THE

Spiritual Magazine.

SEPTEMBER, 1873.

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SPIRITUALISTS AT LIVERPOOL.

THE "National Conference of Spiritualists," announced in a former number, was held at Liverpool during the first week in August; and seems to have approximated more nearly to the title assumed than any of its predecessors. Provincial Spiritualists were well represented, but the London Spiritualists were chiefly conspicuous by their absence, possibly because the invitations seem to have been principally limited to the little local societies to which the leading Spiritualists generally have not attached themselves. The *Spiritual Magazine* was not represented at the Conference, as we had received no invitation, nor indeed had any notice of it been sent to us: we can therefore speak of it only from published reports in other journals. All the other Spiritualist journals were however represented by their respective editors, so our necessarily scant notice can be supplemented by reference to our contemporaries.

The chief outcome of the Conference appears to be the formation of a "National Association of Spiritualists." Hitherto, all attempts at national organization, whether in America or in England, have met little or no success, generally, indeed, leading to a more complete disorganization, by bringing out more conspicuously the wide and fundamental differences on important subjects which divide Spiritualists, and which vitally affect their conceptions of Spiritualism, and of the spirit and objects that should be aimed at in any movement for its more general diffusion. The new Association hopes to escape the difficulty by avoiding theological discussion, disavowing collective responsibility for religious opinion or belief, but leaving its members and speakers free to express and advocate any views

on the subject they may individually entertain. This certainly seems to us to be the wisest course to be taken, indeed the only one giving any hope of success; but the difficulty of carrying it out in practice was strikingly illustrated by the Conference itself, which, after dealing with the question of organization, immediately plunged into a discussion on the relation between Spiritualism and the Bible, and between natural law and miracle; and it is just such questions as these which prevent or peril the existence of any general organization among Spiritualists. No doubt if these questions were always discussed with the moderation, charity, and good feeling shown at the Liverpool Conference, and if Spiritualists everywhere would seek out and act together on those points on which they are agreed, instead of wrangling over those on which they are divided, a general and effective union among them would be far less difficult of attainment, and these differences themselves would gradually lessen, if they did not altogether disappear.

The new Association will, we presume, from the reports we have read, be mainly a federation of local societies, though it is no doubt hoped with a large number of other members, and is formed for purely business purposes, such as aiding local efforts, providing for the delivery of lectures by qualified speakers, the establishment of a central institution in the Metropolis, the diffusion of information by the press, &c. The general affairs of the Association to be managed by a council, the members of which shall not be directly or indirectly commercially interested in Spiritualism.

All this appears judicious, and if these objects can be better accomplished by the new Association than by existing agencies or in co-operation with them, it will no doubt meet with general support; but surely it must have been either from ignorance or inadvertance that the names of nearly all the earliest and most active pioneers of Spiritualism in England were omitted in the list suggested, as well as in that of those subsequently nominated as members of the council.

The Conference (judging from the report of it in the *Spiritualist*) seems to have been earnest and unsectarian, and in its representation, as well as in intelligence, moderation, and practical good sense, a marked improvement on any previous gathering of the kind; and the National Association it has inaugurated, may possibly exercise an important influence on the future development of Spiritualism in England.

SPIRITUAL MONITIONS.

III.

If the personal experiences, especially those of the inner life, could be carefully traced in every individual, and faithfully recorded, we should find that probably all were more or less consciously the subject of spiritual monitions, wholly out of themselves, and which sometimes though comparatively rarely, break through into the region of the outer senses.

These monitions may vary in form, intensity, or power; but they usually, if not always, will be found to have the same general type and character—they shadow forth intelligence of some coming event, or delineate some necessary course of action, to which the soul is, as it were, made a confidant, in advance of the senses, for some fixed and special purpose, which in the event is made to appear. These impressions may be angel whispers, and they doubtless are, for nothing can be more reasonable than to suppose that while disenthralled spirits are capable of looking into the future, and of perceiving the results of causes, whose effects, though yet latent, they are able to determine, should feel a deep interest in human affairs, and especially in those which involve the happiness of their own immediate friends and companions while in the body. How natural, then—that they should whisper warnings into the placid ear of the dreamer, when the disturbing conditions of the outer world no longer operate upon him, with their discordant jar—that they should portray events in visions—that they should suggest true and right modes of action in cases of uncertainty or doubt, upon which important results are poised.

In proportion as we keep the soul open to these impressions, the spiritual energies are quickened, and the inner life is developed. A chilling scepticism, founded on the grossest materialism—since to the senses alone were committed the measure and the test of its laws—was the reaction from ancient superstition: and this doubtless was a necessary period in the education of the human mind, since it tended to the establishment of a truer equilibrium between the outer and the inner life—between the senses and the soul. Toward this equilibrium the tendencies of the age are now verging. The common people, with all their ignorance and superstition, have in these matters shown themselves wiser than the learned ignorant who despised them; and their simple candour has served to fan the spark which otherwise might have been as nearly smothered as what is vital in itself can be. In their unquestioning faith, and implicit reliance on the facts they

have observed, they have come nearer to truth than the philosophising sceptics, for the true and natural eye of the simple traced the operation of unknown causes in facts which the telescope vision of the learned glanced over without perceiving.

But scholars are now coming forth to widen the prescribed boundaries of science: and sitting like children at the feet of nature, inquiring earnestly if peradventure there may not be written in *her* book higher laws which they have either wholly overlooked, or obstinately refused to believe.

Psychology is beginning to receive a larger share of attention than has for a long time been awarded it. It is in accordance with this growing tendency—this increasing demand for "more light," to explore the hitherto dark chambers of the human soul, that we present the more interesting facts we meet with which have a bearing on the question; and we here subjoin a very remarkable one:—

In our first article we quoted from *All the Year Round* an instance of murder prevented by what had every appearance of being a spiritual interposition. The following, which we take from *Chambers's Journal*, is an instance in which a man, wrongfully pronounced guilty by a jury, was rescued from an ignominious death, and his innocence established by what it is difficult even to conceive of as other than a spiritual intervention in his behalf.

A SPIRITUAL SUBPŒNA.

"Some dozen years ago I passed a couple of early summer months in Devonshire, fishing; changing one picturesque scene of sport for another, always disbelieving that I should find so fair a place as that last quitted, and always having pleasantly to acknowledge myself wrong. There is, indeed, an almost inexhaustible treasure of delicious nooks in that fertile county, which comprehends every element of landscape beauty—coast and inland, hill and valley, moor and woodland—and excels in nothing more than in its curved rivers. What cliff-like and full-foliaged banks about their sources, and what rich meadows sprinkled with unrivalled kine, as they broaden towards the sea! At the close of my tour I was lodging in a farm-house near a branch of the Exe, rather regretful at the thought of so soon having to shoulder my knapsack and return to native Dorset, near a certain provincial town of which county, and in a neighbourhood without a tree within sight, or a stream within sound, it was my lot to dwell. We had lately thrown out a bow window to the drawing-room there, but why, I cannot tell, for there was certainly nothing to see from it. What a difference between such a spot and my then abode, from the windows of which a score of miles

of undulating and varied landscape could be discerned, with the old cathedral towers of the capital city standing grandly up against the southern sky! It is not true that people who live in picturesque places do not appreciate them, but only that they require to be made to understand their good fortune. Michael Courtenay, the good man of the farm, and like all his class, a thorough stay-at-home, could not discover what I found in that look-out from his house to make such a fuss about; but his wife, who had once paid a visit to her son when in business at Birmingham, knew perfectly well. Concerning which son Robert, by the bye, there was a sad tale. He was the only child of the good pair, and one who should have been there at Cowlees, the right hand of his father, and the comfort of his loving mother; but the young man had decided otherwise. He had never taken to farming, but had grieved his father hugely by a hankering after mechanical studies, which the old agriculturist associated almost with the black art itself. Thinking himself to have a gift for the practical sciences, Robert had got apprenticed in Birmingham, and for some time bade fair to acquit himself well. But it had not been farming to which he was in reality averse, so much as to restraint of any kind: and finding, after a little, that he could not be his own master at the lathe, any more than at the plough, he forsook his second calling likewise. This had justly angered Michael, and drawn from him, on the return of the lad, certain expressions which his young spirit undutifully resented. There was a violent scene in that peaceful homestead of Cowlees one day; and the next morning, when the house was astir, it was found that Robert had gone away in the night-time, nor had he since either returned home or written of his whereabouts. It was a year ago and more by this time, during which period Mrs. Courtenay had grown older than in the half-dozen years before, while the old man himself, said the farm people, had altered to the full as much as she although, for his part, he never owned to it. It was not he who told me of the matter, but the gude-wife, who was fond of me—as my vanity was obliged to confess—mainly because I was the age of her lost lad, and so reminded her of him. I slept in the very room which had formerly been her Robert's, and a very comfortable little room it was.

