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THE DAVENPORT BROTHERS.

IN our last two numbers we devoted a considerable space to the manifestations which are observed to occur in the presence of Ira and William Davenport, and of W. M. Fay, who accompanies them. These manifestations have for many years been exhibited throughout the States of America, and have repeatedly been described by the Press, so that there are, perhaps, few of the inquirers into spiritual laws and philosophy to whom the accounts are not familiar. For more than eleven years we have read the statements made in the American papers, and have during that time observed the constant recurrence of the same manifestations in the presence of large audiences, and of committees chosen from such audiences to test and report upon the facts. The same arguments have been used for and against, and the audiences have separated to ruminate upon what they had seen and heard, according to their several intelligences. The general result has been, and it is a noteworthy one, that in spite of hostile criticisms, and of charges of impossibilities, and of conjuring, fraud, and delusion, the Brothers Davenport have received testimonies to the facts from the hundreds of towns which they have visited, and from the committees who have been appointed, and they have gone on from day to day, producing the alleged impossibilities in the face of all the tests which could be applied. Perhaps Englishmen are much more acute and clever than Americans in detecting fraud and imposture, though in America it is not thought so, and it is perhaps from the idea that if Uncle Sam could be got over, it would not be difficult to ease John Bull of some of his credulity and cash, that the party has now crossed the Atlantic to make the experiment. A few weeks will show us how this is, for public opinion will, by that time, have settled down again into its proper channels, and the present excitement will have left only the usual amount of controversy, founded on each person's broader or narrower convictions. The misfortune is

that we are all prone to make up our minds, as it is properly called, too easily, and there is a marvellous power of digesting and assimilating according to our several requirements. Each man's mind is a little centre or cosmos, in which he always reigns supreme, and often stupid.

At this moment, however, London is very much excited by the transport of these young men over the sea. What is so commonly known and even stale in America, has here produced not only interest, but intense excitement and wonder. It has become a general topic of conversation even in miscellaneous gatherings, and as we hear from a friend, a well-known doctor of medicine, the souls of those who go to the city in omnibuses were so full of it a few days ago, that it was thrust forward as a topic of conversation amongst the twelve insides which one of those vehicles was carrying from Bayswater to the Bank. What did they think of it, these twelve insides? because you are likely there to find a fair sample of the human bulk which makes up our public opinion. The omnibus party was sadly divided into three opinions, all expressed with equal certainty. The first considered that the Davenports were simply conjurors, and therefore gross impostors and scoundrels. Another, that the manifestations were no conjuring or sleight-of-hand, but the direct work of the devil, who made use of them for his own ordinary purposes. The third disagreed with both the others, and believed that it was a development of what is called Spiritualism. Our friend, the doctor, sat quiet, and heard what was said without observation, and he left them before they had settled their differences. Let us only enlarge the capacity of the omnibus, and of its insides and outsides, and call it London, and listen to what is being said and very surely going to be said, and it will all amount to the same story of conjuring, the devil, and Spiritualism; with the addition, let us hope, of a few sensible persons, who, feeling within themselves that they know nothing about it, will be content to say so, and to wait for more light, before they join either of the three omnibus parties, or adopt some theory of physical laws which may help to keep Materialism a little longer alive. We do not want any to be in too great a hurry in coming to conclusions, or to join our army of martyrs, although we believe that in upholding the fact of spiritual phenomena, whether these manifestations of the Davenports may be found to be genuine or not, it is battling for the right and true, and will, therefore, certainly be victorious; but the worst of these hot converts is that they know very little about it, and insist on enlisting as generals instead of as privates. Witness Mr. Dion Boucicault, who is so newly and strongly impressed, that he has not had time to cast off all his private clothes, but has just put on his military jacket over them, and



thinks himself all at once a soldier, and as able, as he is willing, to take the command of the regiment.

At present, however, the first question is as to the matter of fact, which must be settled as a basis before any of the other parties can theorize about it. If the conjurors be right, then it can't be either the Devil or Spiritualism, nor can it lay any ground for the discovery of hitherto unknown physical or spiritual laws. There will, if and when this is proved, be an end of the subject, and the Davenports will speedily retire discomfited before the scrutiny of intelligent England, and we shall enjoy the laugh at America for having been so long the dupe of such impostors. Our business is to record results and offer opinions upon them, and we shall do it without fear and frankly, glad only to get as near as we can to the truth. We have not ourselves at this time of writing, had an opportunity of witnessing the alleged phenomena, and we do not know that we shall be able when we do see them to detect what, if it exists, has eluded the scrutiny of others who are presumably as good observers as ourselves. There is, however, this difference between us and the general public—that whether or not the Davenport manifestations be true or false, some of them are similar to what we know to be true, and for that reason we should think the recurrence of them probable, and the only question of interest, therefore, will be the question of fact to be settled by exact evidence in their particular case.

We have already, as we have said, recorded on several occasions in our pages the facts as they have been described by others in America, and that this has been fairly done, is shewn by the many newspaper articles which have already appeared in this country, giving the same or similar details. Very wisely, as it seems to us, the circle of these facts is not a large one, for it is better to present a few constantly-recurring phenomena, which are capable of being witnessed and tested in public, than by going through a larger range, which is more adapted for private sittings. This indeed is what has been so often asked for in England, and now, at last, the public is brought face to face with one phase of this dreaded subject, from which it cannot escape, and must perforce enter into some one of the ranks we have designated. For ourselves, in order that we may not conceal our opinions, we say that if the conjurors do not gain the day, we unfeignedly believe that the manifestations of the Davenport Brothers are merely repetitions of part of the well-known range of spiritual phenomena or mediumship, of which many instances have been recorded in our pages, and are well proved and known to the personal experience of hundreds of our readers. Having said this, it is our intention to confine ourselves chiefly, in what follows, to preserving the remarks and descriptions which have appeared in the news-

papers. It is the record of a mighty pretty quarrel, which will yet rage with greater vehemence when people find out what is really at stake in the question of Spiritualism; but even now it is not deficient in zeal, or in abuse, or in talent, or in wonder, or in fear, or in many other qualities which, as we proceed, we shall take the opportunity of noticing whilst introducing each article.

THEIR PERSONAL HISTORY.

We do not know that we can add much to the general knowledge of the Davenport Brothers and Mr. Fay. Their birth, parentage, and education have not much to do with the matter in hand, and what little we have accessible is derived from a small pamphlet published at Oswego, in the United States, in 1859. It is called—*A Sketch of the History of the Davenport Boys*, and from it we learn that “The parents of these remarkable mediums were on the mother’s side of English extraction, while the father is a New Yorker. They reside in Buffalo, New York, where they have reared their family, sharing the honours and responsibilities of that city. In the early training of their children, consisting of these two boys and of a daughter, it was of course unknown that there were any mediums in their family. At length the young daughter was impressed to say, that if they would sit they would receive manifestations from the spirits. The trial was made, and the prediction of the child was verified, and the house from that time has been the scene of spirit manifestations of the most demonstrative and unmistakable character, even up to the present time (1859). The mediumship of the children seemed to develop itself at once, or rather it was discovered at once that it existed. No long process of training seemed necessary; the conditions being favourable, the spirits could act in their presence at once. The boys were borne about the house by the spirits, and lifted up against the ceiling of the room over head, as among the commonest early physical manifestations in the family. Since those early manifestations other modes have been introduced by spirits, such as the playing of musical instruments, the exhibition of spirit-hands, their touch and handling of persons and things, writing with spirit-hands, loud and long continued talking by the spirits, and all in keeping with a clear determinate zeal and purpose on the part of the spirits, to establish the fact of spirit manifestations. The boys are small in stature, being rather below the middle size. Whether the great and constant draughts from their vital force, made in giving manifestations, have produced this result is unknown, and yet this is the general supposition. They are usually healthy, having an exuberant flow of humour and vivacity, both from habit and

stitution, and much inclined to conviviality and social amusements. Their ages now (1859) are eighteen and nineteen. Their sister having much the same phase of mediumship at present as her brothers, is hale and vigorous, and in her presence spirits readily manifest their powers, speaking audibly, and bearing musical instruments about the room and over the heads of the audience, playing in unison with her time and tune while she sits firmly pinioned to her seat. To make this class of demonstrations absolutely certain, the boys and their sister have been accustomed to allow themselves to be tied firmly to their seats. Excessive tying was not contemplated, but since they have submitted to this ordeal, strong men have often tied ropes on them for half-an-hour to an hour, and these complicated knots have always and invariably been untied at the close by the spirits with incredible rapidity. This order of manifestation, and these tests, have been witnessed by so many committees and circles, that the phenomena thus evinced are established as a verity, and the genuineness of the mediumship of the boys put beyond all question in so far as human testimony can go. Committees, both large and small, of unquestionable capacity to judge, have from time to time witnessed the phenomena, written out the facts in full and definite statements, and given them to the world. But, after all, they are so astounding and so far removed from anything with which the world has been acquainted, that any second-handed testimony cannot be received."

The pamphlet is written by Mr. L. P. Rand, who was at that time travelling with the brothers, and he tells how he first made their acquaintance. He says:—

I had attended the circles in Bangor, of Mr. Willis, when he visited that city—saw him twice suspended from the floor without contact, in the light, in the presence of some thirty-five other witnesses—was one of five men, pressing with all our weight upon the piano, a large and heavy instrument, when it tilted majestically, keeping time with the tune, as Mr. Willis, a light and frail man, played in the light, having no contact with the instrument, save as his fingers touched its keys. But the boys came into our vicinity, and we were invited to attend their circles, and became deeply interested in the manifestations. The circles at which we made our first acquaintance with the mediums were held in Orono [our residence], Old Town and Bradley. I mention these places because the Davenport Mediums spent nearly one year at this locality, making it their home for the time—holding many circles, both in public and private during their stay here, in the midst of a large circle of their friends, who had every opportunity of becoming acquainted with the boys and the manifestations given through them. We also made the acquaintance of the spirits; they seemed like familiar friends—they talked much with us and to us—they came to our homes, and talked familiarly with us and our children, often shaking us by the hand, often passing their hands upon our brows and upon our persons, handling and freely playing upon musical instruments, five and more, even, at the same instant of time, and giving the most unmistakable and absolutely positive demonstration of their presence and power in a great variety of other ways and modes of communication.

Among other things, we often had an exhibition of spirit-hands in the light

and also received communications written by spirit-hands in total darkness. Communications of great excellence in sentiment, and elegance and beauty of style—the ruled lines of our marked, and invariably identified paper traced with the utmost accuracy in the dark; and the composition both in artistic taste and accuracy of style and punctuation, as well as in originality and grandeur of idea, entirely beyond the capacity of the boys or any other person under any kindred circumstances whatever.

Mr. Rand afterwards entered into an engagement with them, and travelled with them from town to town, and all passed off as usual, until when being with them at the small town of Mexico, they were charged with infringing the law by having a public exhibition without a license. This was the culmination of the conjurors' theory, and the conjuring party being in a majority, they were condemned to a fine, or in default one month's imprisonment in the gaol of Oswego. They preferred to be the victims of this decision rather than to pay the fine, and they were accordingly conveyed to the prison, and were there confined. Like another gaoler we read of, however, the keeper of the prison took pleasure in them, and treated them kindly and learnt of them. The day before the expiration of the month an incident is said to have occurred which is shortly described in the following document:—

DECLARATION AND AFFIDAVIT.

Be it known to all people, that in the seventh month A. D. 1859, we, the undersigned, were imprisoned, in the common jail, in the City of Oswego, N. Y., on account of propagating our religious principles, and that after twenty-nine days of our confinement, at evening, when we were all in our prison-room together, as we had just been locked in by the jailer, we having truly answered to his call, a voice spoke and said "*Rand, you are to go out of this place this night. Put on your coat and hat,—be ready.*" Immediately the door was thrown open, and the voice again spake and said, "*Now walk quickly out and on to the attic window yonder, and let thyself down by a rope, and flee from this place. We will take care of the Boys.—There are many angels present, though but one speaks.*" The angelic command was strictly obeyed.

That this, and all this, did absolutely occur in our presence, we do most solemnly and positively affirm before God and angels and men.

Subscribed and sworn before me, this first day of August, 1859. [Signed]
JAMES BARNES, Justice of the Peace.

IRA ERASTUS DAVENPORT,
LUKE P. RAND,

Subscribed and sworn before me by William Davenport, this 5th day of August, 1859.

WILLIAM DAVENPORT.

U. B. BENT, Justice of the Peace.

Mr. Rand did escape from the cell and the prison to the bewilderment of the gaoler.

We only find Mr. W. M. Fay mentioned once in the pamphlet, when the following is said to have occurred:—

At a private circle of about 40 persons in the City of Oswego, the Davenport Boys, with Wm. M. Fay, also a powerful physical medium, who took a seat with them, were all fastened at the extremes of a very large and long table, with strong fine cotton thread, wound closely around their wrists and tied in many knots—each wrist of each boy being wound many times and closely tied in many knots each time, and then the threads on either side of each hand carried out

few inches—tied in a knot at the end and tacked down to the table by a common tack, and that knot and tack sealed with wax. This was faithfully done by a committee. All had an opportunity to look upon the knots and seals, and all knew it was utterly impossible for either boy to move his hand without breaking the threads.—The instruments were then laid in the middle of the table, far beyond the possible reach of the boys. The audience were then all tied together by ropes and cords, so that no one could move without the knowledge of others, and then on extinguishing the light, those instruments were taken up and borne about the room and over our heads, and thrummed and played by some intelligent hands other than our own. This was certain, as instantly on lighting the gas we found the mediums in every instance, firmly tied and immovably secure.

The Brothers are now 24 and 25 years of age, Ira being the elder. Mr. Fay is 25, and was also a resident at Buffalo, and they have been from childhood on intimate terms together. He also about the same time shewed strong mediumistic powers, of which we may give as an instance, that on one occasion whilst playing at marbles with some of the boys, he was suddenly seen to rise from the ground and float into the branches of a tree under which they were playing! This was certainly a promising beginning, and since that time he has frequently sat with the Davenport, and is gifted with powers very similar to theirs. It is said that in his presence they are not so much exhausted during the manifestations as when sitting by themselves. If there be any conjuring or imposture, he is clearly one of the party, and must be watched equally with them by all who propose to investigate the phenomena which are presented.

Of Mr. Palmer we need only say that it is he who has undertaken the office of *impresario* and business-manager in bringing them over to England, and arranging all the necessary details for exhibiting them to the public. Mr. Palmer is an Englishman, and well and favourably known to many members of the Press and others in this country. His business as a manager of such enterprizes for public entertainment and instruction brought him into connexion with the Davenport Brothers, as it has before been the means of his managing for other persons, and amongst them for Mr. Anderson the conjuror. In a recent letter Mr. Anderson refers to Mr. Palmer as having been employed by him, whereas it was rather that Mr. Palmer employed Mr. Anderson, and we are not aware whether or not he regrets having done so. If the Davenports should succeed in public estimation, we suppose that Mr. Palmer will be the richer for it. He states his entire conviction of their truth and honesty, and that the manifestations are not the result of conjuring, or of any power over which they have control. It appears that while in America they were most carefully watched during six sittings by Mr. Herman, the well-known conjuror, who declared that the phenomena were not produced by legerdemain, and that he could in no way account for their occurrence by any physical cause.

