and consistent lives, which could only be effected by our knowing the uses of things, and adhering closely to what they inculcated. Thus, as beauty comes from the adherence to use—as man advances in this spiritual life, beauty increases.

Q. Is there sense-knowledge in spirit-life?—A. Yes; the whole man is transported at death to an objective world, in which every faculty is exercised by proper surroundings. But there is developed in spirit-life a higher range of senses, which do not merely take cognisance of objects, but penetrate into the interior essences and merits of things. These are known by the term intuitions.

Q. Does a stout heavy person after death appear in the spirit-world as a stout spirit?—A. No; the spirit assumes normal proportions, uninfluenced by any diseased conditions which may have produced the stoutness in earth-life. When spirits appear to seeing-mediums it is necessary that they should assume their earth-form in order to be identified. Those not long departed retain a full memory of their earthly conditions, and thus appear externally in the earth-form.

THE STROLLING PLAYER

controlled, and gave a very interesting discourse, illustrating the worthless education on religious and spiritual subjects supplied by the ecclesiastical institutions of the land. "Suppose," he said, "we stand at the gate of the spirit-world for twenty minutes and interrogate all who come from the earth with the question, 'Where are you going?' The first, a Pharisee, would say, 'To heaven;' the second, a victim of Phariseism, would answer, 'To hell;' the third, a natural theologian, would reply, 'I do not care; it was all right on earth, and it will be all right here;' the fourth, a Materialist, would deny he was dead, not believing in a future life; the fifth, a Spiritualist, would make answer, 'I am going neither to heaven nor hell, but to the spirit-land.'" He censured our modern priestcraft for much of the ignorance, deception, moral deflection, and misery which exist in society, because they taught the people superstitious lies instead of spiritual truths.

THE WORD OF GOD.

On Sunday evening, the services at Cavendish Rooms were conducted by Mr. Burns, who delivered an address on the above subject. He said the doctrine was inculcated by the Christian priesthood that the whole of the Bible was the word of God, and that God had said nothing more to mankind, thus making the Deity responsible for everything which the Bible contains, and limiting Him from the power of saying anything else. He said he would neither attack the Bible nor apologise for it, but simply take a glance at its contents, to see whether it gives any foundation for the doctrine referred to. He divided biblical history into several epochs, and endeavoured to discover what was meant by the term "word of God" in each case.

In the patriarchal age, God, or what was at that time supposed to be God, assumed the human form, and reasoned and talked with men face to face, as in the case of Abraham on the plains of Mamre, and many others. The word of God was at that time what these spiritual visitants communicated. Sometimes it was common information, sometimes prophecy; at other times, the expression of anger or regret. Under no such circumstances could anyone recognise the spiritual God of Jesus, and believe that the God of Abraham was identical therewith. During the institution and reign of the Mosaic dispensation, this Jehovah, or spiritual guide of the Israelites, was their king and ruler, and communicated his will through certain seers, prophets, or mediums, who were able to hear his "word" by a special faculty similar to clairaudience as manifested at the present day.

Subsequently the priesthood became so corrupt that they could not hear this spirit-voice, and the "word of the Lord" became "precious," and "there was no open vision." Then the Israelites departed, in a great measure, from the worship of this spirit, and clamoured for a king. We next hear of the functions of the "man of God" being admitted by Saul and his servant, in the same way as we would recognise the powers of a clairvoyant for the recovery of lost or stolen property. We gather that men of God were accustomed to take fees for their services when anyone solicited them for the purpose of "inquiring of God," and that there were a number of such persons in the land—at Bethel, Shiloh, and other places. We learn that in those days the term "word of God" was applied to the sayings and communications of these prophets, or seers. The theory was that all spirit-influences came directly from God; but in that age, when there was perhaps no proper conception of the Deity, the term which we have translated God might have been used to indicate spirit-influence, or communications from a superior state. The later prophets used the terms "word of the Lord" or "word of God" in the same sense. But the phenomena were of a much higher quality, being beautiful, symbolical, and poetical, and often accompanied by visions. Thus Isaiah declared that he "saw the word." In the 119th Psalm a much higher conception of the "word" is given. It is represented as a spiritual influence, capable of

elevating and controlling in moral channels the actions of men, and making as nought the desires of the flesh and worldly ambition.