"Here it was very early one May morning, before even the earliest risers of the farm were up, that I was awakened by these three words pronounced close by me in the distinctest tones: 'The ferryman waits.' So perfectly conscious was I of having been really addressed that I sat up in my bed at once and replied: 'Well, and what is that to me?' before the absurdity of the intimation had time to strike me. The snow-white curtains of the little bed were completely undrawn, so that no person could have been

hidden behind them. Although it was not broad daylight, every object was clearly discernible, and through the half-open window came the cool, delicious summer air with quickening fragrance. I heard the dog rattle his chain in the yard as he came out of his kennel and shook himself and then return to it lazily, as though it was not time to be up yet. A cock crew, but very unsatisfactorily, leaving off in the middle of his performance as though he had been mistaken in the hour. My watch, a more reliable chronicler, informed me that it wanted a quarter of four o'clock. I was not accustomed to be awakened at such a time as that, and turned myself indignantly on the pillow, regretting that I had eaten clotted cream for supper the preceding evening. I lay perfectly still with my eyes shut, endeavouring, since I could not go to sleep again, to account for the peculiar nature of my late nightmare, as I had made up my mind to consider it, until the cuckoo clock on the oaken stair outside struck four. The last note of the mechanical bird had scarcely died away when again, close to my pillow, I heard uttered, not only with distinctness, but with a most unmistakeable earnestness, the same piece of information which had once so startled me already 'The ferryman waits.'

"Then I got up and looked under the little bed, and behind it; into the small cupboard where my one change of boots was kept, and where there was scarcely room for anything else. I sounded the wall nearest my bed's head, and found it solid enough; it was also an outside wall; nor from any of the more remote ones could so distinct a summons have come. Then I pushed the window casement fully back and thrust my head and bare neck into the morning air. If I was still asleep, I was determined to wake myself, and then if I should hear the mysterious voice again I was determined to obey it. I was not alarmed, nor even disturbed in my mind, although greatly interested. The circumstances of my position precluded any supernatural terror. The animals in the farmyard were lying in the tumbled straw close by, and near enough to be startled at a shout of mine; some pigeons were already circling round the dovecote, or pacing, sentinel like, the little platforms before their domiciles; and the sound of the lasher, by whose circling eddies I had so often watched for trout, came cheerily and with inviting tone across the dewy meadows. The whole landscape seemed instinct with new-born life, and to have thoroughly shaken off the solemnity of dreary night. Its surpassing beauty and freshness so entirely took possession of me, indeed, that in its contemplation I absolutely forgot the inexplicable occurrence which had brought me to the window. I was wrapped in the endeavour to make out whether those tapering lines, supporting,

as it appeared, a mass of southern cloud, were indeed the pinnacles of the cathedral, when close by my ear, close by as though the speaker had his face at the casement likewise, the words were a third time uttered: 'The ferryman waits.' There was a deeper seriousness in its tone on this occasion, an appeal which seemed to have a touch of pathos as well as gloom; but it was the same voice, and one which I shall never forget. I did not hesitate another moment, but dressed myself as quickly as I could, and descending the stairs, took down the vast oaken door-bar, and let myself out, as I had been wont to do when I went betimes a fishing. Then I strode southward along the footpath leading through the fields to where the river ferry was, some three miles off, now doubting, now believing, that the ferryman did wait there at such an unusually early hour and for me. I made such good use of my legs that it was not five o'clock when I reached the last meadow that lay between me and the stream: it was higher ground than its neighbour land, and every step I took I was looking eagerly to come in sight of the ferry-house, which was on the opposite bank, and by no means within easy hailing distance. At last I did so, and observed, to my astonishment, that the boat was not at its usual moorings. It must needs, therefore, have been already brought over upon my own side. A few steps further brought me into view of it, with the ferryman standing up in the stern leaning on his punt-pole, and looking intently in my direction. He gave a great 'hollo' when he recognised me and I returned it, for we were old acquaintances.

"On arriving, the ferryman said he had been waiting for some time. Mr. Reaton, however, had some suspicion that he had been befooled, and preferred to manifest a little reserve until he could ascertain why the ferryman should pretend to have been looking for him; he therefore demanded some explanation from him.

"The ferryman replied; 'All I can say is, as I was roused at half-past three or so by a friend of yours, saying as though you would be wanting me in a little on the north bank.' 'What friend was that?' enquired I. 'Nay, sir, for that matter I can't say, since I did not see him, but I *heard* him well enough at all events, and as plain as I now hear you. I was asleep when he first called me from outside yonder, and could scarcely make any sense of it; but the second time I was wide awake, and the third time, as I was undoing the window, there could be no mistake about.—'Be ready for Philip Reaton on the nor' bank,' he said. 'And how was it you missed seeing my friend?' enquired I as carelessly as I could. 'He was in such a hurry to be gone, I reckon, that as soon as he heard my window open, and knew he

had roused me, he set off. His voice came round the east corner of the cottage, as though he went Exeter way. I wouldn't have got up at such a time, and at such a summons, for many other folks but you, I do assure you, Master Philip.' 'Thank you,' said I, though by no means quite convinced; 'you're a good fellow, and here's five shillings for you. And now, put me across, and show me the nearest way by which I can get to the city.'

"Now, if by some inscrutable means, the ferryman—who had become the leading figure in my mind because of the mysterious warning—or any accomplice of his, had played me a trick, and trumped up a story for my further bewilderment, they had not, I flattered myself, very much cause for boasting. I had evinced but slight curiosity about the unknown gentleman who had heralded my approach at daylight, and I had given them to understand that I had a real object in my early rising—that of reaching the capital city, at least ten miles away. But my own brain was, for all that, a prey to the most conflicting suggestions, not one of which was of final service towards an explanation of the events of the morning. There was I, at a little after five a.m., with a walk before me of ten, and a walk behind me of three, good Devon miles, breakfastless. I consumed the way in mentally reviewing all the circumstances of the case again and again, and by no means in a credulous spirit; but when I at length arrived at the city upon the hill, I was as far from the solution of the matter as when I started. That the ferryman himself, a simple countryman, should be concerned in any practical joke upon *me*, a mere fly-fishing acquaintance of a couple of weeks' standing; or that such persons as the Courtenays should have permitted the playing of it upon a guest at Cowlees, was only less astounding than the perfection of the trick itself—if trick it really was. But neither my feelings of anger, when I looked on the matter in that light, nor those of mystery when I took the more supernatural view of it, in anywise interfered with the gradual growth of appetite; and when I turned into a private room at the Bishop's Head in the High-street, the leading idea in my mind, after all my cogitation, was breakfast.

"Although Exeter is as picturesque and venerable a city as any raven could desire to dwell in, it is not a lively town by any means, in a general way. 'Nothing going on as usual, I suppose?' inquired I, with a yawn at the waiter, when I had finished a vast refection. 'Going on, sir! Yessir. City very gay indeed, sir, just now. Assizes, sir, now sitting. Murder case—very interesting for a young gentleman like yourself, indeed, sir.' 'How do you know what is interesting?' retorted I, with the rising indignation of hobbledehoyhood at having its manhood called into question. 'Young gentleman, indeed! I

am a man, sir. But what about this murder? Is the prisoner convicted?' 'Convicted, sir! Nossir; not yet, sir. We hope he will be convicted this morning, sir. It's a very bad case, indeed, sir. A journeyman carpenter, one Robert Moles, have been and murdered a toll-keeper—killed him in the dead of night, sir, with a 'atchet; and his wife is the witness against him.' 'That's very horrible,' remarked I. 'I didn't know a wife could give evidence.' 'Nossir, not his wife, sir; it is the toll-keeper's wife, sir. She swears to this Moles, although it happened two months ago or more, sir. Murder will out, they say: and how true it is! He'll be hung in front of the jail, sir, a hopen place upon an 'ill, so as almost everybody will be able to see it, bless ye!' 'I should like to hear the end of his trial—very much indeed, waiter.' 'Should you, sir?' fondling his chin. 'It couldn't be done, sir—it could not be done; the court is crowded into a mash already. To be sure, I've got a—— But no, sir, it could not be done.' 'I suppose its merely a question of how much?' said I, taking out my purse. 'Didn't you say you had a'——'A cousin as is a javelin man, yessir. Well, I don't know but what it might be done, sir, if you'll just wait till I've cleared away. There, they're at it already!'