The last of the party is the Rev. J. B. Ferguson, of Nashville, Tennessee, a man of high repute and position in his own country—a gentleman, a scholar, and a high-minded and honourable man. A clergyman and eloquent preacher, with a congregation of 1,500 hanging upon his ministry, he some years ago became a believer in Spiritual Christianity, and gave up for it his worldly prospects in the Church. His occupation gone, the sad troubles which have come upon his country—Nashville being taken by the military of the North, he found himself willing to form one of the party to England, even at much sacrifice of personal dignity and position, hoping that thereby he might be able to sow some good seed in England, by spreading the philosophy which spiritual manifestations, when once established, must lead every logical mind to receive. We need not say that he has been able, during a short acquaintance of some months with the Davenport Brothers, to detect no conjuring and no fraud, and that were he to do so, he would at once expose it. Their long and successful career in America, and the testimonies they have up to this time received from most of the leading journals, is a sufficient justification to him, and to all other Spiritualists, for believing in the genuineness of the manifestations, until they can be formally disproved; and if he believes, as he firmly does, in this, he is not only justified, but highly to be praised in coming forward as he has done. If there be anything to remark with reference to his position, it is a regret that he should not state outright that the phenomena are, if true, spiritual, and nothing else. We hope that it may be found possible to engage his services as a lecturer on Spiritual Philosophy, that the public may have through him a manifestation of mental power and light, as to which there can be no dispute or difference of opinion. As from Mr. Ferguson's position in introducing the Davenport Brothers he is even incurring, in some newspaper articles, that last indignity of honest minds, of being called and treated as a confederate in a gross swindle, we wish to refer our readers to a work of his, published a year or two ago, and which we reviewed at length at page 412 of our last volume. It is called *Spirit Communion, addressed by the Rev. J. B. Ferguson, Nashville, Tennessee, U.S.A.*, and it is an eloquent and noble statement of his experience and opinions, gradually leading him into a full and entire belief in Spiritual Christianity. In a separate pamphlet addressed to his congregation, *On the Relation of Pastor and People*, Mr. Ferguson gives a "Statement of Belief," from which we take the following passage:—

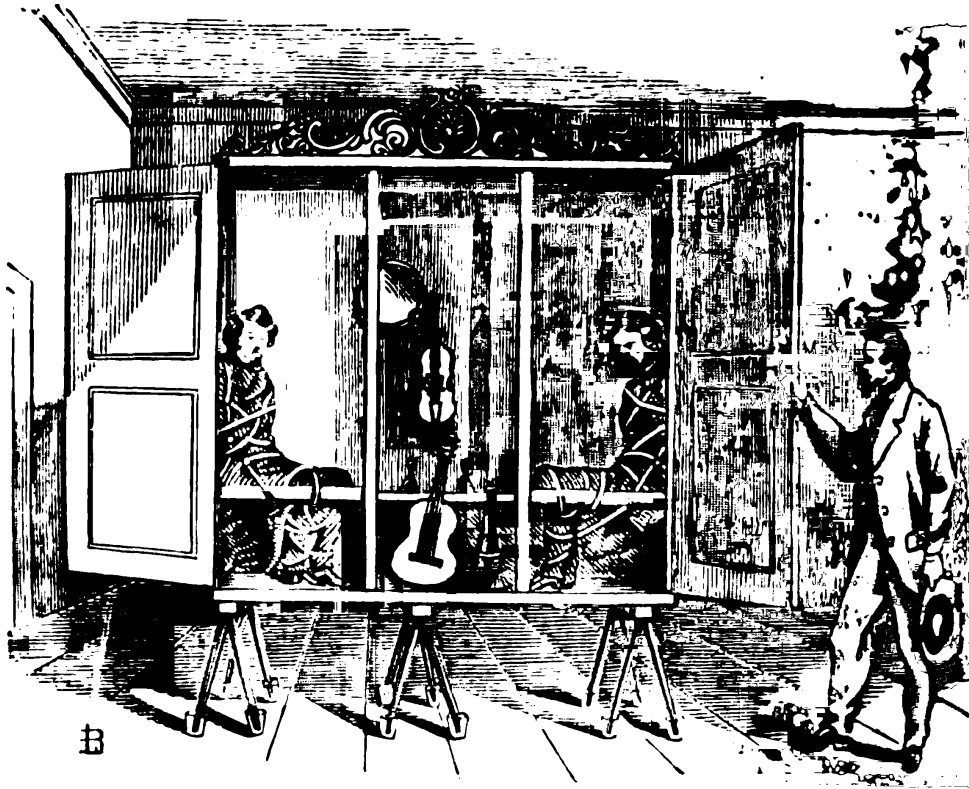
It has been said, you believe in *Spiritualism*. I answer, *unhesitatingly, I do*. So far as the word *Spiritualism* represents the opposite of the materialistic philosophy, I do not remember when I was not a Spiritualist. So far as it might represent devotion to spiritual things, such as truth, holiness, charity, it is my profession to be a Spiritualist. And so far as it represents now, an acceptance of

the possibility of spirit-intercourse with man, it is but candour to say, I believe it without hesitancy and without doubt. That there are many absurdities and some mischief connected with what claims to be spirit-manifestation I know, but I know also that there is much truth and good. My brethren: I have examined this question in all the reverence for God and love for truth of which my nature and circumstances are capable. At home and abroad, for days and weeks together, alone and in company, with believers and sceptics, I have investigated; and I could neither be an honest man nor a philanthropist, did I not say I know that I have had intelligent and blissful communion with departed spirits. . . . I call upon heaven to witness that I have no consciousness of ever having stated a conviction in your presence that was more a conviction of my highest reason than the solemn and yet joyous asseveration, that I believe God has granted spiritual intercourse to these times. And this conviction does not lessen any faith I have in God, in Christ, in the Spirit of Holiness; but only enlightens, hallows and beautifies it, and deepens my reverence.

This, then, is the gentleman whom some part of the Press, and their friends, the conjurors, wish to treat as a confederate in legerdemain, helping the Davenports with tricks and machinery, and passing about musical instruments in the dark! Forbid it, heaven! that such a thought should enter our minds—that a member should give up his church and all his worldly prospects for conscience sake, in order to take up the showman's calling, and to cheat in his new vocation. If sometimes he should be a little awkward in his new position amidst all the badgering and ridicule of sceptics, do not wonder at it, good reader. Perhaps you might not perform his duty quite so well as he does.

The controversy which has arisen in the Press has had, at all events, the great advantage of shewing that Spiritualists were not the ignorant and stupid persons they have been hitherto represented to be. Upon a review of all the articles which have appeared, and of the excited state of feeling which has been so apparent on the subject, it is now found that the hitherto deriders of these things are just as easily arrested as others have been, when they witness the phenomena, and all at once the discovery is made and widely acknowledged that probably some hitherto unknown law is to be deduced from the facts. Even if all or some of the phenomena should be found to be imitable by conjurors, still the fact remains that most of the great organs of public opinion have, on first witnessing the manifestations, been so sorely puzzled by them as to deprive them henceforth of the power of deriding those who have for years past asserted the occurrence of the phenomena. If the Spiritualists have been hitherto egregious simpletons, they will henceforth be in the respectable company of the editors of the daily and weekly papers, and of the twenty-four literary and scientific gentlemen who agreed to the report of which Mr. Dion Boucicault was the mouthpiece.

In order to make the accounts of the manifestations more intelligible, we have obtained two woodcuts representing the cabinet, and the manner in which the Davenports have been fastened



inside it. In the first they appear bound by ropes at each end, and the musical instruments in the centre. In the second, after the two side-doors have been closed, and before there has been time to close the middle one, the instruments are seen flying out, and hands are thrust out touching the head of the person who is about to close the door. On instantly re-opening the side-doors the brothers are found bound as before. The problem is— are they or can they be so bound as to be sure to demonstration that the hands do not belong to them.

It will be desirable to give the newspaper accounts in the order of date, that we may see the successive growth of ideas on the subject, and the suggestions which have, from time to time been made.

THE MORNING POST.

On the 29th September the first notice appeared of a *séance* the previous evening, at Mr. Boucicault's house, in Regent-street. Mr. Dunphy of the *Morning Post*, Mr. Oxenford of the *Times*, and some others were present. This article is from the pen of Mr. Dunphy.

EXTRAORDINARY MANIFESTATIONS.

Yesterday evening, in the front drawing-room of a house in the immediate neighbourhood of Portland-place, a select number of persons were invited to witness some strange manifestations which took place in the presence, if not by the agency, of three gentlemen lately arrived from America, and who have passed in their own country as Spiritualists of the most gifted order. The party consists of two brothers named Davenport, 24 and 25 years of age, and a Mr. Fay, a gentleman born in the States, but we believe of German origin. They are accompanied by Mr. H. D. Palmer, a gentleman long and favourably known in New York in connection with operatic matters, and by a Dr. Ferguson, who explains the nature of the manifestations about to be presented, but who does not venture to give any explanation of them. It should be stated at the outset that the trio, who appear to be gifted in so extraordinary a manner, do not lay claim to any particular physical, psychological, or moral power. All they assert is that in their presence certain physical manifestations take place. The spectator is, of course, at liberty to draw any inference he pleases. They invite the most critical examination (compatible with certain conditions to be observed), and those who witness the manifestations are at liberty to take all needful precautions against fraud or deception.

The party invited to witness the manifestations last night consisted of some 12 or 14 individuals, all of whom are admitted to be of considerable distinction in the various professions with which they are connected. The majority had never previously witnessed anything of the kind. Some were avowed sceptics, while others were what Spiritualists call more impressionable with regard to occult influences than others. All, however, were determined to detect, and, if possible, expose any attempt at deception. The Brothers Davenport are slightly-built, gentleman-like in appearance, and about the last persons in the world from whom any great muscular performances might be expected. Mr. Fay is apparently a few years older, and of more robust constitution.

After describing the occurrences which will be found more particularly stated in subsequent articles, Mr. Dunphy proceeds :

With this last-named illustration the *séance* terminated. It had lasted rather

more than two hours, during which time the cabinet was minutely inspected, the coats examined to ascertain whether they were fashioned so as to favour a trick, and every possible precaution taken to bind the hands and feet of the persons whose presence appeared to be essential to the development of the manifestations.

It may be asserted that all the illustrations above enumerated can be traced to clever conjuring. *Possibly they may, or it is possible that some new physical force can be engendered at will to account for what appears on the face of it absolutely unaccountable.* All that can be asserted is, that the displays to which we have referred took place on the present occasion *under conditions and circumstances that preclude the presumption of fraud.* It is true that darkness is in some cases an essential condition, but darkness does not necessarily imply deception. But, putting aside the cabinet manifestations, there is abundance left to excite curiosity, and challenge the attention of the scientific. Learning, we know, is not a limited quantity; it is inexhaustible for all mankind, *and here is a field for the investigation of the scientific world.* *In the present state of knowledge upon the subject of occult forces, dependant more or less upon the will, all that can be said is that the manifestations of Messrs. Davenport and Mr. Fay appear to be altogether inexplicable.*

In a little time we believe it is their intention to give *séances* at the Egyptian Hall or some other suitable place, when the public will be afforded an opportunity of witnessing some of the astonishing feats of which we have given an outline. For the present it is sufficient to say that they invite the strictest scrutiny on the part of men of science, and that, whatever be the theory involved, they repudiate any active agency in the production of the extraordinary manifestations which take place in their presence. It is perhaps well for them that they were not in the flesh a century and a half ago, as, in the then state of human knowledge and social enlightenment, they would unquestionably have been conducted to Smithfield, and burnt as necromancers of the most dangerous type.

Here we have the testimony of Mr. Dunphy of the *Morning Post*, that there was no possibility of fraud, and that possibly the facts may indicate some new physical force. He says nothing of the possibility of a spiritual force, but if only the former, he should hardly have omitted mentioning the deep debt of gratitude which the world owes to the Spiritualists for having, throughout, insisted on the happening of analogous phenomena, and this notwithstanding all the abuse which has been heaped upon them. Supposing that in their observations they have mistaken this new force for a spiritual one, which it says it is, still the discovery of a new physical force is not a small matter, but probably as great as the discovery of the gravitation force by Newton.

THE "TIMES."

The *Times* has always played fast and loose with Spiritualism, as with most other subjects. Years ago it had nothing but the most scorching ridicule for all alleged spiritual phenomena, and in a leading article which we have preserved against the time when it will turn round and say that it has always advocated the truth of the facts, it wants to know why it cannot be informed of the winner of the Derby, or the price of Consols a month hence. Some of its staff, however, have long been believers, and amongst them Mr. Oxenford, who is a very incautious person, and has hitherto shewn himself to a great degree incapable of scientific

investigation of the subject. He it was who wrote the article indorsing the impostor Dr. Bly, whom we exposed at the time; and again, he was unable to discriminate in his observation of Mr. Foster, and the *Times* was led into ecstasy and large print in praise of that person. Now, it appears, the *Times* wishes to be a little more reticent, if not more honest, and does not wish to be caught again, and so, when Mr. Oxenford goes again as its representative, it has not the candour to insert his report in the usual way, but in order to disclaim responsibility, and if necessary afterwards "to turn its back upon itself," it commits the offence of falsely stating that the communication is "from a Correspondent." There is not so much in it after all to make such a precaution necessary, but it is "a sign of the *Times*," and is further a proof that its omniscience was able to discover no trick, and therefore that it is no disgrace to other people not to be able to do so. We learn, in addition, that one of the instruments struck Mr. Oxenford so severe a blow on the head as to cause a considerable flow of blood, which, perhaps, accounts in some degree for the moderate tone of his article.

We shall presently shew an amusing instance of how the *Times* disavows its "Correspondent" in a short note at the end of Lord Bury's letter, in which it twits his Lordship for being such a fool as to be present at such an exhibition, as if a *Times* staff-man could not have been guilty of such an indiscretion. The private history of the Press is a disgrace to it, and we can only wonder that with so much rottenness beneath, it is able to keep such an appearance of public virtue on the surface.

THE BROTHERS DAVENPORT.

(From a Correspondent).

Of the various phenomena that are loosely classed under the head of "spiritual manifestations," none have been more remarkable than those now exhibited by two gentlemen named Davenport. In the United States they have been celebrated for some years, but they have not been for more than a fortnight in London, and are as yet wholly unknown to the British public, with the exception of those professed connoisseurs of "Spiritualism" who are on the watch for any new illustrations of their favourite creed. Hence their *séances* hitherto have been strictly private. By whatever means they perform their marvels, they have this to recommend them, that their feats are altogether dissimilar in kind from those performed by their "spiritual" predecessors. Rapping-tables are not among the articles of their furniture, nor do they undertake to spell the names of deceased friends—an operation, by the way, which is seldom performed without difficulty even by spirits of the most decidedly orthographical turn. Nor do they, as I am aware, make any attempt to anticipate coming events. Heedless of the past, and regardless of the future, the Brothers Davenport are content to enliven present hours with excitement of no ordinary power.

I was present at a *séance* that took place in the course of the present week at the house of a private gentleman, Mr. Dion Boucicault, whose party comprised several persons known in the literary and artistic world. Having arrived rather late, I missed some of the earlier "experiments," which seem to have been extremely curious. I shall not state what I heard about them, as I do not choose to disseminate a knowledge of "spiritual" facts that do not fall within the sphere

of my own personal observation. The recorder of events connected with "spiritual" manifestations has this disadvantage, that the most extreme acridity in his narrative will scarcely preserve him from the suspicion of being a believer.

When I entered the room devoted to the "manifestations," I found it occupied by a number of persons who attentively listened to a strange discordant concert held within a wardrobe placed at the end furthest from the door. When the sounds had ceased the wardrobe was opened, and three compartments were discovered, two of which were occupied by the Brothers Davenport, bound hand and foot with strong cords, like the most dangerous malefactors. The centre compartment held the musical instruments, and on each side of this sat the corded brothers. The ostensible theory is that the Davenports, bound as they were, produced a combination of noises, compared to which the performance of the most obtrusive German band that ever awakened the wrath of a Babbage is the harmony of the spheres. The cords are examined, the wardrobe is closed, the instruments are replaced, and presently, through an aperture in the centre door, a trumpet is hurled with violence. The wardrobe is re-opened, and there are the Brothers Davenport corded as before.