In this beautiful and spiritual sense we are prepared to consider the same topic as presented in the gospels. Jesus speaks of the "word of God" being nullified by the empty formalities of the Pharisees, and all through his ministry, his oracular utterances of spiritual and moral truths he recognises, after the prophets, as the "word of God," or from the Father. When a poor woman encountered him with faltering flattery he rebuked her by saying, "Rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it." This word, heard direct or from the utterance of others, was, in the estimation of Jesus and the apostles, the rule of life, the standard of religious belief, the sole spiritual guide and teacher. The Psalmist also recognised it as the means of salvation.

Thus it is evident, from all these instances, that the term was not intended to be applied to the Bible, which was not then in existence, but to communications and influences received from the spirit-world. Later on we find that the whole mission of the apostles was to preach this "word," not by basing it on books already written. They were not to bethink themselves what they would say, for the "spirit" would give them utterance suitable for all occasions. This "word" was of such a special kind that all were not prepared to hear it or to arrive at truthful convictions respecting it, hence the phrase is introduced, "He who hath ears to hear, let him hear," as it seemed to be a merit in those days to possess "spiritual gifts," so as to be put individually in direct communication with spiritual guidance. In the later epistles it is repeatedly promised that this "word" should be everlasting, and whereas all flesh should wither and pass away as grass, "purified souls, in obeying the truth through the spirit, should become incorruptible by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." Indeed, this was the burden of the gospel: "The word of the Lord endureth for ever."

According to popular theology, God has been speechless for eighteen hundred years, and it is considered unorthodox to suppose that he will ever again recover his speech. The speaker pointed out how unscriptural such a statement was, and also how erroneous and blasphemous it was to attribute the authorship of the Bible to God. It is true the Bible contains the "word of God," which was not a final statement for all time, but a progressive institution shining into the souls of men from age to age, and feeding them with spiritual food according to the development of their natures to receive it. Thus, the "word of God" was an eternal institution—like the sun in the heavens giving light to each day and hour as time presented them. The sun that shone a thousand years ago could not warm and vivify the world to-day; neither could the "word of God" as spoken in times past appeal to the necessities of the present day. Yet these records were exceedingly valuable. They showed that the "word of God" was progressive, and that each individual should seek for it on his own account, and, like the obedient child of his father, be guided thereby.

What, then, was meant by the term? It meant any form of knowledge or guidance capable of serving man and directing him aright. All inspirations in science, manufactures, or arts—in social relations, in moral motives, and spiritual aspirations were part and parcel of God's gifts vouchsafed to mankind from time to time as they required them and were able to use them. Truth was the "word of God;" but man being finite, truth could only be relative, never absolute; hence, though it were possible for God to give a final manifestation of himself, it would be impossible for man to receive it, and therefore the existence of any infallible and final "word of God" was an absurdity.

SPIRITUALISTIC TELEGRAPHY.

To the Editor of the Medium and Daybreak.

SIR,—In a late impression of your valuable paper I observe a letter from "Apemantus," in which he makes a suggestion for the better communion with our spirit-friends by advancing the idea of having some small wooden machine fixed firmly on the centre of the table, so as to do away with table-tilting, &c., which machine, he suggests, should be worked after the exact system of Professor Morse's telegraph, viz., that the complete alphabet should be rapped out by dots and dashes, or, in other words, by long strokes and short ones.

This seems to me to be a very feasible suggestion, provided our spirit-friends would take the trouble to learn the code, which, by-the-bye, would take them some little time to do, so as to acquire accuracy, with speed.