"While he spoke, a fanfaronade of trumpets without proclaimed that the judges were about to take their seats, and in a few minutes the waiter and I were among the crowd. The javelin man, turning out to be amenable to reason and the ties of relationship, as well as not averse to a small pecuniary recompense, I soon found standing room for myself in the court-house, where every seat had been engaged for hours before. As I had been informed, the proceedings were all but concluded, save some unimportant indirect evidence, and the speech of the prisoner's counsel. This gentleman had been assigned to the accused by the court, since he had not provided himself with any advocate, nor attempted to meet the tremendous charge laid against him, except by a simple denial. All that had been elicited from him since his apprehension, it seemed, was this; that the toll-keeper's wife was mistaken in his identity, but that he had led a wandering life of late, and could not produce any person to prove an *alibi;* that he was in Dorsetshire when the murder was done, miles away from the scene of its commission; but at what place on the particular day in question—the 5th of March—he could not recall to mind. This, taken in connection with strong condemnatory evidence, it was clear, would go sadly against him with the jury, as a lame defence indeed; although, as it struck *me* who had only gleaned this much from a bystander, nothing was more natural than that a journeyman carpenter

who was not likely to have kept a diary, should not recollect what place he had tramped through upon any particular date. Why, where had I myself been on the 5th of March? thought I. It took me several minutes to remember, and I only did so by recollecting that I had left Dorsetshire on the day following. partly in consequence of some alterations going on at home. Dorsetshire, by the by, did the prisoner say? Why surely I had seen that face somewhere before, which was now turned anxiously and hurriedly around the court, and now, as if ashamed of so many eyes, concealed in his tremulous hands! Robert Moles! No, I had certainly never heard that name; and yet I began to watch the poor fellow with a singular interest, begotten of the increasing conviction that he was not altogether a stranger to me. The evidence went on and I concluded the counsel for the prisoner did his best, but his speech was, of necessity, an appeal to mercy rather than to justice. All that had been confided to him by his client was this—that the young man was a vagabond, who had deserted his parents, and run away from his indentures, and was so far deserving of little pity; that he had, however, only been vicious, and not criminal; as for the murder with which he was now charged, the commission of such hideous outrage had never entered his brain. 'Did the lad look like a murderer? Or did he not rather resemble the Prodigal Son, penitent for his misdeeds indeed, but not weighed down by the blood of a fellow-creature?' All this was powerfully enough expressed, but it was not evidence; and the jury, without retiring from their box, pronounced the young man 'guilty,' amid a silence which seemed to corroborate the verdict. Then the judge put on the terrible black cap, and solemnly inquired for the last time whether Robert Moles had any reason to urge why sentence should not be passed upon him.

"'My lord,' replied the lad in a singularly low soft voice, which recalled the utterer to my recollection in an instant, 'I am wholly innocent of the dreadful crime of which I am accused, although I confess I see in the doom that is about to be passed upon me a fit recompense for my wickedness and disobedience. I was, however, until informed of it by the officer who took me into custody, as ignorant of this poor man's existence as of his death.'

"'My lord,' cried I, speaking with an energy and distinctness that astonished myself, 'this young man has spoken the truth, as I can testify.'

"There was a tremendous sensation in the court at this announcement, and it was some minutes before I was allowed to take my place in the witness box. The counsel for the Crown objected to my becoming evidence at that period of the pro-

ceedings at all, and threw himself into the legal question with all the indignation which he had previously exhibited against the practice of midnight murder; but eventually the court over-ruled him, and I was sworn. I stated that I did not know the prisoner by name, but that I could swear to his identity. I described how, upon the 5th of March last, the local builder, being in want of hands, had hired the accused to assist in the construction of a bow-window in the drawing-room of our house in Dorsetshire. The counsel for the prosecution, affecting to disbelieve my sudden recognition of the prisoner, here requested to know whether any particular circumstance had recalled him to my mind, or whether I had only a vague and general recollection of him. 'I had only that,' I confessed, 'until the prisoner spoke; his voice is peculiar, and I remember very distinctly to have heard it upon the occasion I speak of; he had the misfortune to tread upon his foot rule and break it, while at work upon the window, and I overheard him lamenting that occurrence.' Here the counsel for the accused reminded the court that a broken foot rule had been found upon the prisoner's person at the time of his apprehension. Within some five minutes, in short, the feelings of judge, jury, and spectators entirely changed; and the poor young fellow at the bar instead of having sentence of death passed upon him, found himself, through my means, set very soon at liberty. He came over to me at the inn to express his sense of my prompt interference, and to beg to know how he might show his gratitude. 'I am not so mean a fellow as I seem,' said he, 'and I hope, by God's blessing, to be yet a credit to the parents to whom I have behaved so ill.' 'What is your real name?' inquired I, struck by a sudden impulse. 'My real name,' replied the young man, blushing deeply, 'is Courtenay; and my home, where I hope to be to-night, is at Cowlees Farm, across the Exe.' And so I had not been called so mysteriously at four o'clock in the morning without a good and sufficient reason after all."

The preservation of life from sudden accident and unforeseen danger is a frequent, and it must be admitted a worthy object of spiritual monition. Many instances will be found in this Magazine. To the illustrations already cited, we add the following instance of—

A LIFE SAVED.

In 1866, an accident occurred on the Metropolitan Railway, by which two persons were crushed to death, and several others very seriously injured. A massive iron girder weighing several tons, which had been suspended over the line prior to being placed in its position, got away from its tackle and fell from a

height of about 30 feet, on to the top of the rear portion of the train, completely smashing the last carriage into splinters, and more or less injuring the whole of the occupants. The following paragraph was cut from a Manchester newspaper, at the time of the accident:—

"There were in the compartment of the carriage in which Mrs. Johnson (one of the killed) sat, two gentlemen; all three are now dead. A third gentleman got into the same compartment at Moorgate Street, and sat down. He says that a presentiment of misfortune came over him, and he rose and apologising to the lady for troubling her to allow him to pass, left the carriage, and went to one in the fore-part of the train. This of course saved his life."

In instances like this (and many are far more numerous than is commonly supposed), the question naturally arises—How is it that such presentiment of misfortune is not communicated to all who are in the like peril? Without pretending to meet all the difficulties which the inquiry suggests, we may in brief answer—All are not equally susceptible to these monitions. All are not equally heedful of them. Not equality, but diversity of endowment in both natural and spiritual gifts, is the law of the Spirit who giveth to every man severally as He will, thus linking all in the golden chain of mutual dependence. Or rather, we belong to an organic whole; are members one of another, bound together by sympathy, for mutual help and service.

In this series of articles (as is our wont), our examples have been taken not from the literature of Spiritualism, but from standard works in general literature—from books and journals of established repute, with no special leanings to Spiritualism, and which relate the facts incidentally, with no view to the establishment of any particular theory. They are representative facts, drawn from widely different and independent sources, and may therefore serve to illustrate the universality of the spiritual agency operating in human affairs, which is indeed co-extensive with our humanity.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS.—A PRESENTIMENT.

We present, in conclusion, a final illustration from the autobiography of Frederick Douglass, entitled, *My Bondage and My Freedom.* He and some fellow-slaves had been plotting their escape. The time for putting their plans into execution was just at hand. The author says:—

"Early that morning we went, as usual, to the field, but with hearts that beat quickly and anxiously. Any one intimately acquainted with us, might have seen that all was not well with us, and that some monster lingered in our thoughts. Our work

that morning was the same as it had been for several days past—drawing out and spreading manure. While thus engaged I had a sudden presentiment which flashed upon me like lightning in a dark night, revealing to the lonely traveller the gulf before, and the enemy behind. I instantly turned to Sandy Jenkins, who was near me, and said to him, '*Sandy, we are betrayed;* something has just told me so.' I felt as sure of it, as if the officers were there in sight. Sandy said, 'Man, dat is strange; but I feel just as you do.' If my mother—then long in her grave—had appeared before me, and told me that we were betrayed, I could not, at that moment, have felt more certain of the fact."