A change takes place in the manner of the performance. Hitherto the brothers have remained incarcerated in this box, while the audience are at liberty. They now leave the wardrobe and take their place in the middle of the room, where they are firmly bound to their chairs. The gentleman who officiates as their lecturer or spokesman even offers to drop sealingwax on the knots, and requests any one of the company to impress it with his own seal. On the evening of my visit this offer was not accepted, but the fault, if any, lay with the investigators. When the lights had been extinguished, and as we were all seated round the room with hands joined, at the request of the lecturer, a most extraordinary "manifestation" took place. The air was filled with the sound of instruments which we had seen laid upon a table, but which now seemed to be flying about the room, playing as they went, without the smallest respect to the heads of the visitors. Now a bell jingled close to your ear, now a guitar was struck immediately over your head, while every now and then a cold wind passed across the faces of the whole party. Sometimes a smart blow was administered, sometimes the knee was patted by a mysterious hand, divers shrieks from the members of the company indicating the side on which the more tangible "manifestations" had taken place. A candle having been lighted, the brothers were seen still bound to their chairs, while some of the instruments had dropped into the laps of the visitors. I myself had received a blow on the face from a floating guitar, which drew enough blood to necessitate the employment of towel and sponge.

A new experiment was now made. Darkness having regained its supremacy, one of the brothers expressed a desire to be relieved of his coat. Returning light showed him in his shirt-sleeves, though his hands were still firmly bound behind his chair. It was now stated that he was prepared to put on the coat of any one of the company willing to "loan" that article of attire, and an assenting gentleman having been found, the coat, after a short interval of darkness, was worn in proper fashion by a person for whom it had not been designed by the tailor. Finally, the brothers desired a release, and one of the company, certainly not an accomplice, requested that the rope might fall into his lap. During the interval of darkness a rushing sound as of swiftly drawn cords was audible, and the ropes reached the required knees, after striking the face of the person in the next chair.

Such are the chief phenomena, which are, of course, referred by the operators to spiritual agency. To sum up the essential characteristics of the exhibition, it is sufficient to state that the brothers, when not shut up in the wardrobe, are bound while the candles are alight, perform their miracles in the dark, and on the return of light are found to be bound as before. The investigators into the means of operation have to ascertain whether the brothers are able to release themselves and resume their straitened condition during the intervals of darkness, and whether, even if this is practicable, they can, without assistance, produce the effects described.—*Times*, Sept. 13.

THE "STANDARD."

How easy it is to follow a bad example! Mr. Charles Kenney, one of the regular staff of the *Standard* and of the *Herald*, was at the same *séance* at Mr. Boucicault's house, and seeing how Mr. Oxenford had saved himself as a correspondent, he or his editor determines on adopting a similar course. He therefore comes forward as altogether unconnected with his own paper, and writes under the signature of "Incredulous Odi." What a pity that these gentlemen should not be more honourable and straightforward. He gives a long and minute account, and, as will be seen, thinks that he has found out how the tricks are done, at all events those out of the cabinet, namely, by the Davenports leaving their seats in the dark, and getting back to them before the light is produced. As to those occurring in the cabinet, he thinks even a partial "shifting of their position" would account for the phenomena. It will be seen in subsequent accounts how the leaving of their seats is utterly eliminated out of the inquiry, and also the interval of time, which it will be found on subsequent occasions was observed to be not one second, so that Mr. Kenney's idea goes for nothing, and that being the only explanation he could give why what he saw should not be evidence of a new force natural or spiritual, he may fairly be dismissed from the enquiry. We are obliged by want of space again to omit many of the details, but we give all his arguments.

THE DAVENPORT BROTHERS.

(To the Editor).

SIR,—I have read two separate accounts in your contemporaries of certain extraordinary proceedings which took place last week at the house of a well-known literary gentleman, in the neighbourhood of Portland-place, and in which two young American gentlemen, the Davenport Brothers, and a Mr. Fay were principally concerned, two other gentlemen, also Americans—Dr. Ferguson and Mr. Palmer—acting as a sort of bottle-holders during the "manifestations." As neither of these accounts, though conveying faithfully enough, I have no doubt, the mental impressions derived from these performances by their respective authors, exactly represent what passed through my mind at the time, as a fellow-witness of theirs, nor what I have on reflection come to think of these "manifestations," I venture to send you my testimony as to what occurred on that occasion, and also my views of a puzzle which, *whether it be physical or metaphysical, is likely to cause much and various speculation ere it be finally, if ever, solved.*

Unlike the correspondent of the *Times*, I was there from the beginning, and came upon the field of action as soon as the walnut cabinet was erected on its restles at one end of the apartment with its back to the chimney. I examined it and found it too simple in construction to admit of any concealed machinery. Any two gentlemen of the company were then invited to bind them firmly with ropes, then produced, to the bench hand and foot, as well as either knew how. One of the volunteers who presented himself for this office was nautical, and accordingly, profound in the matter of knots. He had no doubt of the perfect rigidity of his fastening, nor indeed had the other gentleman, nor any of the company who examined the complicated ligatures which, passing through holes perforated in the bench, and connecting the ankles with the wrists of the patients, seemed to render all free motion, at any rate of arms or feet, an impossibility. It was suggested that the knees should also be made fast, but this was not deemed

necessary. Dr. Ferguson also told us, I should add, that he would advance no theory or explanation of what was about to happen, and begged us not to discuss the causes of what we saw or heard, but content ourselves with the attitude of simple and candid observers. Now, let me say what did happen, so far as my own observation is concerned. As the doctor had told us, the bolt of the middle door was heard to be drawn from inside, hands then appeared at the lozenge-shaped aperture, one from each side of the cabinet, as it appeared, and jiggled fittingly in front of the curtain, which was thrust slightly back. The hands were in a semi-obscurity, the gas by which the room was lighted having been slightly lowered, and the arms belonging to them not being visible from the smallness of the aperture, they looked ghostly enough to elicit a set of little awe-struck ejaculations from the ladies present.

Then follows a short description, not differing materially from the others.

This constituted the first part of the manifestations, and as those which followed were under different, though in the most essential point—namely, the invisibility of the agents, or mediums of the agency—similar conditions, I will pause here to make one general remark which pressed itself on me both while and after I witnessed what I have described. *Supposing it possible for these brothers to have discovered a means of even partially shifting their position, even if they cannot disengage themselves from their bonds and resume them rapidly, the phenomena would all be possible without such "metaphysical aid" as is hinted at and with this supposition squares the interval of time which elapses during which one or other of the brothers, if not both, are concealed from sight—in answer to the length of which, it appeared to me, a constant object on the part of the exhibitors very ingeniously, and by every possible device, to disguise.*

I come now to the second series of phenomena—which, by the way, is not very good word for what takes place in the dark, but it must serve, as it would be discourteous and, at present, unjustifiable, to use the less philosophical, though more obvious designation, of tricks. The company were told that the brothers being tired by the performance in the cabinet, Mr. Fay would be chiefly instrumental in what was now to follow, being assisted by only one of the Davenport. Accordingly, there we sat shrouded in darkness, tightly grasping our right-hand and our left-hand neighbour with a nervous clutch, for we had been warned by Dr. Ferguson that when the chain was broken one or other of the instruments had been known to come down violently on the heads of those occasioning the rupture, and had we not seen in the battered trumpet and the broken guitar dreadful evidences of the force that might be brought to bear on our devoted crania, probably laying them bodily open for the reception of the truths offered to us? So as none of us was inclined to risk a broken head in the cause of Divine Philosophy, we maintained the integrity of the chain with desperate firmness, and as the instruments presently whirled close enough to us to feel the wind of their motion, sounding all the while and occasionally touching us, we were careful not to stretch out our hands to more effectually test the cause of those sounds and movements, and we were maintained in this cautious frame of mind by the spiteful violence ever and anon displayed by the manifestations, some of us getting hardish raps on the head, and one gentleman, as a solemn warning, having had a sufficiently severe blow to bring blood. I myself made a slight attempt to grasp the guitar as it passed me with a disengaged thumb and finger, for which I received several hard raps, meant for my knuckles, but which I dexterously received on my upright thumb. While these sounds and sensations were being experienced in the outer circle the voices of the gentlemen emanating from the places in the centre where we had last seen them seemed to assure us they were not parties by ordinary physical means to the proceedings, and light being again restored by Dr. Ferguson, with the aid of a lucifer and a candle which he held constantly ready throughout the performance, Mr. Fay and Mr. Davenport were discovered still firmly bound to their chairs on each side of the table, the knots being declared undisturbed. At several repeated intervals darkness was again procured, and various acts were performed while it lasted. Mr. Fay's coat was removed, and was found on the floor at the

et, though he remained bound as before. The coat of one of the company was afterwards substituted for his own, each feat being immediately preceded by a peculiar sound as of forcible wriggling, when Mr. Fay cried out, "It's done," and the light immediately reappearing showed that so far he had not misstated the fact. Two rings belonging to one of the company were placed (in the dark) in the hand of Mr. Fay (still bound), and again, in another interval of darkness, the same rings, were placed on the finger not of the owner of the rings as that gentleman had desired, but on that of the gentleman whose guests we all were. A watch was also removed from a lady's hand and placed at the feet of Dr. Ferguson, who sat at the further end of the room. The whole ended in a final feat on the part of Mr. Fay, and was as it were the bouquet of these philosophical fireworks. There were three parties only to this "manifestation," viz.,—Mr. Fay, the *Times'* correspondent, and your humble servant. The *Times'* correspondent sat in the middle, and Mr. Fay and myself on each side of him, all three being seated next to a table on which were placed the often-used guitar, bells, &c. We were presently interlaced one with the other in a group, which I can compare only to that of Laocoon and his two sons, except that there was no visible serpent. The *Times'* correspondent was requested to place one hand on the pate of Mr. Fay and the other on mine, while each foot was placed on the feet joined together of his right and left flank companion. The two hands of each man to the right and left were clasped tightly over the out-stretched forearm of the middle man. Nobody was bound, but it seemed so connected that none of us could stir without its being felt by the other. The light was put out, and the middle man was asked to request one of the instruments to play and move about the room. This was done on the instant; the guitar twangled, and felt it rise against my face, presently rapping me on the top of the head, as it did my neighbour. This performance was rapidly brought to a close, Mr. Fay complaining that he was exhausted by the effort, he being "negative" and the middle man "positive," whatever that might mean. It seemed to me the only effort of disengaging one hand while simulating the pressure of both on the arm of the middle man, and moving the guitar with the hand so disengaged.

I will here again conclude with a general remark on what I have last related. Notwithstanding that Mr. Fay and his companion could move at all, bound as they were—*and since the chairs to which they were bound were not fastened to the ground*, this was an easier supposition than in the case of the cabinet—there is no reason why they should not by the act of their own bodies do all that was done—viz., make about hand-bells, whisk guitars rapidly enough round to cut people's noses, rattle tambourines along the ground, take off and put on coats, remove watches out of hands holding them out, and place rings on the wrong man's finger (the science is fallible even in its native darkness), especially as to a quiet server like myself it was clear *there was time enough allowed to do all this naturally and be found in one's seat again when the signal was again given for rest*. I am not going to adventure an exact explanation of how this is to be done, *the modus operandi is at present an immature conception in my brain, but I have already made a guess at it*. I will only say that Mr. Fay is a very strong-built man, and could carry Mr. Davenport, a very light weight, in any conceivable position; being, that I should like to be entrusted during this performance *with the candle and lucifer borne by Dr. Ferguson unrestricted by the promise not to reillumine the room till I was requested*.—I am, Sir, yours obediently,

INCREULUS ODI.

The Editor having got his "Correspondent's" letter, proceeds to write a leader upon it, in which he goes much further than poor Mr. Kenney, who naively told him that after his most careful scrutiny that he cannot give *an exact explanation of how it is done as the modus operandi was at present an immature conception of his brain*. Immature conceptions won't do for editors of newspapers, who can always give "exact explanations" of everything, and the editor, therefore, in introducing the letter

sees at once that the whole is nothing but the most transparent and clumsy conjuring. Mr. Kenney, we should say, would not feel much complimented by having his explanation so curtly disposed of, but we suppose that it is part of his engagement to submit to such snubbings at the hands of his Editor, when the interests of the paper require it.

The commonest stage apparatus of our theatres, the most ordinary facilities of our entertainments, would account for all that the *Times* proclaims as a marvel. M. Houdin would be ashamed of such school-boy trivialities; Mr. Woodin would deem them frivolous; and Mr. Anderson would swallow them whole before commencing his own performances. But, after all, what is the social use of these enchanters? They do nothing for us. They cannot trace a pickpocket or find a lost watch, or reclaim a missing relative. As their craft is an imposture, so their talk is a jargon. Altogether we prefer the Egyptian mangraphy to the American Spiritualist or his British imitator; but the Davenport profession is everywhere a disgraceful sham, pitiable among the ignorant, detestable on the part of educated schemers, and calamitous to the world. What mortal purpose could be served, or what Divine blessing could be imagined, supposing that this impossible story of the Davenport Belphegors, the grand fashionable quacks of "secret American society" were reconcilable with truth? These phantasmagoria are good for the theatre and the lecture-room. They lie totally apart from those illusions bringing up "the spectres whom no exorcism can bind"; they are nothing more than artificial strategies of a vulgar *legerdemain*, which imposes on the idle, the eccentric, and the self-deluded.

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH.

Here is another instance of the evil done by the example of the *Times*. Mr. Matthew Arnold, M.A., high up on the regular staff of the *Daily Telegraph*, goes to another *séance*, at which he is very strongly impressed with the truth of what he witnessed, and writes an excellent report, throughout which it is evident that, if true, the manifestations are not the puerile and useless things which they are called; but that, notwithstanding the apparent absurdity and vulgarity of them, they were enough to prove "an annihilation of what are called 'material laws,'" and even to be "the silent heralds of a social revolution, which must shake the world." Strong words these to come from the *Daily Telegraph*, having the fear of its late editor, Mr. G. A. Sala, before its eyes! The change of tone is too strong for the paper, and so the improper course of the *Times* must again be followed. It is pretty to observe how Mr. Matthew Arnold in his innocence assures his equally innocent editor, "My name will weigh with you, I think, for sincerity and ordinary intelligence." Such tricks are really degrading to all parties concerned, and strike at the root of all honest journalism. We have pleasure, therefore, in making them known, with the hope of preventing them for the future. Of course, if the report of Mr. Matthew Arnold had been unfavourable, it would have been adopted by the *Telegraph* as from its true source, but they dare not be honest to the subject and to them-

selves, for fear of the truth, as they knew it to be, being unpalatable to the public. We will now introduce the letter of the editor to himself, of the 4th October, in order that it may be handy for reference, to shew that Spiritualists are here again more than justified in pursuing their enquiries into this great "annihilation of material laws," and this "silent herald of a social revolution, which must shake the world!"

THE BROTHERS DAVENPORT.

(To the Editor of the Daily Telegraph.)

SIR.—I was a witness, on Friday evening of last week, to some of the "manifestations" which are exhibited by, or rather occur in the presence of, the young Americans who have recently come over here. It is well known that they intend to give public *séances* among us, and the more ordinary of these manifestations will soon therefore become familiar. There are, nevertheless, circumstances about a private sitting which make it especially useful for previous criticism, since it takes place in a locality and amid a society where deception must be more difficult, while inspection is naturally closer and freer than at a public hall. In the circle, for instance, to which I was invited, the guests were mutually known, and bent upon the sharpest investigation. The host was a man of letters, of a character for truth and gravity which it would be impertinence to eulogise; the scene was an apartment crowded to profusion with delicate works of art, and therefore most awkward for any rough conjuring resources; and finally, the apparatus employed, I understand, elsewhere, was by the nature of the place excluded here. These are conditions which cannot be repeated in public; I therefore offer you, Sir, as a contribution to the decision which such strange phenomena await, my own observations, stripped of bias, theory, or opinion, and made as I should make them in the witness-box of a court of justice.