Having been many years a telegraphist myself, I, perhaps, may have discovered the virtues of the suggestion, which to an uninitiated individual might be barely apparent, although I cannot but think that even the adoption of this machine would fail to succeed in convincing the sceptic, inasmuch as he, being, perhaps, entirely ignorant of both the alphabet and the principles upon which it was formed, and hence not being able to "read" the communication himself, would not receive as orthodox the testimony of others, and although skilled telegraphists from all parts of Britain might be present, and endorse the truth and accuracy of the manifestations given, he would, I feel convinced, adhere to the favourite absurdity that there was trickery at the bottom of it all, for I know there are sceptics who are actually not open to conviction, whilst there are others who are like the old Scotch woman—open to conviction, but show them the man who can convince them.

As a medium of communication between the true, sincere, and intelligent Spiritualist and his friends, this machine would be simply invaluable; but I must leave to abler and wiser heads than mine to offer suggestions for the overthrow of those evils so truthfully stated in "Apemantus's" letter.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

CHARLES E. HALLAS.

We learn from the *Norwood News* that the present series of popular entertainments at Norwood were inaugurated by a lecture on "Cloudland," by our friend, John Jones, Esq., of Enmore Park. The lecture was a review of the invisible forces of nature apparently up to the threshold of Spiritualism. The discourse was aptly illustrated with dissolving views.

ENFIELD HIGHWAY.—A letter from Mr. E. A. Bows, Watham Lane, Waltham New Town, Cheshunt, speaks encouragingly of the development of local mediums. Very powerful phenomena have been elicited, and the circle is in a high state of enthusiasm.

SEANCES AT LEEDS.

In continuation of last week's statement, I now proceed to give you an account of the three following seances held by Mr. Bottomley, Thursday, January 4, 1872, the seance was held at the house of your old friend, Mr. Lingford, where there were about ten sitters at the table. The spirit "Zeud" again controlled the medium, and gave us a graphic account of those planets that were inhabited, and those that were not. A gentleman from Hull asked if some physical phenomena could not be produced. "Zeud" said, No; but that he and a band of spirits with him had been to the house of a member of the circle, and had arranged their batteries and laid their wires to give such phenomena on the following Sunday as would convince all sceptics. This promise being satisfactory to the circle, the meeting dispersed with great expectations.

On Saturday the seance was held at the house of Mr. P—, when the spirit "Zeud" gave me a splendid physiological examination of one of the members of the circle who is diseased, and likewise indicated the precise remedy, which quite coincided with my diagnosis. Afterwards, a pair of gloves were brought out of my coat pocket from the entrance hall of the house, and one thrown upon the table, the other upon the floor, and a sea-shell was brought from the mantelpiece and dropped upon the floor close to the table; the reason assigned for it not being placed upon the table being that there was too much light in the room. The seance was altogether satisfactory and the members of the circle again separated with great expectations of the morrow.

On Sunday the seance was held at the house of Mr. H—, consisting of about eleven persons, one of whom was an entire sceptic. We commenced by singing, "Shall we gather at the river." After having sat a few minutes, "Zeud" again controlled the medium, and enjoined darkness and silence; shortly afterwards, the large chandelier, which hung over the table, was struck with something which, to our senses, made the glass to fly in all directions; on turning on the light, expecting to see the table covered with thousands of bits of glass, there was not one bit to be found, but a book of Wesley's hymns. The light was again put out, when there came a slight rushing noise, and two stems from two geraniums which were in the staircase window were dropped, one into the hand of the sceptic, and the other into the hand of the lady who sat next to me, which was immediately followed by three more hymn books from the piano being thrown upon the table; then, in a moment, the chair on which my right-hand neighbour was sitting was taken from under her by force and carried over my head, hitting me a smart blow over the eye, which commenced to swell rapidly; at the same time, the sceptic was entranced in a violent manner; the ladies screamed, some groaned, and the wife of the sceptic cried; of course we assured her the spirits would not hurt her husband, when, in the midst of all the confusion, the Indian spirit, named "Amelia," spoke, and asked the lady what she was crying for; she said, "You wanted physical phenomena, and when we give you physical phenomena you are afraid." The light was again restored, when the chair was found laid at length upon the table, and the sceptic in what appeared to be violent convulsions. I asked "Amelia" why they had hit me with the chair; she replied, "You should keep your head out of the way." Order being restored, we again put out the light, when the bass notes of the piano, which was behind the medium, were struck two or three times, for which we thanked the spirits, when a hand ran over all the keys of the piano. A medium who was present was entranced, and gave a very beautiful message, which I am not permitted to repeat; thus ended the grandest seance at which I have sat.