The presentiment proved too true, but forewarned they were forearmed, and enabled to take means which averted the cruel fate which would certainly have otherwise overtaken them.

We think that instances like these may serve to exemplify some of the agencies and methods of Divine Providence in the moral government of the world, and to keep alive and confirm our faith in eternal verities, and particularly in that world of light and love beyond our mortal ken. They evidence the presence and power and ministry of our unseen guardians and helpers, who intervene not idly, but for beneficent ends; whose secret monitions penetrate our souls (and even, if need be, our dull corporeal sense), filling us with deep and solemn and consoling thoughts, whose visits would doubtless be more constant did we give them more cordial welcome and hospitable entertainment. They are the bright ministers of God and grace, who protect us from enemies and perils, temporal and spiritual, we wot not of. As Spenser sings:—

> They for us fight, and watch, and duly ward,
> And their bright squadrons round about us plant,
> And all for love, and nothing for reward:
> O why should heavenly God to man have such regard!

T. S.

THE *DAILY TELEGRAPH* ON "SPIRIT-FORMS."

[SPIRITUALISM seems to have found a new organ in the press, one which, has everybody knows, has "the largest circulation in the world." About a year ago the *Daily Telegraph* published an article by its "special correspondent," on "Spirit-Faces," as witnessed through the mediumship of Miss Florence Cook, and which we reproduced. Its issue of August 12th contains an article, which we give below, from the same gentleman, on "Spirit-Forms," through the mediumship of Mr. Williams, at the houses of Mrs. Fitzgerald and of Mrs. Campbell. The same journal briefly reported the National Conference of Spiritualists at Liverpool last month, and, still more recently, the "special correspondent" has again been among the Spiritualists, "taking notes" at their highly-successful Metropolitan *fête* at the People's Gardens, Willesden, on Wednesday, August 20th, and duly reported in the *Daily Telegraph* the

following day. Really, if our contemporary continues to go a-head at this rate our occupation will soon be gone, and our readers may expect an announcement that "The *Spiritual Magazine* will in future be incorporated in the *Daily* SPIRITUAL *Telegraph*."—ED. *S.M.*]

"About a year ago I contributed to these columns an article on Spirit-Faces, which was to me the source of troubles manifold. In the first place, the inquirers into Spiritualism, whose name I found to be Legion, inundated me with letters, asking me to take them to the house of pretty Miss Blank, the medium. Miss Blank might have been going on till now, holding nightly receptions, without having exhausted her list of self-invited guests. I had but one answer; the lady was a comparative stranger to me, and not a professional medium; *ergo*, the legion must ask some one to chaperone them elsewhere. Spirit-Faces have got comparatively common and almost gone out since I last wrote. We are a long way beyond faces now. Then, again, my second source of trouble was that forthwith, from the date of my writing, the Spiritualists claimed me for their own, as Melancholy did the young gentleman in Gray's Elegy. Though I fancied my paper was only a calm judicial statement of things seen, and I carefully avoided saying whether I was convinced or not, I found myself *nolens volens* enrolled among the initiated, and expected to devote about five evenings out of the seven to *séances*. I did go, and do go still to a great many; so that I feel pretty well posted up in the 'Latest Intelligence' of the spiritual world. But the worst of all is that my own familiar friends, in whom I trusted, have also lifted up their heels against me—I mean metaphorically, of course. 'What's the last new thing in spirits?' they ask me out loud in omnibuses or railway carriages, causing my fellow-travellers to look at me in doubt as to whether I am a licensed victualler or a necromancer. As 'bigots feign belief till they believe,' I really begin to have some doubts myself as to the state of my convictions.

"But I wish to make this paper again a simple statement of things heard and seen—especially seen. I flatter myself the title is a nice weird, ghostly one, calculated to make people feel uncomfortable about the small hours of the morning. Should such be the case—as they say in all prefaces—the utmost hopes of the writer will be realised. When last I communicated my experiences, the ultimate end we had reached was the appearance of a white counterpart of pretty Miss Blank's face at the peephole of a corner cupboard. There were a good many more or less—generally less—successful imitations of this performance in various quarters, and the sensation subsided. Miss B. was still *facile princeps* from the fact that she stood full light—I

mean her spirit-face did—whilst all the others leaned to a more of less dim religious kind of gloom. In a short time, however, Katie—as the familiar of Miss B. was termed—thought she would be able to 'materialise' herself so far as to present the whole form, if we re-arranged the corner cupboard so as to admit of her doing so. Accordingly we opened the door and from it suspended a rug or two opening in the centre, after the fashion of a Bedouin Arab's tent, formed a semicircle, sat and sang Longfellow's 'Footsteps of Angels.' Therein occurs the passage: 'Then the forms of the departed enter at the open door.' And, lo and behold, though we had left Miss B. tied and sealed to her chair, and clad in an ordinary black dress somewhat voluminous as to the skirts, a tall female figure draped classically in white, with bare arms and feet, did enter at the open door, or rather down the centre from between the two rugs, and stood statue-like before us, spoke a few words, and retired; after which we entered the Bedouin tent and found pretty Miss B. with her dress as before, knots and seals secure, and her boots on! This was Form No. 1, the first I had ever seen. It looked as material as myself; and on a subsequent occasion—for I have seen it several times—we took four very good photographic portraits of it by magnesium light. The difficulty I still felt, with the form as with the faces, was that it seemed so thoroughly material and flesh-and-blood like. Perhaps, I thought, the authoress of *The Gates Ajar* is right, and the next condition of things may be more material than we generally think, even to the extent of admitting—as she says—pianofortes among its adjuncts. But I was to see something much more ghostly than this.

"The great fact I notice about Spiritualism is, that it is obeying the occult impetus of all great movements, and steadily going from east to west. From Hackney and Highbury it gravitates towards Belgravia and Tyburnia. I left the wilds of Hackney behind, and neared Hyde Park for my next form. I must again conceal names and localities. I have no desire to advertise mediums, or right to betray persons who have shown me hospitality—and spirit-forms. We arranged ourselves in a semicircle around the curtains which separated the small back drawing room from the large front one, joined hands, sang until we were hoarse as crows, and kept our eyes steadily fixed on an aperture left between the curtains for the faces to show themselves. The room was in blank darkness, and, feeling rather tired of the incantation, I looked over my shoulder into the gloom, and, lo, a shadowy form stood self-illuminated not far from me. At last I had seen it—a good orthodox ghost in white, and visible in the darkness. It was the form of the redoubtable John King himself, who was, I believe, a bold

buccaneer in the flesh, but who looked more like an Arab sheikh in the spirit. He sailed about the room, talked to us, and finally disappeared. Eventually he reappeared behind the curtains, and for a brief space the portière was drawn aside, and the spirit-form was seen lighting up the recumbent figure of the medium, who sat stretched on a sofa apparently in deep trance. It must be borne in mind that we were forming a cordon round the passage from one room to the other during the whole of this time. A trio of 'spirits' generally puts in an appearance at these *séances*. In this case there were John King, whom I had now seen, as well as heard; Katie, the familiar of Miss B.; and a peculiarly lugubrious gentleman named Peter, who, I fancy, has not been seen, but who has several times done me the favour of grasping my hand and hoisting me towards the ceiling, as though he were going to carry me off bodily to spirit-land. I stand some six feet in my boots, and have stepped upon my chair, and still felt the hand coming downwards to me—where from I have no idea. But my latest experiences have still to be told. I was invited a few weeks ago to a very select *séance* indeed, where the same medium was to officiate. This family, who spared no expense in their investigations, had actually got a large handsome cabinet standing in their dining room as a recognised piece of furniture. It was only used, however, on this occasion for the imprisonment of the medium. The evolutions of John King, who soon appeared, all took place outside the cabinet door. He was only 'materialised' to the middle; and, to our utter amazement came up to the table, and apparently *through* the table, into the very middle of the circle, where he disported himself in various ways, keeping up an animated conversation the whole time, and frequently throwing himself into the attitude of a person swimming on his back. He also went upwards as high as the gasalier, and altogether did a good many marvellous things, considering that all this time he presented the appearance of only half a man illuminated by his own light.