Custodem quis custodiet? however—who will testify to the witness? He may be in turn an impostor—may be incapable of calm observation—may be a headlong generaliser—and those with him may have been severally and collectively, like himself, fools or knaves. True, that is possible; but what is not possible is to find evidence not open to these astute objections. I pass them by therefore, as the inevitable fate of anonymous testimony. *My name will weigh, however, with you, I think, for sincerity and ordinary intelligence;* and, with regard to an acquaintance with the resources of legerdemain, *a long knowledge of jugglers and snake-charmers with their budget of tricks has at least blunted the edge of my wonder upon that score.* For my fellow-guests, they too were not people upon whom deception could be easily played. Officers of the army and navy, a colonial baronet, a well-known sculptor, a public writer, and others accustomed to keep their wits about them, made up, with ladies, the circle of twelve or fifteen present.

The party was completed by the two brothers Davenport, a Mr. Fay, and a Mr. Ferguson. There is nothing very marked about the first two gentlemen; the Davenports are quiet young men, of mild and agreeable address; so also is their companion, Mr. Fay, though he is more English or German in appearance. The spokesman of the party, indeed, Mr. Ferguson, seems a decidedly "remarkable man," as those who encounter him in metaphysical discussion will probably acknowledge. I pass, however, from metaphysics to what I saw, heard, and felt. We sate in a half-circle round the side of the drawing room—Mr. Ferguson being at one end, and one of the Davenports at the other; in the middle the second brother and Mr. Fay placed themselves upon two ordinary chairs, with a small table between them, on which were laid a guitar, bell, tambourine, and trumpet; while about twelve yards of clothes-line, in two pieces, lay at hand. It was then requested that some of our party should secure each of the sitters hand and foot to the chairs with the cord. Mr. Davenport was operated upon by a captain of one of her Majesty's vessels of war, a distinguished Arctic navigator, (Captain Inglefield). As a yachtsman, I must here plunge so far into techni-

calities as to say that each ankle of Mr. Davenport was roundly seized up by this gentleman with a "clove-hitch," as also each wrist—the wrists being fastened to the bar of the chair behind, and the legs made secure by passing the line round and round the foot-bars, and up to meet the wrist-rope—when both were joined with a "bread-bag knot." Sailors well know that a "bread-bag knot" can only be imitated by those who comprehend exactly the trick of turning a "reef-knot" into it; in fact, it is the old boatswain's trap to catch a thief at his biscuit-store. Mr. Fay was made fast less scientifically, but very sufficiently, and the circle was formed in front of the captives. We were specially warned to keep our hands joined while darkness lasted, and the gentlemen at each extremity of the semi-circle were duly grasped and held by their neighbours. The lights were then extinguished, and *in an instant* there commenced a medley of noises from tambourine, guitar, and bell. These sounded in all parts of the apartment, now high, now low, now here, now there—*simultaneously* be it observed—and the passage of them through the air could be heard and felt, immensely rapid, and accompanied by *no football on the floor*. The knees, forehead, and feet of those in the circle were every now and then rapped by the instruments in a manner boisterous but harmless, and exclamations of amusement or surprise on our part mingled with this curious Babel. The guitar especially passed and repassed with what was more like flight than ordinary motion, at times violently strummed, at others as gently thrilled as an Æolian harp. At the end of all this, a signal for light was given by taps, and, the apartment being *instantly* illuminated, the prisoners were discovered exactly as they had been last seen, the instruments lying about, or upon the knees of those present. The captain's sailor-like fastenings were precisely as he had left them, and were declared to have been untouched after our close examination. The same was the case with Mr. Fay. Hands were then joined, and the lights were once more extinguished; whereupon the same curious and vivacious sounds, motions, and playful rappings re-occurred; and hands, or what appeared such—soft, warm, and well-defined—grasped the joined hands of some, touched the knees and heads of others. *This interval was very brief indeed*, and a sound was suddenly heard of rope being swiftly whisked apart. The light was struck again, and Mr. Davenport was found perfectly free, with his rope festooned about the neck of one of the guests. The whole space of this interval *did not appear at all sufficient for the task* of thus disentangling the captive's toils.

After discussing this marvel or trick, the circle was re-formed, the rope placed on the floor, and the lights re-extinguished. To the same discordant music, and with the same rustling noise, the rope was now heard to be taken up, and in a very short time Mr. Davenport was shown to us more tightly bound than before, in the old position, with a perfect roll of hitches on wrists and ankles and the chair-bars. Again darkness was made, and it was desired that the dress coat worn by the prisoner should be removed. Certainly—no sooner said than done—for with a "swish" something was heard to fly towards the circle, and Mr. Davenport appeared bound exactly as before, but in his shirt-sleeves, the coat lying between two of those looking on. We had been requested previously to assure ourselves of the integrity of the second set of knots by sealing them; this was not done, but an india-rubber band was twisted in a very peculiar way over the principal knot, and band and knot, so far as the sharpest of us could judge, were absolutely intact after the experiment. *We had either witnessed, therefore, which laughs at the law of "the continuity of matter," resembling that of turning the skin of an orange inside out without breaking it, or we had been duped.* You, sir, take your choice, as we did, of the alternatives. This was performed with Mr. Davenport's coat, which may give "Wizards of the North and South" the right to smile at what they could certainly, with *some important preparation* before, counterfeit. But afterwards the coat of one of the gentlemen present was taken off and laid on the table, and, with the same "swish" in the dark, it was in a few minutes and accurately adjusted to the back and arms of Mr. Davenport; his wrists were still bound together and still fastened behind him to the chair-back; the coat also being again ascertained to be, so far as could be judged by the closest inspection, unviolated. Again, Mr. Editor, I must present you with the dilemma of the horns of which we were tossed; either we had witnessed an *annihilation* of matter, or we were the dupes of extremely clever conjurers, *are called "material laws,"* or we were the dupes of extremely clever conjurers.

The last is the explanation, I have perceived, of some professional prestidigitators, naturally alarmed for their trade; but, though the "coat-changing trick" is common enough among the "Houdins" and "Andersons" of Europe and Asia, it remains to be seen if they can accept the conditions of it which I have attempted to describe. If they can, it is doubtless prestidigitation which we witnessed, and the darkness is a shield of tricksters, not an atmospheric condition absolutely demanded by the subtle laws of some new and unexplained force. As a candid reporter of the proceedings, I must confess that the verdict of "conjuring" was not that which was pronounced by my companions. But then almost every one was in the habit of seeing and hearing "manifestations," at home or in private residences, of a kind daily familiar now to them, whatever, and whencesoever they may be—familiar, indeed, I understand, to thousands of persons, but very little spoken of except among the initiated. These would make, however, a bead-roll most surprising to the exoteric, comprising, it is whispered, distinguished statesmen, authors, scientific men and clergymen, who form together a curious and quiet society—either the embodiment of a mutual and colossal self-deceit, *or the silent heralds of a social revolution which must shake the world.*

I shall neither report to you the astounding accounts which were given to us of what "had occurred" in the same way, nor the explanations attempted in the conversations that followed. My wish has been simply to present here what was seen, heard, and felt to happen in a private drawing-room, and among intelligent and careful observers, with serious reasons for detecting a trick, if trick could be detected. It only remains to add that the cords upon Mr. Fay's hands and feet had been all this while so tightly tied, that the tension was painful, and another minute's gloom was therefore resorted to to free him, upon which the cords were instantly thrown loose and fastened about Captain Inglefield's neck, in a knot which sailors call the "hangman's"—an intricate slip-knot, which gives upwards, but not downwards. A voice then called through the speaking trumpet "Good night;" and the puzzling "manifestations" of which I offer you a perfectly sincere, and I think an exact account, were concluded. The problem is very simple. The "wizards" have only to perform exactly the same things, and whatever more can be done, under the conditions which the Brothers Davenport dictate and accept, and the public will agree with their view of what at present is *not* easily explained.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

MASTER OF ARTS.

DAILY NEWS.

This appears, unfortunately, to be almost the only daily newspaper which has not resorted to the trick we have reprobated. It, however, was under no temptation to do so, for the Editor had not been present at a *séance*, and only had to write a condemnatory article. This task was taken by Mr. John Hollinshead, a very hard-headed gentleman, who, being a sincere and thorough disbeliever in the possibility, at this day, of anything but material laws, was under no necessity of previous observation, to pronounce the whole to be clumsy conjuring and a bare-faced imposture. This he does very cleverly, and little thinking what a rebuke he was thereby administering to his friends and coadjutors of the cloth—the correspondents of the other daily papers.

That under the prevalent love of novelty and excitement some enterprising speculators should attempt to surround dexterous conjuring tricks with an air of mystery, should seek to invest them with semi-scientific pretensions, and

even strive, if possible, to raise them to the dignity of spiritual manifestations, is not by any means so very surprising. *But it is both surprising and deplorable that persons of education and standing should not only countenance but welcome and applaud such efforts, and that influential organs of opinion should be found ready to give them indirect encouragement, if not positive support.* The so-called "manifestations" of the Davenport Brothers *have nothing to distinguish them from the ordinary feats of manual magic*, beyond, perhaps, the superior skill of the individual performers. Even this, however, from the voluminous accounts that have appeared, was open to some doubt. Their experiments are all of the well-known type—the majority of them, such as the rope-tying, bell-ringing, and coat-changing tricks, having been exhibited over and over again by performers who do not condescend to any mystification as to the source and nature of their power. These triumphs of manual dexterity were all successfully exhibited in this country a few years since, and are at this moment being repeated on the other side of the Atlantic by public entertainers, who lay claim to the possession of no gifts beyond that of practised sleight of hand. Nor does there appear to be anything very exceptional in the manner of their performance by the Davenport Brothers. *They have their own apparatus, their chosen confederates, and the convenient shield of darkness, to facilitate the execution of their undoubtedly ingenious tricks.* It does not appear that they avowedly claim to possess any peculiar spiritual gifts; but as they profess not to know the source and nature of their power, they, of course, *directly suggest the inference*, eagerly drawn by willing dupes, that it must be of supernatural origin.

THE "MORNING STAR."

A very excellent letter appeared about the same date in the *Star*, with the initials "W. E. H.," and we believe we violate no confidence in announcing the writer as Mr. W. E. Hickson, so well known in the literary world, and for eleven years the proprietor and editor of the *Westminster Quarterly Review*. A testimony to the facts from such a man at once so acute and so honest, is a further guarantee to the Spiritualists that they have been and are still engaged on a useful and worthy investigation. Such a testimony from a keen observer might have saved the *Star* from some of its subsequent articles, in which they treat the performance as a transparent and foolish hoax which no person of intelligence could be deceived by. The Rev. Dr. Burns' letter also, which will be found further on, will, it is hoped, suffice to bring the editor back to the reasoning point.

THE DAVENPORT BROTHERS.

(From a Correspondent).

A leading article in the *Daily News* of Saturday, deploring the weakness of the public, laments that among educated men there should be found persons even to countenance an enquiry into what are called "spiritual manifestations." Differing so far from the writer as to believe that there are phenomena connected with our mental states, including the grossest delusions of superstition, worthy of greater attention than they have yet received from the scientific world, I accepted an invitation for Saturday evening to a *séance* with the Davenport Brothers; purchasing for a preliminary visit on the afternoon of the same day a ticket for Mr. Anderson's advertised exposure of Spiritualism in St. James's Hall.

Mr. Anderson had a crowded house, and performed with success a number of familiar conjuring feats. His "exposure" of Spiritualism consisted of an imitation (partly with the aid of an electric apparatus) of table-rapping and clairvoyance, as unlike as possible what most persons have now had an opportunity of witnessing

in private circles; and of a reference to a shilling pamphlet sold at the doors, in which he at once puts himself out of court by an obviously gross caricature, and misleading the representation of the facts. At page 80 of this pamphlet, Mr. Anderson asks how it is that spiritual demonstrations are chiefly confined to ladies, and asserts, that a "gentleman rapping medium has seldom, if ever, been heard of;" ignoring the existence of Mr. Home, the most celebrated of the Spiritualists, whose reputation is familiar to every newspaper reader of Europe. At page 81 he tells us that the spirits of every nation rap invariably in English—a statement at variance with every history of Spiritualism that has yet appeared; and throughout his pamphlet (as in his lecture of Saturday) assumes that Spiritualists pretend to a power, which they indignantly disclaim, of summoning at will any spirit they please from the celestial spheres.

In the case of Mr. Home it is well known that he pretends to no power whatever of controlling the manifestations of which he is said to be the medium. Those who have visited him have often been disappointed of witnessing any of the effects ascribed to his mediumistic influence, when he was himself desirous of exhibiting them. The case of the Davenport Brothers is so far different that they claim the *specialité* of producing to order, at any given time and place, and before any audience, certain physical effects, apparently inexplicable (as the public are left to conclude) upon any other hypothesis than that of a spiritual agency; and to this extent their pretensions are open to far more suspicion than those of Mr. Home, while, on the other hand, they are exposed to a far more searching and severe scrutiny.

The company invited to see the Davenport Brothers on Saturday evening assembled at seven o'clock at the Hanover-square Rooms. It consisted of about five-and-thirty ladies and gentlemen, chiefly Spiritualists, with a sprinkling of humble inquirers or but half-developed neophytes like myself.

The moment Mr. Ferguson took away his hand the middle door was pulled to and fastened from within; and at the next instant the distinct form of a large human hand appeared at a diamond-shaped aperture of the door; sounds were heard among the musical instruments; the doors flew open, and the trumpet and bells were thrown out on the floor. By whom? Not certainly by the two bound prisoners, for, if free, there had hardly been time for them to rise from their seats. Was it possible that the projecting forces required had been obtained by electric and chemical agency? This experiment was repeated several times with similar but not quite the same results. Once the two bells appeared outside the aperture ringing violently without any hand to hold them, and sometimes different hands appeared—two, in one instance, together. And what were these hands? Mr. Ferguson was asked might they be touched. Permission being accorded, two gentlemen, approaching the aperture were patted by the hands, and I succeeded in just touching one of them, or something palpable, before it receded backwards, vanishing or melting in the darkness. The brevity of the interval of their appearance, too short for serious examination, was the unsatisfactory part of this experiment.

Who carried the guitar? Not Mr. Ferguson, for his hands were joined to ours; not Messrs. Davenport and Fay, for they remained tied to the chairs, and the position of their feet, which we had marked with pencil, showed they had not stirred. If a confederate in list slippers, no footfall could be detected, and no chance was given us, with our legs stretched out, of tripping him up as he passed.

The coat test, however, and indeed all the manifestations, have yet to be better tested than, under the circumstances, they could be by me, or any one witnessing them only for the first time. I will say of them only that the general result of what was seen, heard, and felt by all, was, in spite of the ludicrous mixed up with it, more startling and perplexing than I had conceived, calculated to produce certainly a profound impression on many minds, and that, if jugglery be at the bottom of it, those by whom it can be exposed cannot too early explain the deception in the interests of the public.

This letter gives the *Star* the necessary text, and knowing that the thing is very likely to be true, but still by no means

certain, another of the staff, Mr. Macarthy, is desired to write the leader upon it, in which he is neither to hurt his friend Mr. Hickson's feelings, nor to compromise the paper. This is not a very easy task, but a ready writer can manage it. So, in the interests of the paper, he throws out the idea of clever conjuring and the name of Wiljalba Frikel, whilst, to be safe on the other side, it refers to the then forthcoming report of the committee of investigation in the following words :—

It is stated that a committee of scientific men is to meet in the ensuing week for the purpose of investigating the nature of the Davenport performances. Undoubtedly it would be satisfactory to the public that such an investigation should take place, and we should ourselves be all the better pleased if the scientific gentlemen would associate one or two professional conjurers with their deliberations. It may seem rather an undignified task for a scientific commission to find out how a man in a dark room can get his coat taken off without any visible imposition of hands, and how a guitar can be made to give forth musical sounds without the apparent agency of any human performer. But it would hardly become Science just at present to stand too much upon her dignity. At a time when hundreds of educated persons deny that human intellect can find any natural explanation for performances such as those of the Davenports it is not too much to ask that Science should do something to enlighten our darkness and to vindicate her own guidance.

THE GENERAL TONE OF THE DAILY PRESS.