P.S.—In answer to your question as to how the spirits spoke, such as my father and others, I can only say that the spirits each controlled the medium's organism, and when a spirit could not speak, "Zeud" then controlled, and explained the matter.—Yours, &c., J. B. C.

Leeds, January 7, 1872.

[This letter has been unavoidably postponed.—Ed. M.]

MR. MORSE'S VISIT TO LIVERPOOL.

This seems to have been one of the most successful events of the kind which have occurred lately. Three of the Liverpool dailies gave considerable prominence to the meetings, and although their tone was not in all cases respectful, yet their reporting the subject recognised it as one of the events of the day. The report of the *Albion* was much better. These newspaper statements have given rise to a paragraph which appeared in the *Echo* on Monday, in which Mr. Morse is made a citizen of Glasgow and a friend of Mr. Duguid, the trance-painter. It makes a little weak mirth over the distribution sale of Mr. Duguid's paintings, and it is a pity that no address is given, so as more effectually to advertise that excellent object. We learn, from various private sources, that the results of Mr. Morse's visit were highly satisfactory to the society which engaged him; the teaching of the spirits, the healthy interest created, and the reimbursement of the expenses from the proceeds of the meetings were all that could be desired. We hear that invitations to visit the country flow in upon Mr. Morse, and we are glad to see that there is a cause in existence to demand such aid, and, at the same time, the necessary mediumistic power to support the cause.

[A special report has come to hand, but too late for this week.—Ed. M.]

A lady in Scotland writes:—"I have much pleasure in informing you that my friends in Edinburgh, as well as myself, have had many good tests, exact descriptions and names, &c., of our departed friends, through the mediumship of Mrs. Olive, and we should be glad if she had a more extended field for her talents. Her powers for development, healing, and prescribing, are also very great. I give her address, in case you may not have it, knowing how willing you are to help on the cause of Spiritualism:—Mrs. Olive, 46, Fitzroy Road, Regent's Park, N.W."

We have to apologise to Mr. A. D. Wilson, Secretary of the Halifax Psychological Society, for having overlooked a kind communication of his announcing the amalgamation of the Halifax and Sowerby Bridge friends for a Christmas demonstration. We hope the friends enjoyed themselves, and we shall be glad to hear from Mr. Wilson again, and trust his favour will receive better attention.

ORGANISATION IN HULL.

To the Editor of the Medium and Daybreak.

DEAR SIR,—It is intended to form a society in Hull for the purpose of investigating the truths and illustrating the facts of Spiritualism, as well as adopting the best means of forming a Spiritual Library. All mediums and other friends are invited to attend every Thursday evening, at seven o'clock, at the address given till further notice.

All friends of the cause will promote the work in hand by communicating with, or sending suitable books and publications they may have to spare for distribution or the Library, to ever yours truthfully,

42, New King Street, Hull.

JOHN L. BLAND.

A FRAGMENT FROM THE SPHERES.

To-day men lives on earth, to-morrow dies, and passes to the higher life of Summer-land;

His loves on earth—those dear ones left behind—are still his loves;
To them he must return, for sympathy links soul to soul,
And death can never sever what the love-chain binds.

Birmingham.

RESTATIO.

BIRMINGHAM.—Mr. C. Gray, writes:—"This year I intend to begin with six copies, proposing to offer one to one of our free libraries, and having obtained orders for three more, to supply parties regularly."