"On one occasion only have I been seated next to the medium during the manifestation of any of these forms. At this *séance* I held him firmly by one hand, and a slightly sceptical lady had the other. We never let go for a moment, but during the whole of the sitting while John King, Katie, and Peter were were talking, tiny children's hands were playing with my arm, hands and hair. There were, of course, no children in the room. Peter, the lugubrious, is great at light porterage. I have known him bring a large collection of valuable Sèvres china, and a timepiece with its glass case, from the chimney-piece to the table—no easy task in the light, much less in blank darkness. He also frequently takes down the pictures from the walls and

puts them on the table. Katie winds up a large musical box, and wafts it, while playing, all over the room. Of course we rub our eyes and ask what on earth, if it be on earth, does this mean? I have not—to keep up the diction of my subject—the *ghost* of an idea. If it's conjuring, why don't the mediums say so, and enter the field openly against Messrs. Maskelyne and Cooke and Dr. Lynn? Even if I had a decided opinion about it I should refrain from propounding it here, because, in the first place, it would be an impertinence, and, in the second no conclusion can be arrived at upon testimony alone. People must see for themselves and draw their own inferences. In the meantime the thing, whatever it is, grows and grows upwards. A year ago I had to journey down east to find it. Now I must array myself gorgeously like a Staffordshire miner, and seek the *salons* of the west. The great desideratum, it still appears to me, is that some man with a name in science should examine the matter, honestly resolving to endorse the facts if true, but to expose them mercilessly if there be a loophole for suspicion. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico habetur.* I used to think ghosts big things, but that was before I knew them. I should think no more of meeting a ghost now than a donkey on a dark night, and would infinitely sooner tackle a spirit than a burglar. People's curiosity is roused, and the sooner somebody gets at the truth the better. It is a somewhat irksome task, it is true; but no general principle can be arrived at except by an induction of particulars. Let us be Baconian, even to our ghosts. If they *are* ghosts they are a good deal more substantial than I had thought. If they are not, let somebody, in the name of nineteenth century science, send them off as with the crow of chanticleer, and let us hear no more of spirit-faces or spirit-forms."

AN ULTRAMONTANE VIEW OF SPIRITUALISM SIXTEEN YEARS AGO.

III.

[We commend this article to the careful attention of those who may still think that the phenomena of Spiritualism may possibly be explained on some mechanical or mechanico-physiological principle, or on some theory of the purely natural forces. It is interesting to note that the hypotheses which would account for all these phenomena as simply the product of a nervous epidemic, which has been recently revived among us, had been broached on the Continent of Europe, and is here refuted, sixteen years

ago; as it had been broached in the United States by Dr. Richmond, and refuted by Professor Brittan, five years previously.—Ed. *S. M.*]

THE PHENOMENA, PHYSICAL AND MORAL.

"Before we enumerate and discuss the various hypotheses which have been put forth with a view to explain the phenomena of Modern Necromancy, we ask the reader's courteous attention to two brief and simple considerations, one of which has to do with the phenomena themselves, and the other has reference to the causes which are to explain them. As regards the phenomena, it is fit to observe, that they naturally group themselves into two grand categories, that is, into phenomena purely physical, and into others which belong to the moral order. To the first category, for example, belong all those movements of rotation, change of place and of other sorts, which we observe in the tables and in other inert bodies, and which may be caused by merely physical influences, as for example mechanical impulses, electric currents, attractions and the like. To the second category are referred all those effects which give a manifest token of a moral agent, that is, one endowed with intelligence and free will. And of this kind are not only speaking and answering, or the expressing a thought, by making knockings at measured intervals, by combining alphabetical signs or writing them with a pencil, but also every other order of motions or of signs which give proof of intelligence, as for instance obedience to a command, changing place with design, performance of musical signs, and others of a similar character: for as the intelligence of man is not manifested and made evident only by the word spoken or written, but by an infinite number of movements and gestures of the body, which proceeding from the intelligence bear the manifest stamp of their principle: so the same may be said of the moving principle of the tables, of whatever nature it may be. With regard to the causes which have to explain the phenomena two conditions are to be noticed, which they ought to fulfil to attain this end. The first is, that they should render an adequate account, not of some of the facts only, but of all: the other is, that we should not bring forward these causes as possible merely, but as the real ones. If the second of these requisites is wanting, the problem would only be resolved in a hypothetical and abstract manner: that is to say, we should demonstrate that the phenomena *may* be produced possibly by such and such a cause, but not that they *are* really so. And if the first of these essentials is defective, the problem would only be half resolved. Here, however, let it be remarked that on the one hand it is not at all necessary that all the phenomena should be ascribed to one

cause only, whilst rather their varied multiplicity seems to demand for itself just as varied a multiplicity of causes; but, on the other hand, it is highly probable that in reality all the causes do derive from one principle only, if we regard their simultaneousness and their connection one with the other, and how they have developed themselves one from another with a manifest continuity of action and identity of object. Having said thus much, let us now enter upon the subject, endeavouring to investigate what may be the causes which render an adequate account of the proposed phenomena."

HYPOTHESES OF IMPOSTURE AND HALLUCINATION.

"Now, the answer to such a question will appear of its own accord to spring out of the brief examination which we shall have occasion to make of the principal opinions which have been put forth by those who have undertaken to resolve the question. In the first place, however, we must put aside out of the number of those opinions, those which do not explain but rather deny the facts. Such is, for example, the opinion of those who take all the wonderful tales which have been told about the tables and the mediums in a bundle, and without giving themselves any more trouble to examine them, attribute them all without exception to imposture, deceit, and the illusions of charlatans. We say *without exception*, for no one doubts, and we are very far from denying that several, nay, many of the facts which are narrated, may be the fruit of imposture. Who does not know that there is not a more ancient art in every country than that of those who trade upon public credulity, and sharpen their wits in a thousand most crafty ways, so as to impose upon, not only the foolish who are always in the majority, but sometimes also even upon the knowing? Who is not also aware that it is their custom, we might rather say the precept of their art, to adapt itself to the time, to find out the prevailing taste and epidemic of the time, and as soon as anything new or strange arises which attracts the eyes of the world, they immediately rise and counterfeit its appearance, in order that the true giving some credit to the false, the latter may be exposed to view with greater safety. It is then exceedingly probable that in this affair also the charlatans have played their tricks on more than one occasion, and seeing the noise which the spirits and tables were making, they have endeavoured by their ingenuity to simulate their results: and if we had time we could adduce more than one instance of this, in which the imposture was most clearly established, and the spirits which were running wild through the houses were brought to their senses by the police officers,

without any more formal exercise than that of the staff. But to maintain, on the contrary, that everything is simple imposture, is to fall into an absurdity; it is to fall from Scylla into Charybdis, encountering difficulties and prodigies much more incredible than are those which are not explained by this proceeding, but simply cut short. In fact, those who are of this opinion must, in order to sustain it, deny at one stroke the veracity of all the experiments, and the authority of the numberless and most respectable witnesses who affirm the reality of the phenomena as things only too true; they must call half the world blockheads, they must in a word refuse henceforward all credit in human authority: since if in this case the world is divided into two parties, one of which is the smaller and composed of the deceivers, and the other, which is by far the greater and composed of the deceived, who is there that does not suspect that the same may happen in an infinity of other cases? Besides all this, they ought to explain among other things, how it has ever happened that the secret of this imposture, which is practised in every part of the world by so many thousands of mediums (who are for the most part women, that is to say of that chattering sex which has greater difficulty in keeping a secret than the spirit itself) has never leaked out, has escaped the lynx-eyed investigations of so many dispassionate and sagacious witnesses, and up to this day keeps on producing wonders which very far surpass all that the most famous jugglers and charmers have ever done.

"Imposture, like every occult art, is always the monopoly of the few, nor has it ever any very long success: and the more common it becomes, the more does it lose its credit and efficacy, because the deceit is sooner or later found out. Besides, we ought to consider well the nature and history of man; in the same way as every lie supposes a truth, and owes its impure birth to a foul mixture of truth and error, so every imposture supposes a reality of which it is the spurious image: and as there has never perhaps existed any order of facts truly extraordinary and marvellous, which did not find its counterfeit, so there has never been an imposture which had not its corresponding order of true facts. Hence the discovery of deceit in some cases, so far from showing that all are false, serves the rather to prove that there are some which are true and real. This is the case also in the present question; and confirms in this manner what is quite manifest already, namely, how unreasonable a thing it is to wish to ascribe to mere trickery and fraud all the phenomena of modern necromancy, which are of so frequent occurrence, so public, and so extraordinary.