We have now gone through the opinions of nearly the whole of the daily Press, given, with the exception of the *Daily News*, by the usual writers for those organs, after as close an investigation as was possible, and all of them, with that exception, evidently staggered and wonder-struck by what they saw. We note this circumstance as an entire justification in itself for Spiritualists, who have been, with better opportunities, and with a much wider range of subjects, pursuing their investigations with all the hounds of these very papers giving tongue at their heels for years past. Whatever may be the result of the inquiry into the Davenport Brothers, the fact will remain that these papers, and their first-class correspondents, were as much and as easily deceived as the Spiritualists. We have no better means of ascertaining the truth in this particular instance, than other persons, further than as being more familiar with such inquiries, and the having a certain knowledge that such things as occur in their presence are possible without any conjuring or fraud, but now the daily press has, to a great extent, indorsed what it will now again, if it pleases to draw back, term our credulity.

There have been, also, some articles, we understand, in the *Morning Advertiser*, but after the unreliable conduct of its Editor, Mr. James Grant, on former occasions, we leave his paper entirely out of consideration, as being unworthy of the least respect.

THE SCIENTIFIC REPORT.

We now come to the meeting of distinguished literary and scientific men, who took, at all events, so serious a view of the question at issue, as to consider it worthy of their strictest investigation. We are disposed to place great reliance on the result of this, so far as it is stated in the report of Mr. Boucicault, as being at once the most careful and painstaking of all the reports which have appeared. None of its statements have been in any way impugned or contradicted by any of the gentlemen of the committee. The subsequent letter of Lord Bury to the *Times*, in which he states that the committee declined to sign a paper "referring the manifestations to some mysterious agency," but agreed only that each of them "should state in society the simple truth that they had failed to detect any evidence of trickery or collusion," is entirely corroborative of Mr. Boucicault's letter. This, indeed, is all they could properly say, leaving the rest to the judgment of the reader, and we believe that notwithstanding all that has since appeared from the conjurors, Messrs. Tolmaque and Anderson, which we shall presently refer to, they would still be able to say the same. Both these conjurors were specially invited to the meeting of the committee of investigation, and both of them declined to be present. Our old friend, Professor Faraday, was also invited; and we think they might all have done good service to the cause of truth if they had accepted instead of declined the invitation. We lay before our readers Mr. Faraday's letter.

Royal Institution of Great Britain,
8th October, 1864.

GENTLEMEN,—I am obliged by your courteous invitation, but really have been so disappointed by the manifestations to which my notice has at different times been called, that I am not encouraged to give any more attention to them, and therefore leave those to which you refer in the hands of the professors of legerdemain.

If spirit communications, not utterly worthless, should happen to start into activity, I will trust the spirits to find out for themselves how they can move my attention. I am tired of them. With thanks,

I am, very truly yours,

THE BROTHERS DAVENPORT.

M. FARADAY.

We have no doubt the Professor does not feel encouraged to pursue the subject. Having made at the outset the most egregious blunder as to the explanation of table-turning, and which has made him the laughing-stock of all subsequent investigators, he indeed has nothing to gain by investigation but his own discomfiture, and this he is in no hurry to obtain at his own hands. We may be sure, therefore, that "the spirits" will have great difficulty in impressing him to investigate anew, and if they did so, we should have as great difficulty in ascribing any value to his

report. The committee was, however, obliged to meet without him, and the following is the report of Mr. Boucicault:—

THE DAVENPORT BROTHERS.

To the Editor of the Star.

SIR,—A *séance* by the Brothers Davenport and Mr. W. Fay took place in my house, Albemarle-street, yesterday, in the presence of

LORD BURY,
SIR CHARLES NICHOLSON,
SIR JOHN GARDINER,
SIR C. LENNOX WYKE,
REV. E. H. NEWENHAM,
REV. W. ELLIS,
CAPT. E. A. INGLEFIELD,
MESSRS. CHARLES READE,
JAMES MATTHEWS,
ALGERNON BORTHWICK,
J. WILLES,
H. E. ORMEROD,

J. W. KAYE,
J. A. BOSTOCK,
W. J. RIDEOUT,
ROBERT BELL,
J. N. MANGLES,
H. M. DUNPHY,
W. TYLER SMITH, M.D.,
E. TYLER SMITH,
T. L. COWARD,
JOHN BROWN, M.D.,
ROBERT CHAMBERS,
DION BOUCICAULT.

The room in which the meeting was held is a large drawing-room, from which all the furniture had been previously removed, excepting the carpet, a chandelier, a small table, a sofa, a pedestal, and twenty-six cane-bottomed chairs.

At two o'clock six of the above party arrived, and the room was subjected to careful scrutiny. It was suggested that a cabinet to be used by the Brothers Davenport but then erected in an adjacent room, should be removed into the front room and placed in a spot selected by ourselves. This was done by our party, but in the process we displaced a portion of this piece of furniture, thus enabling us to examine its material and structure before we mended it. At three o'clock our party was fully assembled and continued the scrutiny. We sent to a neighbouring music-seller for six guitars and two tambourines, so that the implements to be used should not be those with which the operators were familiar. At half-past three the Brothers Davenport and Mr. Fay arrived, and found that we had altered their arrangements, by changing the room which they had previously selected for their manifestations. The *séance* then began by an examination of the dress and persons of the Brothers Davenport, and it was certified that no apparatus or other contrivance was concealed on or about the persons. They entered the cabinet and sat facing each other. Captain Inglefield then, with a new rope provided by ourselves, tied Mr. W. Davenport hand and foot, with his hands behind his back, and then bound him firmly to the seat where he sat. Lord Bury, in like manner, secured Mr. I. Davenport. The knots on these ligatures were then fastened with sealing wax and a seal was affixed. A guitar, violin, tambourine, two bells, and a brass trumpet were placed on the floor of the cabinet. The doors were then closed, and a sufficient light was permitted in the room to enable us to see what followed. I shall omit any detailed account of the Babel of sounds which arose in the cabinet, and the violence with which the doors were repeatedly burst open and the instruments expelled, the hands appearing, as usual, at a lozenge-shaped orifice in the corner door of the cabinet. The following incidents seem to us particularly worthy of note:—While Lord Bury was stooping inside the cabinet, the door being open, and the two operators seen to be sealed and bound, a detached hand was clearly observed to descend upon him, and he started back, remarking that a hand had struck him. Again, in the full light of the gas chandelier, and during an interval in the *séance*, the doors of the cabinet being open, and while the ligatures of the Brothers Davenport were being examined, a very white, thin, female hand and wrist quivered for several seconds in the air above. This appearance drew a general exclamation from all the party. Sir Charles Wyke now entered the cabinet and sat between the two young men—his hands being right and left to each, and secured to them. The doors were then closed, and the Babel of sounds recommenced. Several hands appeared at the orifice—among them the hands of

a child. After a space Sir Charles returned amongst us and stated that while he held the two brothers several hands touched his face and pulled his hair; the instruments at his feet crept up, played round his body and over his head—one of them lodging eventually on his shoulders. During the foregoing incidents the hands which appeared were touched and grasped by Captain Inglefield, and he stated that to the touch they were apparently human hands, though they passed away from his grasp.

I omit mentioning other phenomena; an account of which has already been rendered elsewhere. The next part of the *séance* was performed in the dark. One of the Messrs. Davenport and Mr. Fay seated themselves amongst us. Two ropes were thrown at their feet, and in two minutes and a half they were found tied hand and foot, their hands behind their backs, bound tightly to their chairs, and their chairs bound to an adjacent table. While this process was going on the guitar rose from the table, and swung or floated round the room and over the heads of the party and lightly touching some. Now a phosphoric light shot from side to side over our heads; the laps and hands and shoulders of several were simultaneously touched, struck, or pawed by hands, the guitar meanwhile sailing round the room, now near the ceiling, and then scuffling on the head and shoulders of some luckless wight. The bells whisked here and there, and a light thrumming was maintained on the violin. The two tambourines seemed to roll hither and thither on the floor, now shaking it violently, and now visiting the knees and hands of our circle—all these foregoing actions, audible or tangible, being simultaneous. Mr. Rideout, holding a tambourine, requested it might be plucked from his hand; it was almost instantaneously taken from him. At the same time Lord Bury made a similar request, and a forcible attempt to pluck a tambourine from his grasp was made, which he resisted. Mr. Fay then asked that his coat should be removed. We heard instantly a violent twitch; and here occurred the most remarkable fact. A light was struck before the coat had quite left Mr. Fay's person, and it was seen quitting him, plucked off him upwards. It flew up to the chandelier, where it hung for a moment, and then fell to the ground. Mr. Fay was seen meanwhile bound hand and foot as before. One of our party now divested himself of his coat, and it was placed on the table. The light was extinguished, and this coat was rushed on to Mr. Fay's back with equal rapidity. During the above occurrences in the dark we placed a sheet of paper under the feet of the two operators, and drew with a pencil an outline around them, to the end that if they moved it might be detected. They of their own accord offered to have their hands filled with flour, or any other similar substance, to prove they made no use of them, but this precaution was deemed unnecessary; we required them, however, to count from one to twelve repeatedly, that their voices, constantly heard, might certify to us that they were in the same places where they were tied. Each of our own party held his neighbour firmly, so that no one could move without two adjacent neighbours being aware of it.

At the termination of this *séance* a general conversation took place on the subject of what we had heard and witnessed. Lord Bury suggested that the general opinion seemed to be that we should assure the Brothers Davenport and Mr. W. Fay, *that after a very stringent trial and strict scrutiny of their proceedings, the gentlemen present could arrive at no other conclusion than that there was no trace of trickery in any form, and certainly there were neither confederates nor machinery, and that all those who had witnessed the results would freely state in the society in which they moved that so far as their investigations enable them to form an opinion, the phenomena which had taken place in their presence were not the product of legerdemain. This suggestion was promptly acceded to by all present.*

Before leaving this question, in which my name has been accidentally mixed up, I may be permitted to observe that I have no belief in what is called Spiritualism, and nothing I have seen inclines me to believe in it; indeed, the puerility of some of the demonstrations would sufficiently alienate such a theory; but I do believe that we have not quite explored the realms of natural philosophy—that this enterprise of thought has of late years been confined to useful inventions, and we are content at last to think that the laws of nature are finite, ascertained, and limited to the scope of our knowledge. A very great number of worthy persons seeing such phenomena as I have detailed, ascribe them to supernatural

agency, others wander round the subject in doubt; but as it engages seriously the feeling and earnest thought of so large a number in Europe and America, is it a subject which scientific men are justified in treating with the neglect of contempt?

Some persons think that the requirement of darkness seems to infer trickery. Is not a dark chamber essential in the process of photography? And what would we reply to him who should say, "I believe photography to be a humbug; do it all in the light, and I will believe; otherwise, not till then?" It is true that we know why darkness is necessary to the production of the sun picture; and if scientific men will subject these phenomena to analysis, we shall find out why darkness is essential to such manifestations.—Yours obediently,

326, Regent-street, Oct. 12.

DION BOUCICAULT.

This report is the first document, we believe, which has been laid before the public, of persons so high in science and literature, and so fully entitled to and enjoying confidence and respect. It would be difficult to bring together twenty-four better men for the purpose of passing an independent judgment, and we have no intention of letting any one of the gentlemen easily free from his decided judgment in the case. Following upon the favourable decisions of the great leaders of the Press, it is too valuable to have the opinion of these twenty-four close observers in our favour, for us to relinquish our hold upon them. We find in it, at all events, a full certificate of character for all the enquirers into spiritual philosophy, and much more than a justification for all such to persevere. If anything be said about the absurdity and impossibility of spiritual phenomena, we wish to have this report ready to our hands, and in our mouths, as the recorded opinion of twenty-four first-class men, who found a unanimous verdict in our favour. What other decision, indeed, could they have come to, after such experiments as they tried, and such tests as they applied. Mr. Boucicault should have prefaced his report by stating that the conjurors Anderson and Tolmaque, and the patron Mr. Faraday, were invited to attend, but would not be present, for the very sufficient reason that it would have thereby become apparent how entirely their pretensions differ from the phenomena of the Davenport's; and Mr. Boucicault might also have left out his personal disclaimer of Spiritualism. We hope he does not think it is of any use to disguise before the world that these things are either spiritual or nothing. It is no good to try to gild the pill for the public, for after all, it has enough acuteness to know that it is as a spiritual manifestation and that only, that what is presented has any value or interest, and the intense hatred and horror of the public to such will not be parried by any namby-pamby about "præter-natural," or "new force," or any such verbiage. We must repeat that we blame Mr. Ferguson for allowing any concealment of his real opinions. It is not enough that he should have said the Brothers *do not assert* by what means the phenomena occur, for in reality they know very

well, and do assert privately, and should therefore do so before the public, that the agency of the whole is what is called spiritual. Such assertion was, no doubt, the ground of interest which brought together such a distinguished assembly as Viscount Bury, M.P., Sir Charles Wyke, G.C.B., the astute Ambassador to Mexico, Sir Charles Nicholson, the Chancellor of the University of Sydney, and Speaker of the House of Representatives of Queensland, Mr. Robert Bell, Mr. R. Chambers, D.C.L., Captain Inglefield, the Arctic navigator, Mr. Charles Reade, the novelist, and their coadjutors, not one of whom would have been on a committee to investigate Mr. Anderson's tricks. It is, no doubt, this very fact that has brought Lord Bury into what he finds the little dilemma of appearing to indorse spiritual phenomena, for which we can easily fancy that he has had to run the gauntlet of his friends at the clubs. Unable to stand their banter, and hearing of Mr. Tolmaque untying himself, he has got quite frightened of the consequences, and has tried to modify his position, by writing to the *Times*, though in reality he does not do so in the least, by saying that he refused to say in writing what he expressed the intention of himself and the other members of the committee, to speak boldly in their respective circles of society.

THE DAVENPORT BROTHERS.

(To the Editor of the *Times*.)

SIR,—I observe several communications in *The Times* which hold me in some degree responsible for the good faith of the Davenport Brothers. One of your correspondents, who informs us with superfluous candour that he is no conjuror, proposes for the sake of fair play to bind me and Captain Inglefield hand and foot and throw us into the Serpentine. I should like to say a few words first. If I had enjoyed the advantage of seeing Mr. Boucicault's letter before it appeared in print I should have pointed out to him an important omission. From it one would gather that I had proposed to the gentlemen present at the meeting to give a kind of certificate to the Messrs. Davenport. Such was not the case. After the performance which Mr. Boucicault describes, a paper was handed round which I and others were asked to sign. It referred the manifestations to some mysterious agency which scientific men were earnestly entreated to investigate, and, if I remember right, gave a sort of certificate to the performers that after careful investigation we could find no trace of trickery of any form. The gentlemen who had the paper argued that it would be simply fair to the Brothers Davenport if we gave them some such certificate. I at once said that we should only make ourselves ridiculous if we signed such a paper, and I for one refused to do so. I added that all the Brothers Davenport could reasonably expect from us was that we should state in society the simple truth—viz., that we had failed to detect any evidence of trickery or collusion. Mr. Boucicault makes no mention of this paper; it was withdrawn. I have really formed no theory whatever on the subject of the performance. I went to see a show, and I entirely object to being held as the apologist for the showmen because I have failed to discover their mode of operation.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

London, Oct. 19.

BURY.

* * We are happy to insert this communication, though, as the letter from Mr. Boucicault to which Lord Bury alludes did not appear in *The Times*, we have nothing to do with the greater part of this explanation. So far as our correspondent "No Conjuror" is concerned, Lord Bury does him an injustice. His proposition was, not that Lord Bury and Captain Inglefield should be tied up

and thrown into the Serpentine alone, but that they should undergo that operation in company with the Brothers Davenport. There is a wide difference between the two propositions. Life and death might depend upon the presence of those mysterious artists; and Lord Bury having sanctioned the "show," as he calls it, by his presence, ought not to complain of the consequences, any more than the stork in the Chinese *Æsop*, whose neck was wrung by the farmer, who found him in his net among the geese.—EDITOR OF *The Times*.