SEANCES IN LONDON DURING THE WEEK.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 20, A Special Seance for Spiritualists, by Messrs. Herne and Williams, at their Rooms, 61, Lamb's Conduit Street, at 7 o'clock. Admission, 2s. 6d.

Seance at 24, Lower Stamford Street, Blackfriars, at 7 p.m.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, Mr. Cogswell's Seance, 22, New Road, E., at 7.

MONDAY, JANUARY 22, Mr. Charles Williams, Healing Medium, at 46, Ada Street, Broadway, London Fields, at 7.30.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, Seance at 24, Lower Stamford Street, Blackfriars, at 7.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, Seance at Mr. Wallace's, 105, Islip Street, Kentish Town.

Seance at Mrs. Dyer's, 46, Fitzroy Road, Regent's Park Road, Primrose Hill, at 7 p.m. Trance and Physical Manifestations. Admission 2s. 6d.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 25, Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism. Seance at their rooms, 74, Navarino Road, Dalston, E., at 8 p.m. Particulars as to admission of visitors on application to the Secretary.

Public seance at 7, Corporation Row, Clerkenwell, at 8. Free.

SEANCES IN THE PROVINCES DURING THE WEEK.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 19, LIVERPOOL, Psychological Society, at Mrs. Bohn's Temperance Hotel, 5, Stafford Street.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, KEIGHLEY, 10.30 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. Messrs. Shackleton and Wright, Trance-Mediums. Children's Progressive Lyceum at 9 a.m. and 2 p.m.

SOVERBY BRIDGE, at Mr. W. Robinson's, Causeway Head, Children's Lyceum, 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Public Meeting, 6.30 p.m. Trance-Medium, Mr. Wood.

BRADFORD, Public Meetings, 10.30 a.m., 2.30 and 6.30 p.m. Trance-Medium, Mr. Hingworth.

BOWLING, Spiritualists' Meeting Room, 2.30 and 6 p.m. Hall Lane, 2 and 6 p.m.

MANCHESTER, Union Chambers, 15, Dickenson St., Mount St., at 2.30.

COWNS, at George Holdroyd's, at 6 p.m.

HAGG'S LANE END, 5 a.m. and 6 p.m. Trance-Mediums Mr. J. Crane and Mrs. N. Wilde.

GLASGOW, Whyte's Temperance Hotel, Candleriggs, at 6.30.

GAWTHORPE, Spiritualists' Meeting Room, 2.30 and 6 p.m. Mrs. S. A. Swift and J. Kilson, Mediums.

MORLEY, Mr. G. Butterfield's, New Scarboro', Mrs. J. A. Butterfield, medium, at 6.30.

HALIFAX, at the Stannary, 2.30 and 6.30. Mr. Blackburn and Mr. Wood, Trance-Mediums.

NOTTINGHAM, at Mr. Gilpin's Rooms, Long Row. Children's Lyceum at 9.45 a.m. and 2 p.m. Public meeting at 6.30 p.m.

MONDAY, JANUARY 22, NEW FELLOWS, at Mr. Swain's, at 8 o'clock.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, KEIGHLEY, at 7.30 p.m., at the Lyceum. Trance-Mediums, Mrs. Lucas and Messrs. Wright and Shackleton.

GAWTHORPE, at Mr. J. Mercer's, at 7.30 p.m. Medium, Miss A. Mercer.

SOVERBY BRIDGE, at Mr. W. Robinson's, Causeway Head, 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, BOWLING, Spiritualists' Meeting Room, 8 p.m.

HAGG'S LANE END, J. Crane, Trance-Medium. 7.30 p.m.

MORLEY, Mr. G. Butterfield's, New Scarboro', at 7.30.

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 25, BOWLING, Hall Lane, 7.30 p.m.

GAWTHORPE, Spiritualists' Meeting Room, a Developing Circle, at 7.30.

WEST HARTLEPOOL, Seance at Mr. Hull's, Adelaide Street.

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