"The same condemnation we must make of that other

opinion, which pretends to explain everything by 'hallucination.' According to this opinion it is not now the juggler who shows us by means of his machinations the moon in a well (to use a common phrase) by making an effect which is very simple and natural in itself appear miraculous; but it is a disease of the imagination or of the senses which illudes people, and makes them fancy that they see really certain objects, which have no other existence after all than in their own diseased brains. According to this opinion, the phenomena of necromancy have not the slightest objective reality; the tables do not really turn, dance or speak; the pencils of the tripod do not really write; the air is not really struck by sounds and blows; there is nothing in fact in the surrounding objects which departs from its wonted course and order. The disorder and strangeness is entirely in our eyes, ears and senses, the nerves and organs of which being from time to time invaded by some unknown, vicious and foolish humour, produce all these phantasmagoria. It will seem incredible that anyone can have put forth seriously an explanation of this sort, and maintain that all who have practised and witnessed in these days the marvels of the tables, were all of them simply labouring under hallucination: that in the circles of the Spiritualists, the mediums and the spectators, the actors and those acted upon, were all of them suddenly and at the same time affected with a certain giddiness of the senses and of the intellectual powers, which made them fancy they saw those wonders of table-turnings and dancings, of knockings, sounds, light, and so forth. So it is, however: this doctrine has been gravely propounded by a learned member of the Institute of France, M. Littré, in an article written in that respectable periodical, *La Révue des Deux Mondes*. If any one doubts it, let him read it: and if he does not happen to be himself attacked by some unfortunate hallucination all of a sudden, he will see that the article which we speak of contains the following statement made with all the pomp of science and with all the graces of erudition.

"It asserts, then, that all the recent phenomena of the tables and spirits, as well as those which in past ages were attributed to magic, are nothing else than epidemic hallucinations, which at intervals seize upon the human race, causing ravages in the intelligence of men just in the same way as pestilences do in their bodies. And as epidemic diseases are caused in the human body by certain universal physical influences of malaria and of miasmata and unseasonable weather and so forth, so in the same way certain moral influences of opinions, beliefs and fears predominating at given times in society give rise to, or at least greatly promote and favour those disturbances of the nervous

system in society at large, from which these hallucinations immediately spring up. And if we ask what are the sad influences which in these days have so powerful an influence in altering the nerves and turning the heads of so many victims, M. Littré shall answer in his own words:—'Our epoch, says he, 'is an epoch of revolutions. Considerable disturbances have at short intervals troubled society, inspired some with unheard-of terrors, others with unbounded hopes. In this state the nervous system has become more susceptible than it was before. On the other hand, when the very groundwork of society seemed to be quaking, many minds returned to religious ideas with anxiety as towards a refuge, and this return was not unmixed with some alloy: the return was made in presence of the opposite ideas which preserve their ascendancy and in presence of scientific ideas which have inspired a great respect even in those who dread their influence. Here we have a concourse of circumstances which must have favoured the contemporary explosion.'

"According to this author, social revolutions and a new start of religious piety, tempered, however, by a little scepticism and a little science, are the influences which have brought forth this monster of universal hallucination which has given rise to all the tales of the spirits and of the tables: in which, in fact, if we make but a very slight examination, we shall, without any difficulty, find out the marks of those four generating elements. Some one will perhaps demand the proofs by which M. Littré demonstrates or at least renders probable this which he calls the 'spontaneous theory' of the alleged phenomena. The sum of all his reasoning is this; that it is matter of observation that whenever these phenomena happen the agents or the patients suffer nervous perturbations, which may be produced not only by physical and external agents but also by internal changes and disorders, whether of the organism or of the intelligence. Now the nervous perturbations cause hallucination naturally; and when this has once taken possession of a person there is no portent which he does not fancy he sees, there is no folly which he will not believe. The hallucination may take according to circumstances an infinite variety of forms; and under one and the same form it may be sporadic or epidemic. As instances of the epidemic form we may cite the hallucinations of the witches of the middle ages, of the Camisards in the time of Louis XIV., of the convulsionary Jansenists of St. Medard, and such is at the present day the illusion of the speaking tables and spirit-rappings, which as is seen from its historical comparison does not differ in disposition, and therefore in origin from the preceding.

"Here ends the demonstration of this able philosopher, and if any person does not consider himself satisfied with it, so it

must be. We shall not outrage the good sense of our readers by stopping to confute those empty and inconclusive phrases with which M. Littré endeavours rather to cover the evident absurdity of his paradox than to prove it. Suffice it to observe, that if in the present matter we are obliged to admit so portentous and universal a hallucination, the evidence of the senses, and the authority of human testimony would lose all value entirely, nor would there be any effect whatever coming under the cognisance of the senses the reality of which we might not deny, by attributing it to a mere illusion of diseased nerves and a raving mind. Sad would the world be really if the contagion of madness and of hallucination were so to impregnate the air we breathe, and to cause such an intellectual slaughter among men as did the famous plague of the fourteenth century, the sweating sickness of the fifteenth, and in our own days the cholera, which are the very examples brought forward by M. Littré. Who might not fear every moment that he was the victim of this giddiness and swimming in the head? And, what is worse, without being at all aware of it. For, among the strange qualities of this new and monstrous variety of hallucination which M. Littré has discovered, there is this one also, *viz.*, that whilst in the others the bystanders or the patient himself perceive the coming on of the fits or of the nervous crisis which produce them, here, on the contrary, there is nothing of the sort: no one ever knows when another is in his senses or is foolish, when his own senses pass from the watching to the dreamy state or from sanity to delirium; and if it were not for M. Littré the world would still not be aware that it had seen and perceived these things whilst labouring under a delirium, when it believed that it really saw the tables turn and heard the spirit-rappings. Very well: that there are at this time (and, perhaps, more so now than formerly) nervous maladies, frenzied brains, delirious fancies, hallucinations, monomania, and follies of every kind we know only too well: that in the table and spirit-games, more than one person has been the victim of hallucination is a thing very probable; but that all this table-turning and noise of spirits is nothing else than a vain phantasmagoria of deluded minds, propagated by some sort of mysterious contagion, this is too much to believe. Hallucinations are, thank God, a much more rare disease than M. Littré makes them out to be; and we are willing rather to believe for the honour of the human race, that the brain of the illustrious academician alone was affected by some giddiness when he wrote these things, than that of the innumerable attestors of the necromantic phenomena, to whom he is so very kind in dispensing the patent of hallucination—that is to say, of little less than madness."

ELECTRICAL, MECHANICAL, AND PHYSIOLOGICAL THEORIES.

"We will then pass over these opinions, and pre-supposing that the facts are substantially and in the main true, as we began by saying, if not in every case (where, possibly, some imposture and hallucination may have crept in),—and this cannot now be doubted after the so many and grave testimonies which we have of them from all parts,—let us come to the discussion of the opinions which have been brought forward to explain them. Following the well known axiom that we have not to adduce supernatural causes when the natural are sufficient, nor natural agents of a new sort, when those which are already known are sufficient, the first explanations which were brought by the learned on the appearance of the American phenomena were drawn from natural philosophy and from those forces and agents with which science has long been familiar. Electricity, that mysterious worker of so many other marvels, was immediately invoked to give some account of this also. The table-turning and that of other bodies was taken for one of the phenomena of electrical rotation, perhaps similar to the rotation of the discs discovered by Arago: and it was said to be produced by electric currents springing from the hands of the operators, who arranged themselves in a circle, and placed them upon the rotating body. And as electricity invades everything, it was not difficult to find in some cases some symptoms of it, whether in the persons of the experimenters or in the rotating bodies. But in proportion as the experiments and the phenomena increased in number, the electrical explanation instead of finding confirmation had to sustain a thousand oppositions; and the facts in short, showed themselves so rebellious against every law of dynamical and statistical electricity, that this hypothesis was obliged to be entirely given up.