THE "TIMES" AGAIN.—WHO ARE THE GEESE?

Here now is the little incident which we before referred to in introducing the letter of Mr. Oxenford, "the correspondent" of the *Times*, and which dishonesty we stated was perpetrated in order that the *Times* might disavow and throw him overboard when it might suit their purpose to do so. We did not think the proof would come so soon, but here we have the whole of the plot laid before us, with the motive, and the subsequent action upon it. The editor having dishonestly concealed the fact of Mr. Oxenford's being present and writing the article, finds itself in the position it had promised itself, of being able actually to twit Lord Bury with being present at such absurdities, and speaks of him as being the stork among the geese! Had it told the truth about Mr. Oxenford, could it have said this? We can give the public a little further information about *The Times* and the geese. On the very evening on which this editorial note was being written at the foot of Lord Bury's letter, the Davenport Brothers were exhibiting at the private residence of Mr. Sampson, the City Editor of *The Times*, who had invited some others of the staff, and Dr. Wilson of Malvern, and a clergyman to witness the manifestations. A party of eight or ten of these geese was assembled, nearly all of whom, including Mr. Sampson, expressed their satisfaction at what they witnessed and at the tests which were applied. It is well known that during the circle it is particularly requested that the chain may not be broken, but on this occasion the clergyman, in the midst of the phenomena, and whilst the instruments were flying about the room, rushed in at the Davenports, expecting to find them untied and out of their places, but there they were both bound and seated. This conduct was complained of as interfering with the conditions, and the phenomena soon after recommenced, when again Mr. Sampson's clerical friend rushed in with the same result. Let Mr. Anderson and Mr. Tolmaque be asked to perform their tricks with such departures as these from the stated conditions and we shall then know the difference between them and the Brothers Davenport, as clearly as we know the difference between honest journalism, and the disgraceful frauds which the *Times* commits upon truth and fair dealing. This is the misfortune of our subject, that we have not only to cope with its real difficulties, but with the falsehoods and reticency of those who know the truth

ut won't proclaim it. We, however, do not write for pay, and we are in earnest, and shall take every opportunity of exposing such practices. They, truly, are manifestations in dark circles, and will not bear the magnetic properties of the light.

THE WEEKLY PRESS—THE "LANCET."

We have met with a few articles in the weekly Press, of which, what we are about to give will be sufficient samples. The first we were certainly surprised to find in the *Lancet*, as we expected but little fairness in such a quarter. The mistake we willingly acknowledge was ours, for the article is one of the most temperate, searching, and fair, of all that we have seen. Its value, however, now has been considerably lessened by the report in the "24," which details experiments and tests which render nugatory the suggestions and doubts of the *Lancet*. The article, we understand, is from the pen of Mr. Radcliffe, the surgeon, and he especially pays attention to the important test of hanging with ropes. At this *séance*, which was at the Hanover square rooms, about thirty persons were present, and after describing the process adopted, he adds—

Notwithstanding, however, the apparent completeness of the manner in which the two brothers had been secured from movement, neither of the binders expressed himself as fully satisfied with the results of his labours. One, in special, stated that he did not see the possibility of securing the hands satisfactorily with the means which had been provided. He further objected that no method of securing the two brothers could be trusted unless provision were made for fastening the cords outside the closet, where the knots could be under observation. This could be done without interfering with the chief condition of the manifestations." It is important to mention that the ligatures used for binding the brothers consisted of short pieces of soft quarter-inch rope, several of which are required to complete the binding. To multiply the knots of a thick ligature is to multiply the chances of escape from it. It deserves to be remembered, moreover, that one of the feats of Hindoo jugglers is to defy securing the hands by tying the wrists in any known fashion.

After some of the manifestations had been produced, and a "right hand" projected, Mr. Radcliffe notes that on the opening of the doors—

The two brothers were seen still bound, and the ligatures apparently had not been tampered with. The only notable difference observed was that the brother on the right was breathing shortly—indeed, panting slightly; and that he bent forward and coughed two or three times.

After the brothers had been released, and afterwards re-tied, he observes—

It was again noted that the brother sitting on the right, when the doors of the closet were opened, was not breathing naturally, and that he coughed as before.

Then, after the playing on the musical instruments, which, he says, "made it almost certain that the atrocious concert was the work of two pairs of hands," he proceeds—

A few moments more, and the doors were thrown open, and the two brothers

were seen sitting bound as before. But the brother on the right was again breathing irregularly and coughing. He was now unmistakably panting, the trunk was bedewed with perspiration, and the heart was beating violently and most tumultuously. It was impossible to account for the violent action of the heart and disturbed respiration, except on the assumption of great exertion or serious heart disease. The rapidity with which the undue action ceased, and the aspect and movements of the brother when he left the closet, forbid the latter assumption. The heated atmosphere of the closet could not have disturbed so greatly the heart's movements. Neither the breathing nor the heart's action of the other brother was accelerated.

The article concludes with some important statements and reflections.

Doubts having been cast upon the security with which the two brothers were bound, and the implication necessarily arising that they could have bound or unfastened themselves, it was proposed by the spokesman of the sitting to fill their hands with flour. It was argued, that if, with the hands thus laden, the ligatures were removed from the brothers when again shut up, and no trace of flour found on the cords or the clothing, it would be proved conclusively that they had taken no active part in the unbinding. It seems to us that the test would have been more satisfactory had the hands been filled with flour *before* the brothers, unbound, had been shut up with the loose cords. But a greater objection than this arises. A gentleman who was present at the sitting, and closely noticed the quasi-occult ligatures which fastened the brothers, after an hour's practice, contrived to tie himself hand and foot in a manner not easily to be distinguished from that in which the two brothers were bound; and while he was with difficulty unfastened by others, he readily disentangled himself. More, he is convinced that with a little practice he will be able to unfasten himself unaided as featly with flour in his hands as without—not sprinkling a grain of the former. He ventures even to doubt our proposed test of placing flour in the hands before the presumed occult bonds are fixed. He thinks the test must go to the wall before an agile hand. He is also assured, by experiment, that the flour can be transferred from one hand to the other, and that a pseudo-spectral flourless hand exhibited during the last phase of the sitting is not necessarily, or, indeed, probably, an occult phenomena.

But be this as it may, during the sitting of the Davenport Brothers nothing was seen by us which was beyond the compass of human agility, skill, and practice. Given the possibility of loosening the hands, the "manifestations," it was obvious, did not exact much skill. That the manifestations observed depended upon the skill and agility of the Brothers Davenport, we do not say. But it is clear that phenomena which admit of objections such as those we have named, cannot for a moment be allowed to be beyond the reach of physical explanation. There was no evidence on Saturday last to show that the phenomena observed in conjunction with the Brothers Davenport had ever been subjected to any rigid scrutiny. Putting aside the question of collusion, the entire absence of all provision for guarding against the most manifest errors to which the senses are liable under the conditions which are deemed requisite for the development of the phenomena, was alone sufficient to give rise to the gravest doubt. *The greater the importance ascribed to any doubtful phenomena, the severer should be the tests to which they are subjected.* It is difficult enough to observe aright in the light of day; how great are our difficulties increased when we are called upon to exercise our senses in absolute or relative darkness!

It is refreshing to meet with so fairly-argued a paper on this subject, and we sincerely thank the writer for it. We entirely agree with him that the phenomena acquire a value only in proportion as they can be definitely proved to exist, and by this test only, do we hope that they shall be judged. We certainly shall not receive them on any lesser evidence. As to the friend of the

iter who can tie and untie himself, that, too, is a point for strict
 reservation, and we shall be glad to know how he proceeds in his
 deavours, and though it would not prove that the Brothers use
 the same, or any physical means, yet we readily admit that if the
 tying and untying can be done, under the same conditions, by
 conjurors and others, as a mere feat of manual dexterity, it de-
 roys the value of such of the phenomena as depend upon the
 tying or untying as a test of their extra-physical nature. Let
 any one, therefore, who alleges he can perform this, be tied by
 the Davenports, or as they are tied by others, and release himself
 as he can. We very much doubt his doing so, and certainly the
 conjurors refrain from the experiment. The fact noted as to the
 quickening of the pulse and action of the heart, and the panting
 and perspiration, are also useful suggestions to bear in mind, and
 they quite accord with some of our own observations with
 Mr. Squire, Mr. Home, and many other mediums, who, during
 long manifestations, have shewn a marked trembling, and even
 quivering of the body, on the passing of the power through them.
 This has been observed in all ages, sacred and profane, amongst
 prophets and diviners, in the Bible, and in the Greek writers
 almost speaking of the priests and priestesses of the temples. We
 therefore think it likely that if Mr. Radcliffe could have made
 the observation at Delphi, he would have written the same
 diagnosis of the panting of the priestesses there, as he has done of
 the Davenports. Such, however, is not an invariable con-
 stant, or, at least, not to the same extent. We were present
 a few evenings ago at a scene we shall presently describe, when
 Mr. John Hollinshead, who was one of the two committee,
 specially reported that there was no increase of heat or excite-
 ment about the Brothers.

In the "Answers to Correspondents" in the same page, we
 read a short and authoritative decision, in the following words:—
 A VISITOR TO PROFESSOR ANDERSON.—*There is no such thing
 as second sight.*" In the interests of the Bible and of all subse-
 quent history, we hope the Editor is not correct in what he says.

THE "SATURDAY REVIEW."

We have selected this article, not for the same reason as that
 of the *Lancet*, but, really, because it is the weakest and silliest of
 those that we have seen, and we want it to be recorded for our own
 purposes hereafter. We are certainly surprised that the writer
 could be so ignorant on the subject of his article, inasmuch as
 he appears to be a frequent reader of the *Spiritual Magazine*,
 of which he speaks of "this truly comic miscellany." He appears
 to have read it, however, and we are glad that he finds amusement,
 VOL. V.

if not instruction in it. We candidly confess that we can find neither the one nor the other in his pages; and had it not been for an officious friend, we should not have known that he was exercising his brains upon us. There is some chance that we may succeed to the throne left vacant by *Punch*, who has long ceased to have anything comic in his columns. We draw attention to this article in the *Saturday Review*, in order that Mr. Oxenford, Mr. Dunphy, Mr. Matthew Arnold, Mr. Hickson, and Mr. Charles Kenney, and the "24," may see what is the opinion the young man, who gets a couple of guineas for the article, has of their intelligence. We, long since, knew that he thought as meanly of us as we do of him; but now they see that he thinks no better of their intelligence than to throw over their inquiries and observations, and to tell them they are a set of ninnycs. Some of them are sure to know the gentleman, and we hope that they will settle the following account with him:—

The performances of Houdin, and Frikell, and Anderson, and other masters of the art, are infinitely more clever and inexplicable than those of the Davenport fraternity, and are done in broad gas-light. But who wants to find out a conjuror? *Volumus decipi et decipimur.* You go to see tricks, not to learn sleight-of-hand. Professional conjurors assure us that "the rope-tying trick, ringing and coat-changing experiments, are exhibited at this moment in America by Anderson's son, and by natural agency only," and they offer to do every one of the Davenport mysteries "by the science of conjuring, mixed up with no small portion of the conjuror's never-failing friend—humbug." And as to the grand and pretentious narrative of "A Correspondent," we must say that the private exhibition at the house of the well-known literary gentleman is only an ingenious though not very ingenious, form of advertisement. Nor is there anything so recondite in the assumption, by modern conjurors, of scientific and quasi-physical and spiritualistic jargon. Just as, some centuries ago, a parchment girdle, a pentagon, a magic crystal, and a cabalistical mitre, were part of a conjuror's stock in trade, so he now invests in electro-biology, psychometry, mediums, and the luminous aura. It is hard to attempt to deprive any workman of his tools. *Out of this horrid slang the modern necromancer fills his tool-chest. He calls it, as a whole, Spiritualism; and he may as well have that word, which is perfectly meaningless, as any other.* And, after all, the world is much the same as it always was. People believed in Cagliostro, who was a very clever fellow, and no doubt there are now plenty of people who will, when the exhibition is open to the public, run to the Davenport Brothers and gravely wag their heads and hint that they fully believe in the connection of these rampagious vibrations and erratic muffin-bells with the awful realities of the spirit-world. *And that we care to say will disabuse them.* Only let them consider this, that anything can effectually lower all consoling conceptions of the great and mysterious world of spirits, and can completely debase, if not destroy, belief, if not a future state, at least in the blessed condition of disembodied spirits delivered from the burden of the flesh—released, as we trust, from the weaknesses and miseries of this sinful world—it is to take up with Spiritualism. For if we believe in Spiritualism, we must believe that spirits—beings infinitely above us in intelligence, happiness, and the fruition of the Divine love and Divine knowledge—have nothing better to do, and no holier ministrations to discharge, than to crack cracked violins into people's faces, to pinch their legs, in the dark, to float round a room scratching the ceiling with a bit of charcoal, to write execrably bad grammar and portentous nonsense, which they call spirit-messages, by fumbling over a child's toy alphabet; and, last and worst of all, by inspiring such a set of American adventurers as Davenport, Fay & Co., and Mr. Palmer, the speculator formerly in the employment of the Wizard of the North.

We venture to suggest that the investigators will consider this as proving a little too much against them, and will have something to say about it to the writer in defence of their own capacity. It is certainly probable that after eleven years' experience throughout America, and of their few weeks in England, in which they have been vouched for by the *Times*, *Telegraph*, *Post*, and *Star*, and the committee of 24, the discovery of the conjuring would not be made so easily by a young man on the *Saturday Review*, who has never taken the trouble of leaving his desk to look at them. As to his eloquent peroration in which he steps in to defend the great spirit-world from such reposterous issues, and incongruities, we would say that he might safely have left it to take care of itself. He speaks of "beings infinitely above us in intelligence, happiness, and the fruition of Divine love and Divine knowledge" having nothing better to do than perform such manifestations. If this were strictly so, we might, at all events, partially agree with him, but here is the case of alleged manifestations, which in our judgment are just the sort of things that are wanted at this day to satisfy and confound that vulgar Scepticism and Materialism which are the curse of the age, and which seem even more rife among the writers of the *Saturday Review* than amongst the bulk of educated and intelligent England. We believe that it is an adequate adaptation of means to an end, and that in the workings of Divine Providence even such foolish things are sent to confound the wise of this world. Then if that be so, who are to be the workers to such an object? not "the beings infinitely above us in intelligence, happiness, and the fruition of Divine love and wisdom," but some of the poor creatures of the spiritual world best adapted for such phenomena—the spirit Colmaques and Andersons and trumpery critics, who re-view without viewing, and write portentous nonsense, and ring "the tuffin bells" of their weekly journals in our ears. What right have we to suppose that any of these poor ones will all at once change their nature on arriving in the great spirit-world? There is a great abundance of them both in that world and in this, and they are used for purposes high above their knowledge, whilst they think that they are only amusing themselves. If the *Saturday Reviewers* do not covet such a fate, let them beware in time, or they will have to continue their jugglery after they think they have got through the "*in extremis*."

THE "SPECTATOR."

We make a short extract from the *Spectator*, merely to shew the boldness with which it gives up the great point which has always

been charged against Spiritualism, namely, that it could only be investigated by men of science. We have steadily maintained the contrary, and have shown that they are, perhaps, the least capable from their early prejudices and ignorance of the conditions, to make the investigation. The *Spectator* now, at least, agrees with us, and is, indeed, in the general tone of the article less ignorant than it has hitherto shewn itself. Mr. Hutton has probably learnt during the last year something more of the subject than he knew before, and he is more respectful towards his compeers of the Press, and the gentlemen of the committee than some of the other writers have been.