"The mechanical explanation met with better fortune, and this came into the arena under the protection of some of the most celebrated men of science—such as Foucault, Babinet, Chevreul, Orioli, Faraday, and after them many others. According to Babinet, who has treated of the question of table-turning in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* on more than one occasion, the motion is transmitted to the tables by the excessively slight and concordant influence of the hands which are placed upon them and lightly press them. In fact, the prolonged tension of the arm produces a nervous trembling and a series of insensible vibrations in the muscular system of each operator; these vibrations, by means of the contact of the hands, are communicated from one to the other and mutually reinforce one another; and when they arrive at a general agreement, the impulses, although excessively

slight, acquire, by all taking place at the same time and by the nascent state in which they are, a marvellous power, capable, he says, of producing 'very energetic movements.' To this reason, which is purely mechanical, add the physiological influence which the imagination, the will, or even the thought of motion only exert in producing motion by communicating to the organs a spontaneous, although an unobserved impulse, as we see in the experiments of the pendulum of Chevreul, and we shall have quite enough (according to those excellent authors) to give an account of the table-movements, even of those which are the most singular and powerful. This explanation might have seemed probable and sufficient at the beginning, when it was only a question of simple rotation of tables or of other light bodies, that is to say, bodies which did not offer any great resistance to motion, either on account of smallness of size or slightness of form and instability of equilibrium; and this motion once produced it was easy to preserve and increase and direct it, now in a right line, now in a circle or otherwise. This explanation might hold good within certain limits, that is, as long as there did not appear too great a disproportion between the nature or the intensity of the effects produced, and the power of the cause to which they were attributed; but it showed itself very insufficient in accounting for the phenomena as soon as they increased in number and muitiplied themselves. Who, in fact, could ever believe that the aggregate of the very slight nervous tremblings, or gentle purpose exerted by several hands (or even of as many as you will), would be sufficient to produce those very rapid rotations, those runnings, those dartings, those fearful throwing themselves about, that raising themselves up, that resisting and forcible upsetting of great heavy tables, naturally inert, as well on account of the great mass of their substance as of the steadiness of their equilibrium, with all those other marvellous gymnastic forces, of which the tables have so often given a spectacle? Who will be disposed to believe that a man, by merely placing or slightly pressing his fingers upon a body, can infuse into it such a power of motion as he would hardly be able to do if he were to push it with all the strength of his arms.

"But, even if all this should be believed, the problem would still be far enough from being solved; for the tables not only turn and move themselves like living bodies, but speak, and answer, and divine, by striking with the feet strokes by design and according to measure, or by signing among the numbers and alphabetical characters which are presented to them those which are suitable to form the answer, or by moving the pencils fixed to their foot, or by making other gestures and actions proper to animated and intelligent beings. Now, how are all

these facts explained by any mechanical or mechanico-physiological explanation? M. Babinet, who does not choose to admit any other cause besides that of muscular impulses, gets out of the difficulty in two words, and with a marvellous ease. To the question, 'Are the indications of the table intelligent?' he does not for a moment hesitate to answer 'Yes;' and for this reason, he says, 'Because it answers under the intelligent influence of the imposed fingers:' as if he were talking of nothing else than sweeping the finger over the keyboard of a pianoforte.

"More facetious still is Chevreul, who in his book *De la Baguette Divinatoire, du Pendule Explorateur, et des Tables Tournants* (Paris, 1854), endeavouring to apply to table-turning the mechanico-physiological theory by which he explains the phenomena of the divining-rod and of the seeking-pendulum, does not hesitate at all to extend the same theory to the speaking and knocking of the tables; and this is his mode of argument: 'The faculty,' he says, at p. 224, 'of making a table knock with one or other of its feet, when once acquired, as also the faith in the intelligence of that table. I conceive how a question addressed to that table awakens in the person who is acting upon it, without his being conscious of it, a thought, the consequence of which is the muscular movement capable of making one of the feet of the table strike in conformity with the sense of the answer which appears the most probable to that person.' Do you wish, then, to know how to set about it in order to make the tables talk and speak? Acquire for yourself, first of all, the faculty of making the table knock with a foot; then, have lively faith in the intelligence of the table, and the table under your fingers will be ready to answer every question; because, then, as soon as ever you have put the question, your thought will form an answer of its own accord. To this thought, then, will naturally follow a muscular movement which will be sufficient to raise the table and make it strike with its foot, and the strokes of the foot will be just enough to express the answer of the thought and to satisfy the demand.

"You will, perhaps, still ask: 'But how and whence is this faculty of making the table strike acquired? for here is the very knot of the problem. Besides, how can I have a firm faith in so monstrous an absurdity as the intelligence of a table; and especially when you tell me that this intelligence has nothing to do at all with the phenomena, but that it is altogether the play of my thought and my muscles? And these muscles of my fingers placed gently upon the table, how can they possibly impress upon it so strong and singular a motion as is that of its raising itself and striking with its foot; and especially so when the impulse which these muscles receive from

the presence of the thought must be so gentle and insensible as to escape the consciousness entirely, not to say every command of the will?' But you will in vain expect that M. Chevreul will answer these and not a few other very difficult questions which you might put to him; nor, indeed, can he do it. And, if he were to give you an answer, it would still be found to be very far from an adequate solution of the phenomena of the tables. In fact, that theory of his, as well as that of M. Babinet and of others, always supposes that there is contact, nay pressure, however slight it be, of the hands upon the table which turns or speaks. Now it is perfectly well known that the tables sometimes are moved, rise and dance, and speak without their being touched at all, either with the hand or with any instrument, but in obedience to a simple signal of the hand made at a distance, or even to the voice alone or the will of the medium. In such a case as this, then, what explanation can the mechanical theory give? and what answer can it make about so many other marvels which so frequently accompany the turning and the speaking of tables? To take a single instance, how does it explain those invisible knockings which are heard in the air, on the walls, and on glass utensils, without the agency of any visible cause? Where are the concordant motions of the muscles, or the unconscious impulses of the thought, which M. Babinet speaks of?

"It is very true that here also M. Babinet finds, in the articles cited above, the easiest way of getting out of his difficulty, either by denying off hand the facts which do not square with his theory, or by attributing them to imposture and trickery. To this cause he attributes the invisible knockings and rappings in the American phenomena, explaining them by ventriloquism. Hence, as the juggler is able to make certain acoustic tricks and deceptions, he immediately argues that all the excitement produced in America, by the knockings and rappings, is nothing in the world else than a grand attack upon the credulity of the world, practised by thousands of ventriloquists, who have all of a sudden become proficients in an art which is always difficult and confined to a few persons; and who make a variety of feigned sounds by their throats and lungs, and so have given themselves up to deceiving the world, and this so successfully that people have never yet been able to detect the fraud, not even since M. Babinet has put them on the look-out. As regards the fact that the tables turn and lift themselves upon their feet, or otherwise move themselves without any contact, this, he says, is a fable—an absurdity—an impossible thing. 'We must banish into the realm of fiction all that has been said of actions exercised at a distance, and of movements communi-

cated to the table without contact. This is simply impossible—as impossible as perpetual motion.' These are his words. And he brings forward two proofs of this impossibility, which he deems invincible—one of fact and the other of principle.

"The argument from fact is taken from an experiment of Count d'Ourches and of Faraday; who, in order to see whether the impulse of the hand is necessary to place the table in motion, interposed between it and the fingers of the operators placed above it a thin layer of talc in powder or some leaves of mica, in order that by preventing the sticking of the fingers to the table they might also prevent the communication of movement. The table then remained immoveable, from this therefore Babinet infers it is impossible that any one can move the table without touching it. But, gently, Mr. Professor! in good logic, all that you can infer is, that here is one case in which the table did not move without contact. And who says that there may not be many such cases? But they do not at all destroy the fact of their being so many others, no less sure and authentic, in which the tables were moved without contact. The other argument, which is one *à priori*, is not a whit more sound than the preceding. The thing is impossible, says he, because it is in contradiction to the laws of nature, 'when there is no example of motion produced without any external force in operation.' Very good; but this agent, external or extrinsic to the table moved, is it necessary that it be visible? Is the world altogether a thing palpable to our senses; and does there not exist, perchance, in created nature, some invisible agent capable of impressing such motion, which, in such a case, will appear to be in opposition to the ordinary laws of inert nature, but will not really be outside the circle of the laws imposed by the Creator on universal nature?