The Invisible Agencies, whatever they are, which whisk about tambourines and guitars, tie and untie complicated sailors' knots, and manifest gelatinous hands without visible arms and bodies, have gained a distinct step in society this week. Chaperoned by an eminent actor and stage-manager, Mr. Dion Boucicault, they have made acquaintance with Lord Bury, a baronet, two eminent knights, a celebrated Arctic explorer, a couple of clergymen, and a large group of distinguished literary and scientific men, and received a sort of formal certificate of character from twenty-four respectable gentlemen, to some of whom we have referred.

The only difficulty is that when the phenomena are so very miscellaneous involving answers to requests, as well as the manipulation of knots, guitars, and dress-coats, the scientific men will scarcely know how to begin their analysis.

Whatever these strange stories mean, they certainly do not as yet invite the attention of chemists, or physiologists, or any other students of the simpler laws of nature. A few hard-headed practical men like Lord Bury and Captain Inglefield, assisted, perhaps, by physicians who are accustomed to study symptoms, and also by the sharpest of Sir Richard Mayne's force, will do more to settle the question of agency than all the pure science in the world. Grant that agency is proved to be invisible,—it is evidently not yet simplified in a way to admit of what is called "scientific analysis." And should it prove to be visible, we are the sort of men to bring it home to its visible sources. It is idle to expect science to analyze an agent which, whether true or false, is as concrete and complicated as human folly. It would be just as wise to expect Professor Faraday, Professor Owen, and Professor Roscoe to arrive by severe induction the scientific causes of the last caprice in bonnets, as to hope anything from the application of their methods of thought to the dances of tambourines and dress-coats and insulated hands about an ordinary drawing-room. The question whether these things are done by visible or invisible agents is a question for shrewd men of sense, not particularly for men of science. There is nothing so specific enough, even if the facts could be proved true, for the application of scientific methods. Supposing it were once possible to prove, as the two or four gentlemen who assembled at M. Boucicault's seem to have agreed, that the performances exhibited were not due to the legerdemain of any human being present in the flesh, we submit that the next question concerning them—whether agency or agents these doings might be ascribed—is less a scientific question than an ethical and practical one.

We cannot do better, in especial answer to Mr. Hutton, and also for the benefit of several of the other Press writers we have quoted, than refer them to Professor De Morgan's preface to his book "*From Matter to Spirit*." It will tend to moderate their tone, and make them think a little less of themselves. It shows the breadth of the inquiry, and the Professor's experience and opinions upon it.

This masterly essay is mainly occupied with three topics, more or less interwoven—the author's estimate of the spirit theory, concerning the origin of the marvellous phenomena of which every one has heard; his own opinion of these same manifestations; and, thirdly, the nature of rational belief and evidence. In the last difficult question we will not touch, but will state, in condensed form, the views entertained by the Professor on the two former heads.

“To those who know the truth of facts” (he says, p. xxvi.), and who do not know what can and cannot be—at least out of the exact sciences—it will appear, on reflection, that the most probable direction of inquiry, the best chance of eliciting a satisfactory result, *is that which is suggested by the spirit hypothesis*. I mean the hypothesis that some intelligence which is not that of any human beings, clothed in flesh and blood, has a direct share in the phenomena.” (p. xviii.) “*The Spiritualists, beyond a doubt, are in the track that has led to all advancement in physical science; their opponents are the representatives of those who have risen against progress*. I take for granted that there is a large number of unexplained phenomena. Imposture men and coincidence men I leave to see their king (*Solomon Self-Conceit*) anointed, and to rejoice and say, ‘Long live the King.’”

So much for the method and character of researches conducted on the spiritual hypothesis. But what is the Professor's own attitude of mind, for he does not pretend to have arrived at any distinct conclusion. “I am perfectly convinced (he writes) that *have both seen and heard, in a manner which would make belief impossible, things called spiritual which cannot be taken as a rational being to be capable of explanation by imposture, coincidence, or mistake*. So far I feel the ground firm under me. But when it comes to what is the cause of these phenomena I find I cannot adopt any explanation which has yet been suggested. I were bound to choose among things which I can conceive, I could say that there is some sort of action of some combination of will, intellect, and physical power, which is not that of any of the human beings present. * * * The physical explanations which I have seen are easy, but miserably insufficient; the spiritual hypothesis is sufficient, but ponderously difficult. Time and thought will decide—the second asking the first for more results of trial.” Such sentences as these should be a warning to some of our physical savans, and off-hand critics, not to talk so much unwisdom, but induce them to treat the subject in a more serious and scientific tone.

THE GREAT "ROWDY" MEETING OF THE PRESS.

We said, in our opening observations, that we had not, yet, had an opportunity of seeing the Davenport Brothers. We heard that a special *séance* was to be given before the representatives of the London Press, at the Hanover Square Rooms, on the evening of Tuesday, the 18th October, and we were favoured with a ticket of admission. It was the first opportunity which had ever occurred to us of meeting, face to face, the great leader of public opinion. Accustomed for so many years to hear their names pronounced with awe, and daily in the habit of reading the results of their omniscience, which we have never yet known even once to be admittedly in fault, such a meeting, at which nearly seventy were to be present, was a manifestation of earthly power and intelligence, which we embraced with eagerness. When we arrived about half the company was present. We must say that the first impression we received on looking at us was not a favourable one, as to the *personnel* of the lights of the world. We felt awe, however, at the thought of how much intelligence lay underneath such unpromising exteriors. As degrees others dropped in, and, one by one, we learned their names—the old familiar names—their persons only new to us. It was a disappointment, such as all of us have felt sometimes, when imagination has run riot with fact, and, like Uncle Toby, unconsciously whistled the *lillabullero*. We could not but feel a fear that it was not a very spiritual party; nor was it, as was soon apparent. If a company of bright angels had suddenly appeared on the platform, we don't believe that the audience would or could have behaved decently in their presence, for they did not appear to be open to the belief in that or any other manifestation. It is but justice, however, to them, to say that their conduct had the effect of producing action and re-action, and that the manifestations were of a meagre, dreary, and to the general audience, of neither an entertaining, instructive, or awe-striking character. We should say they were the reverse of all that, and that the great point of interest centred itself in the behaviour of the Press gentlemen, rather than in the phenomena. At a distance we were, we could see nothing distinctly of the hands or the other manifestations.

From the first there were uproar and excitement, and quarrelling with the arrangements. Even the first step of appointing Mr. Charles Reade, the novelist, and Mr. John H. Linshead of the *Daily News*, and who writes the "Notes of the Week" for nearly thirty country journals, was objected to by Mr. G. W. M. Reynolds, and only ultimately carried after two divisions, and a great many witty and irreverent sallies. Laughter

jeers, and jokes became the order of the day. Mr. Hollinshead dare not stand where he could see what happened for fear of the trumpet being thrown out upon his head, and when hands appeared and were announced, he jumped out suddenly but too late to see them, and said, "Where, where?" amidst the laughter of the audience. The ropes were tied by him so tight that the effect was cruel upon the flesh of one of the brother's wrists, as was afterwards seen. Mr. Reynolds expressing his dissatisfaction with the tying, and wishing them to be tied with packthread. He continued shouting out that if they were tied with packthread he would believe. Nevertheless, the performance of the cabinet part was got through after dreary intervals of fault-finding and interruption, which were intended to shew the superior cleverness of the Press gentlemen, but only tended to destroy all power of investigation or observation by the audience, though Messrs. Reade and Hollinshead reported that they could detect no imposition. Then it was intended to shew the phenomena of the coat being removed, and of the instruments being carried about the room, and for this purpose all the seats had to be re-arranged. During this interval, Mr. Horace Mayhew and one or two more got to the cabinet, and one of them pushed his arm through the orifice, and a shout was raised of "There's a hand!" amidst roars of laughter. When Mr. Reade was in the cabinet with the brothers, and the instruments began to sound, one of the audience said aloud, "Ah! that's Charles Reade's touch." When the seats were arranged and all were sitting in the dark, three ladies had their bonnets flattened on their heads, and talking and laughing and smart and even obscene jokes were repeated. At this part nothing, fortunately, could be done, and when the match was struck, another shouted out, "There's Lucifer!" while another called for "More light!" The associated Press of London had done its work, and we believe for the first time in eleven years the brothers could do nothing more. Their conduct had a sad interest about it, for one could hardly realize the presence of all the great and little journals on the scene, which on the morrow would once more, like the sun, enlighten the world. They saw little and heard nothing but themselves and some execrable music, and from these stand points they are writing their articles, condemning the Davenports and Spiritualism to the lowest abyss, whilst Mr. Reynolds's faith was still hanging by the piece of packthread, and is probably suspended by it still. We may hope that he may yet hang by something stronger.

As soon as these gentlemen got home they must have begun to write their account of the little they had seen, and which some of them did, certainly in a very clever and humorous manner, throwing enough ridicule over it. These accounts were at once taken up in

leading articles, and for a few days there was a torrent of newspaper articles of a very sweeping description. The Davenports were at a discount, and on the appearance of an article from the *Builder*, stating that M. Tolmaque, the conjuror, had exposed the trick and had done all the same things by legerdemain, there appeared to be an end of the affair. "*The Davenport Humbug*" and "*The Davenport Imposture*" became the headings of subsequent articles.

THE SECOND PRESS SEANCE.

On the following Friday, the 21st, another *séance* was given to about twenty gentlemen of the Press, who behaved in a different manner, and whilst taking extra precautions, and providing further tests, had exhibited so often to them all the manifestations which have been described. There was a much more serious tone among them, and it was seen and acknowledged by many of them, that the alleged performances of the conjurors were in no respect similar to those they now witnessed. A very rabid article however, was being written by the *Morning Star*, at the very time that the Rev. Jabez Burns, D.D., was using the editor's ticket to be present at this *séance*, and as an instance of the reaction which has set in, we make the following extracts from Dr. Burns' letter to that journal:—

To the Editor of the Star.

SIR,—On reading your recent articles on the Davenport Brothers' exhibition I confess that I concluded they were miserable attempts at a sort of jugglery, and therefore rejoiced at the scathing exposure you had given them. On Friday evening I had an opportunity of judging for myself, and I confess what I witnessed totally removed the impressions your articles had produced. The following is a literal version of what occurred:—Dr. Burns then describes the cabinet, &c., and says that the Brothers Davenport were subjected to a careful manipulation to discover if they had about them any movable apparatus or false hands stowed away under their coats.

He mentions also that in the second and following experiments the knots of the cords had sealing wax attached, and sealed with the crest of a gentleman present. And he proceeds—

The guitar was now touched with phosphorus, and when the lights were extinguished we saw the luminous spots on it, on the table. Shortly it rose and moved around and above us, and we could distinctly trace it by the phosphorescent light it emitted. In passing close to me it struck the foot of a young gentleman whose hand was linked with mine, and left the phosphorescent light on the leg of his trousers. In the course of the experiments the coat of one of the Davenports was removed, and afterwards they were uncorded, and the rope of one thrown into the lap of a person who sat near me.

Now such are the actual occurrences, without rhetorical garniture, and literally as they were seen by myself and all present.

I had expected that Dr. Ferguson would be in connection with the closet, but he never went near it during the experiment, one of the gentlemen being invariably between him and the closet. *I cannot conceive of any exhibition being more open and straightforward, and if there should be a conjuror able to repeat these tricks, as they are called, I shall be glad to be one of a committee to record it,*

and also, I will liberally subscribe towards getting up a public exhibition of the same. I have no theory to maintain on the subject at all. I have given you the events of Friday evening last precisely as they occurred; and asking for their insertion in your columns, I am yours,

A DAILY READER OF THE "STAR" AND
A LONDON MINISTER.

MR. DOBBS AND THE CONJURORS.

Unlike the faith of Mr. G. W. M. Reynolds, the proprietor of *Reynolds's Weekly Newspaper*, which is hanging by a piece of packthread, the faith of London may be said to be now hanging upon "the Rev. A. S. Dobbs" and the conjurors. It is pretty well admitted that if these persons cannot get London out of the manifestations, it is likely to go hard with the town. We had intended to print at full length the circumstantial account taken from the *Toronto Globe*, which was seized on with such avidity by the Press, as if they knew by instinct the danger they were in, if the manifestations could not be overthrown; but we have already gone to such an extravagant length in recording the story of the month, that we can only shortly refer to it. The substance of it is, that the Rev. A. S. Dobbs performed the whole of their tricks, and utterly routed them before a large public audience at Cleveland. This exposure, however, only lasted one day, when a letter from Mr. Fay appeared, shewing that at the alleged time of the occurrence he was at sea *en route* for England, and also giving a further circumstantial denial of the whole statement. It is not likely that the Rev. Mr. Dobbs is more clever than our conjurors, and therefore we can wait till Dobbs makes his appearance, leaving the matter meanwhile in the hands of our own conjurors, who say that they also can do and have done the whole trick. We are not however yet by any means satisfied on this head even from their own statements. We give the substance of the account, as it appeared in the *Builder*, of the performance of M. Tolmaque at the house of Mr. W. Morris, in the Stock Exchange, in Eccleston Square:—

Mr. Tolmaque explained his reasons for wishing to expose the Messrs. Davenport. He submitted to be bound to a chair. This was done by a gentleman who on a previous occasion had tied one of the Davenports; and as he had been jeered by his friends for not securing that person, he took good care not in the present instance they should not make a similar accusation. Mr. Tolmaque was, therefore, unmistakably secure. It was agreed that the *séance* should be continued in the light. A screen was placed before Mr. Tolmaque, and in about half a minute the jingling of the tambourines and the discordant rickling of the guitars commenced, and the "spirit-hand" was seen above the screen. The tambourines came flying about the room, the guitars followed, and about three minutes Mr. Tolmaque requested the screen to be removed, when he stood before the audience unbound. He requested to be tied again; and the riter, who had a theory about pinioning, proceeded to bind him in a way which was deemed perfectly secure. The screen was again put up. The same Davenport ensued, excepting that Mr. Tolmaque not being able to play on the fiddle

he could not treat us to that one nigger melody with which the "spirits" seem always to delight themselves. A friend of mine has attended the Davenports three times, and he has always heard the same tune. The result in this case, as in the former, was that Mr. Tolmaque walked out free and unfettered. He submitted to be fastened for a third time, and on this occasion it was done by our host. There could be no question that he was perfectly secure. The screen had scarcely been put up when Mr. Tolmaque exclaimed, "I am tied so tightly. Will any one give me my instruments? You will not: then take my coat;" and the coat came flying over the screen among the audience. Mr. Tolmaque immediately appeared unbound in his shirt sleeves. The delight among the sceptics, arising from this illustration of passive agency, can easily be imagined. One gentleman present, somewhat of a believer in "the spirits," would not acknowledge his conviction that Mr. Tolmaque could tie himself up again. This he did twice in as short a space of time as he took to untie himself, if not shorter.

When analyzed the whole of this narrative reduces itself to the simple fact, that the conjuror was able to untie the rope as it was then fastened, and to be then free to throw the musical instruments over the screen, afterwards to throw off his coat, and again that he was able to re-tie himself in a presentable fashion. Is this, however, what the Davenports do, which excites the wonder of observers, and is reported on by the committee of 24? Is Captain Inglefield satisfied that the conjuror was tied in the same way, and were the knots sealed as in that investigation, and in many others which are recorded? As the conjurors profess that they can do the same things, why did they not accept the invitation of this committee, to be present and assist or why do not they now do them? The answer is obvious and clear, after a little analysis—that the two things are totally dissimilar, and none know this better than the conjurors themselves. In the entertainment given at the house of Mr. Morris, does that gentleman imagine that the instruments would have been thrown over the screen, or the coat removed, if the knots had been sealed as in the case of the Davenports. If the screen had been instantly thrown down, would the conjuror have appeared bound, and the committee have found the rope undealt with? Were his hands found bound, as before, and the knots untouched so instantaneously after the removal of his coat, that it was seen flying up from him in the air when the candle was suddenly lighted? Can he make the instruments whirl like lightning round the room while he sits bound with sealed knots in his chair? Can he, while in the cabinet, shew hands through the orifice, after his person has been searched to prevent his taking sham hands inside, and when the doors are instantly opened, be found bound with sealed knots? or perform the same while Mr. Reade is in the cabinet with him and holding his hands? Can he unloose himself with flour in his hands, perform upon the instruments, and on the doors being re-opened on the instant, be found rebound as before, with the knots untouched and sealed? These, let us mark, are only some of

the many tests to which the Davenports have been subjected; and we will believe that they can be got over by conjurors when we see it ourselves, or have it reported on as good testimony as that upon which we receive the Davenport manifestations. We happen to know that M. Tolmaque has too prudent a regard for himself to allow himself to be entrapped into a performance before the brothers, or such a committee of 24 as reported upon them. We also know that he will not venture, nor will Anderson or any of his men, to perform under similar conditions and examinations as the Davenports submit to. They tell us fairly enough that they want such knots as they can untie, and that they must on no account be sealed, that to shew the proper number of hands they must take a few extra hands inside with them, and that to make the instruments fly about the room they must have three or four confederates. Now where were the confederates of the brothers? they were all in close custody. Was Lord Bury a confederate? Where are they among the 24 who reported?

M. Tolmaque has since written the following letter to the papers, which justifies our remarks as to him:—

To the Editor of the "Star."

SIR,—May I intrude on your space for the following reply to Mr. Palmer?

I, M. Tolmaque, prestidigitateur, hereby inform Mr. Palmer that as long as he sails under false colours I will not answer him or any of his friends on the subject of the Brothers Davenport.

Respectfully yours,

October 24.

M. TOLMAQUE.

As to Mr. Anderson, we were present at his performance on the 25th, when his man Sutton failed in untying himself after being tied by Mr. Wakley and Mr. Hans Friswell, but afterwards both he and Miss Anderson certainly untied themselves very rapidly, and Sutton shewed his hand loose in a few seconds. In less than two minutes the doors were thrown open, and they were seen free, but it took eight minutes for Miss Anderson to retie herself to the seat, and there were many crucial differences between her and the Davenports' performance. Mr. Hollinshead was the chairman of a committee of 12, who presided over Mr. Anderson's performance, and in an article which appeared the following day in the *Daily News*, he sums up the result by saying that "Professor Anderson has done little more than advertize the Davenports and himself, and we are still waiting for some one to take up Mr. Palmer's hundred pound challenge." This is quite our opinion of the controversy with the conjurors as it now stands, and we say that they have failed up to this time in displacing the manifestations, whatever success they may have hereafter.

We have no hesitation in summing up the whole that has appeared, by saying that what the conjurors themselves say as to

what they can do, and what they require for the doing of it, is of itself a proof to us that the manifestations of the brothers are totally dissimilar from theirs, and that the conjurors have hitherto signally failed in even the most coarse imitation of the brothers. We repeat that they have done no more as yet than untie and tie themselves, which is a somewhat common conjuring trick, but they have not done even this at the critical and instantaneous conjunctures in which the brothers are found to have done it. The rope test, however, is only one of many to which they have been subjected, and until we heard of its being sometimes a conjuring trick, we should have thought it a good test; with the sealing and nautical tying of the knots we should still think it to be so, at all events with our conjurors, though how it would be with some of the Indian and Egyptian performers we do not know. We believe these Orientals are mediums as well as conjurors, and there is much concurrent testimony to bear out the probability. It should be remembered that the rope test was not originally thought of by the Davenports, but was suggested as a test by others, and that it is only incidentally that the test itself has since been partially converted into one of the alleged manifestations, by the sudden tying and untying of the ropes. It is, however, only one of the safeguards or tests to satisfy the public that the phenomena which appear are not produced naturally by the brothers. One of Mr. Anderson's daughters is a medium, and we hear that M. Tolmaque is a believer in Spiritualism, but we do not suppose that either he or Anderson are more than common conjurors, very anxious to get a good advertisement by hanging to the skirts of the Davenports. In America, where they have quite as clever conjurors as we have in England, and we name Mr. Herman as one of them, the Davenports have repeatedly had this same theory to meet, and always with the same result. This indeed is, we hear, but a clumsy imitation of the investigations that have taken place in America. Our conjurors will not attempt to perform the same feats under the same conditions, and until they do we shall not think they have advanced one step, beyond shewing the necessity for the most careful scrutiny of the rope test as applied to the Davenports.

Throughout this long statement we have kept in view principally the main question which is one of fact—aye or no. At this time we say that the noes have failed to produce a single fact or argument which, on examination, detracts from the facts in the report of the committee of 24, and so far as the case is to be judged by the evidence already adduced, and without anticipating what may yet be discovered, we say that the ayes have it.

Notices of Books.

MAN: HIS TRUE NATURE AND MINISTRY.*

MR. PENNY is evidently an ardent admirer and disciple of Louis Claude de Saint-Martin. Last year he translated for us Saint-Martin's correspondence with Baron Kirchberger, in which an account is given of the curious spiritual manifestations which took place, toward the end of the last century, in the courts of Northern Europe, he now, in a volume of five hundred pages, has translated Saint-Martin's *Le Ministere de l'Homme-Esprit*. Mr. Penny is thus doing his best to make the English reading public better acquainted with a writer of whom hitherto little has been known in England, beyond the name. Saint-Martin was well acquainted with the facts of human magnetism, clairvoyance, and spiritual manifestations; but while greatly in advance of his time in recognizing these truths, his mind was not of a cast that could rest in mere phenomena of any kind. He was an earnest thinker on spiritual themes, and delighted to write on the human soul, and its relations to nature and to God, of which the present work is an instance. While the theme chosen is deep and full of interest, it is one which in its very nature is full of difficulty; and the inherent difficulties of the subject are unhappily not diminished by Saint-Martin's style of writing, as seen in the present work. He is not indeed so obscure a writer as his master, Jacob Böhme, but still it must be confessed that he is diffuse and vague, with digressions and peculiarities of phraseology which deter the ordinary reader, and especially the ordinary English reader. It is often difficult to be sure of his exact meaning, to apprehend what is the definite idea he wishes to convey. Hence, what is wanted we think, is an interpreter rather than a translator, and though Mr. Penny has no doubt executed his task with care and fidelity, yet it seems to us it would have been better if instead of presenting us with the mere verbal equivalents of language, Mr. Penny had given us an exposition of the thoughts they were meant to express with as much brevity as possible, and in the clearest and most intelligible English he was able to command; by this means, while the book before us would have been greatly reduced in

* *Man: his True Nature and Ministry*. Translated from the French of LOUIS CLAUDE DE SAINT-MARTIN ("Le Philosophe Inconnu"), by EDWARD BURTON PENNY. London: ALLAN & Co., Stationers' Hall Court. Exeter: ROBERTS, Broadgate.

bulk, it would have increased in value; at least, it would have been far more readable than we are afraid the majority of readers will now deem it to be.

However, those readers who are fond of hours with the mystics, and don't care for lively reading, will do well to read, and find a place on their bookshelves for *Man: his True Nature and Ministry*.

Correspondence.

SECOND AND FINAL PROTEST AGAINST THE DOCTRINES OF LIBRA.

To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."

SIR,—It was not and it is not my intention to enter into any long controversy with *Libra* on his spurious doctrines. My simple object was to enter my protest against them, certain that this would be amply sufficient with every healthy mind. My present object is to shew that *Libra* has in no degree answered my protest and there to leave it. He complains that I have not made quotations from his article on Rome, Theatres, &c., to support my statements. This was perfectly unnecessary, as the article is in the hands and recollections of all the readers of the *Magazine*—see the number for November, 1863, p. 498. It is equally unnecessary for me to follow *Libra* into the various texts he has quoted, and the issues he has raised on them; they prove nothing but an evident desire to lead myself and the reader off the main trail. It were perfectly easy to follow him and beat him at all points in detail; there is a shorter and more complete method—to attack him in his centre. To shew that "preaching the Gospel to the poor" is the natural *sequence* of miracles, not the *climax*, and that signs *follow* the working of the spirit, would be only to repeat what I have already affirmed. Let us bring *Libra* back to his article in the August number.

He there says that "miraculous proof is no proof of *Divine* operation." I replied that "*Divine* miracle is *Divine* proof," and what is his answer? "Doubtless, but how shall we discover what is *Divine* miracle?" No matter how we discover it if the thing is. He admits that *Divine* miracle *doubtless* is *Divine* proof. That covers the whole of my assertion, and negatives the whole of his prior affirmation. The question of how we are to prove *Divine* miracle is quite another question, though no man can surely find any difficulty in discovering when miracles are *Divine*. "People who judge of things by a superficial standard," he says, "do not easily make the distinction between *Divine* and devilish miracles;" but truly they must be very superficial minds indeed who cannot make so broad a distinction. The miracles of Moses, he says, were not terrible, and the Egyptians and the rebel Israelites found them so. Truly, he did that shew any obstacle in the way of their recognizing them as *Divine* miracles. Certainly not; both Egyptians and Israelites at all times knew and felt the *Divine* in them, when they punished as much as when they blessed. At the same time we do not ask *rebel* minds or *superficial* minds to decide for us what is *Divine*; the answer is found in every healthy and average understanding. *Libra* says we do not follow out things to their consequences; let me return the compliment. If he had carried out the character of miracles to their ultimates, he would have had no difficulty in discerning what miracles are *Divine*. Does any single man of ordinary capacity feel any doubt about the source of the vast body of miracles which run through both the Old and the New Testaments? When God, or Christ in God, rend mountains, and cleave asunder rivers and oceans, and waste the fields of oppressors with lightning and hail, and whelm their proud

chariots in the sea, is it not to teach a mighty lesson to the nations, to vindicate the great rights of humanity, and to establish a race of people who shall, in the first place, preserve the knowledge of Him and His laws, and in the second place to spread that knowledge in the benign Gospel through the earth? When Christ withered up the barren fig-tree, was there a disciple so blind that he could not see or could not be taught that it was a great moral lesson, the same which the Saviour taught in another place, "It is barren, why cumbereth it the ground?" It was, in fact, pronouncing judgment on the barren system of religion of the *Libras* of that day—a system which confines itself to mere inward feelings and mystical operations, without the natural fruits of outer manifestations, which are the blossoms and the fruit of the Christian tree.

Let me remind *Libra* that he has not touched on my answer to his strange assertion that "spiritual things are their own evidence, and it is entirely inverting the order of things to expect spirit to give evidence to spirit by the mediation of matter;" that this is a total denial of the very cause of Christ's coming, of his taking upon him matter for the very purpose of spirit giving evidence to spirit by the mediation of matter. This great fact admits of no answer, and cannot tolerate any subterfuge. It is a fact not only too luminous in itself to be put aside, but is in full accordance with the whole system and history of human redemption, from the foundation of the world to the present day. What are the whole of the Old and New Testaments but voluminous masses of miracles—spiritual interventions through matter to the spirit in man? After declaring that "pretended evidence of miracles and historical facts is rapidly vanishing, and will speedily disappear entirely," he now tells us that "Miraculous power will ever remain in the true Church, but these powers never can be used to make converts to Christ." If there be miraculous power in the Church, undoubtedly there will be evidence of these miracles, and they will be historical facts. Thus this writer wholly contradicts his former assertions, and while he admits a perpetual possession of miraculous powers in the Church, declares that they can never be used for the conversion of souls. These powers, then, if they cannot convert souls, of what use are they? If no proof can be given that the miracles resulting from these powers are Divine, then they are worse than useless—they are a senseless and objectless gift of God to his Church—a proposition in itself too absurd to be seriously treated. Without pursuing the paradoxical reasonings of this writer farther, as to Christ concealing his miracles, when they were daily performed in the open air, in the streets and squares of cities, on mountains whose sides were paved with crushing throngs of people, on sea-shores where He was compelled to put off in boats to avoid the pressure of tens of thousands of witnesses, performing his miracles of the loaves and fishes before four thousand and five thousand people at a time; and again, as to there being no love in the modern manifestations, let me say once for all, that the whole of *Libra's* statements are in the openest opposition to the whole system of Christ's mode of converting people, and of the effectual practice of the true Church ever since. Christ several times checked the noisy zeal of new converts, who would have run about shouting, "A wonder! a wonder!" but he never concealed his miracles. St. Paul, in enumerating the miraculous powers of the Church, in the 12th chapter of the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians, has compared them to the limbs of a human body. A Church without these miraculous powers has no limbs—it is a mangled trunk, dead and incapable of exerting any Christian function—it is a useless, amorphous mass; but miraculous powers, such amongst them as those of the modern *séances*, can and always have been shewn to be the only means of awaking the worldly and the sensual out of their debased, torpid condition. They cannot convert souls—they have no love in them, says *Libra*, but the whole of their history says that this is not true. It is because the outward churches have abandoned these miraculous powers of the true Church, that they have ceased to convert souls. The last number of the *Spiritual Magazine* gives an awful proof of this, at page 450, in the statistics of the miserable failure of missions. Missionaries do not go out now armed with the outward signs, springing from inward grace and power, as the first apostles and missionaries of Christianity did, and they do not produce the same effects. Spiritualism, possessing these powers in simplicity and love, though *Libra* does not seem to know this, is doing the most

wonderful work of conversion, and therefore of *love*, since the apostolic days. In fifteen years, according to *Clarke's Guide to Spiritualism*, it has converted 20,000,000 of people. Its success has exceeded that of Christianity at its first preaching for more than a century. Professor Hare, years ago, declared that it had converted 25,000 atheists and deists in America to Christianity. Could this have been done without love as well as power? Does *Libra* see the immense work it is doing in France, bringing over to fervent Christianity its tens and hundreds of thousands, and liberating them from the yoke of popery and priests?

The fact is, that *Libra's* system of mere inward life, without its outward manifestations of power as well as of love, is about as rational as it would be to expect a tree with an interior healthy flow of sap, to put out neither leaves, flowers, nor fruit. It is that spurious and morbid species of mysticism which filled the Thebaic deserts with men posting themselves for years on columns, and otherwise making scarecrows of themselves, instead of doing God's active work in society. It is the same which has in all ages filled convents with useless dreamers. It is that soft and sentimental theosophy without bone and muscle, which endeavoured to rise to life in the *Dawn*, but had not strength to reach beyond the dawn. It is that unpractical Harris-ism which expends itself in dreams and speculations, while the robuster forms of Christianity adapt themselves to the needs of this natural and sensual time. And I take my final leave of it by recommending *Libra*, and any who may think with him, to read the following remarks from that clear and philosophical treatise of Joel Tiffany, *Spiritualism Explained*. New York, 1856.

THE USE OF OUTWARD MANIFESTATIONS.

"If you want to become mediums for interior communications, you must become absolutely true in every thought, feeling and affection—become absolutely just in all your relations of life, so that morning, noon, and night, you shall be enquiring and thirsting after righteousness. Such an individual will not need any outward signs to convey truth to him. But the person disposed to live in the outward world, to live in the enjoyment of his appetites and lustful affections, will require representations if ever he believes in spirits. He has to be addressed as a physical or sensuous being. If ever he believes in a future life, the spirits have got to come and rap him over the head. These outward manifestations are designed to say to the sordid Atheist, to the Materialist, to the religious worldling, 'You have a soul.' It is for this reason that there is speaking with tongues, and that all the wonderful works are wrought in your midst. That is what makes Mr. Davenport's circles necessary for the vast majority of the citizens of New York. They are not sufficiently developed to understand spiritual truth. These manifestations are necessary. They are not calculated to make you wise, but they can startle you, and prompt you to investigate, and they can give you such directions as will prepare you to enter into a higher and holier investigation of your relation to the world and to your Divine Father. * * * The object of this external communication is to give outward evidence. The tongues are but a sign to those who are not believers. The man or woman that is not established in the faith, needs these outward manifestations. We need no more raps than will save humanity. We need all that we can get for that purpose. If Spiritualism takes that direction it is a God-send to the world: in whatever sphere the spirit can work, let it work; I bid it God speed."—pp. 115-117.

LIBRA-ÆQUABILIS.