"The philosopher who does not know how to carry his view beyond the confines of the material world in which his science moves will certainly be unable to give any account of wonders of this sort; and when he finds himself pressed by the too evident reality of the facts (and facts are stubborn things, says the proverb), he will be obliged, in explaining them, either to fall into ridiculous absurdities, or to be sceptical and refuse all faith in his own theories; or, at least, confessing his own ignorance, shut himself up in a silence more humiliating than otherwise; and this is exactly the part which many scientific men have taken in this matter, who found themselves, on the one hand, unable to give a good reason for the undeniable marvels of the tables and of the spirits by means of the principles of physical philosophy alone, and, on the other hand, did not choose to lift themselves above matter into a world which they

don't believe in or know anything about; and so they preferred not troubling themselves about these things, and being entirely silent, as the best course which they could take under the circumstances. As this is the case, we will respect their silence and pass on."

THE MAGNETIC HYPOTHESIS.

"As, therefore, the agents and the laws of ordinary physics were found insufficient to explain all the phenomena of modern necromancy, every day getting more remarkable, many persons betook themselves to seeking for their origin and cause in a more recondite sphere, but, however, without departing from the circle of natural causes; and as the field of the unknown has no boundaries, and gives free scope to all the dreams of fancy, it would be impossible to tell the number of the extraordinary hypotheses and theories which were broached in order to decipher the great enigma. We should be mad were we to follow every one of these scientific shams, which were generally so vain and ephemeral, that like bubbles in water as soon as they rose to the surface they burst, having nothing more solid about them than that little bit of rather scientific jargon which was often unintelligible to the authors themselves, and which served to cover the emptiness of their substance. However, among such a number, there was one which obtained fame and authority, and has still some credit with many people. This is the magnetic hypothesis, which attributes the wonders of the tables and of the spirits to the same principle to which are ascribed the no less extraordinary phenomena of animal magnetism; and, indeed, no one can deny that there are very singular likenesses between the two classes of phenomena. As the magnetiser exerts a hidden action upon the person magnetised by him, which is powerful and of marvellous efficacy, so does the medium exert an influence upon the inert matter of the tables. In the first case, it is the will, according to the magnetologists, which is the principal and necessary fountain of the magnetic virtue; and such is it also in the second; and, as the magnetiser can often do without manipulations and magnetic processes, a single command being enough to set the subject influenced to sleep, so the medium can make the tables turn and speak with only the command of the voice and of the mind, without touching them at all. The lucid somnambulist has, or supposes that he has, the faculty of seeing hidden things and at such a distance that the visual organs cannot reach them; so the medium has the faculty of moving about surrounding objects, acting upon them at a distance and without any contact with organs of motion. Finally, if the magnetisers are often excellent mediums, or *vice versa*, it often

happens, in the same manner, that the mediums themselves, and especially the writing and speaking mediums, offer in the very act of their experiments the same nervous paroxysms and the same pathological phenomena which are seen in magnetic somnambulists.

"Now, although animal magnetism, considered *in genere*, is thought by many persons to be the only and true principle of the necromatic phenomena, they are, nevertheless, very far from being agreed upon the manner of applying this principle to them. And no wonder; for the science of zoomagnetism, as its very champions confess, is still in its infancy: or, rather, it seems to us it has still to be born, if ever it is to have that good fortune. The uncertainty, therefore, and the disagreement which reigns among the masters of magnetism in explaining the magnetic effects, is much more the case with regard to the necromantic phenomena. We shall, however, here state that which we can collect most explicitly and is most commonly received of the various opinions of the magnetists. The human mind, according to their opinions, by means of the nervous fluid (or vital, biotic, magnetic, zoomagnetic, sympathetic, cerebral fluid, or by whatever other name you please to call it), not only moves and governs its own body, but, by causing that fluid to depart out of itself and by directing it towards another living body, it is able to exercise upon the nervous system of the latter such an influence and mastery as to produce those marvellous effects which are comprised under the term 'Animal Magnetism.' Now, if the will, and the fluid which serves it as its immediate servant, possess, and are able to exert this magnetic influence, under certain conditions, upon living bodies, why may they not also be able to operate in some similar manner, upon inert bodies? Supposing, then, that the will of one or more operators sends out of its own organic body its nervous fluid, and directs it upon a table, and concentrates it there, this table will become, after the invasion of this magnetic power, the most docile instrument of that will—no less so, in fact, than is the hand, or the foot, or any other member of the body which pertains to it; and not only will it be able to turn, to lift itself up, to change its place, and move in a hundred other ways, but it will be enabled also to speak, to answer, write, and give other proofs of intelligence, just as does the hand, which, when moved by the will or by means of the fluid, continually produces as many signs of intelligence as are the commands of the intelligent principle in obedience to which it acts. External and inanimate bodies in this way come to partake of human life; they receive and send on a reverberation of the thought, and take, so to speak, the impression of the spirit which possesses them. Nay, who knows

(adds one of these reasoners) that matter itself, under the influence of that fluid, does not come really to spiritualise itself? Who shall say that magnetism does not awaken in matter the dormant power of thought, and transmute it into a personal existence? Since, in fact, if the brain thinks, it owes this power to nothing else than to the exquisite elaboration of the nervous substance and of the fluid of which it is composed. Now, if this fluid, radiating from a brain exuberant with vital spirits (and better still, if many brains conspire together with convergent "effluences")—if this fluid, say they, should insinuate itself into the very fibres of a table, why will it not be able to communicate to it life and thought? All is living in nature; all partakes, more or less, of the universal life of the great cosmos; but in order that brute matter be awakened out of the torpor of that inert sleep in which it lies, and ascend to thought, which is the highest grade of vitality, all that is required is, that it be invaded by this most subtle and marvellous magnetic fluid, which is the vehicle and universal minister of life.

"Thus do these profound thinkers discourse; and in the prodigies of the tables they salute the aurora of a new philosophical age, which will reveal to the world the great mystery of life, about which so many minds have hitherto been vainly puzzling themselves. We shall not give ourselves or our readers the trouble of confuting either the gross materialism of these views—according to which a little magnetic fluid is sufficient to set wood thinking (and to think such follies one must really have a wooden head)—or the little more refined materialism of those who gratuitously arrogate to the will the power of acting, by means of a fluid only, upon external bodies. As regards the former, the celebrated derision which the venerable Nestor of modern physical science, Humboldt, made of these things, in a letter to M. Jobard, and which ran through the journals of all Europe, is the best reply which can be made to them. With respect to the latter, besides the fact of their doctrine being altogether wanting in proof, it contradicts, in the first place, all the hitherto known and ascertained laws of physics and physiology—on which account Babinet, among natural philosophers, and Littré among physiologists, have the greatest reason for opposing it as false and absurd. In the second place, it contradicts (as we shall have occasion to show further on) all the principles of true philosophy regarding the soul, its relations to the body, and the unity and order of the organic life; and finally, it contradicts those very phenomena which it seeks to explain. In fact, if the will, and the nervous fluid emitted from it, were the moving principle of the tables, they never could, in their motions and speakings, do otherwise than obey the will

itself, and they would always be (according to the phrase of Gasparin, one of the most strenuous defenders of this hypothesis) a faithful echo of the thought which governs them. But if sometimes, through inertia or stupidity (for we must remember they are only tables), they should happen to fail in obeying the command, they would never, however, be capable of breaking out into acts of positive rebellion, and much less would they, of their own accord, do or say things which are not, and cannot be, in the mind of the enchanter. Now this has happened hundreds of times; and if any one will take the trouble to go over the very few necromantic facts which we have brought forward as examples, he will find more than one of such character. The tables once set dancing have done such unheard-of and unexpected extravagances, as not only to astound, but to terrify, even all the bystanders, and the mediums too. They have divined things utterly unknown to the latter; they have given answers which had never come into the mind of the mediums, and were entirely opposed to their intentions; and a hundred other facts of a similar nature. Now, how are we to explain all this by the influence of the will and the reverberation of the thought? If there were nothing else, then the facts themselves would be sufficient to give the lie to the magnetic hypothesis, and to show its insufficiency: whence it follows that we have to exclude it, considering that, as we said at the beginning of this article, we are not to embrace every hypothesis which is able to explain certain facts only well or ill; but that hypothesis only which explains them all is to be admitted as the true and adequate reason of the necromantic phenomena. Nor should we have anything now to say concerning the applications of the magnetic theory to Neospiritualism, if it were not that a new doctrine presents itself, which has been recently brought forward by an excellent Catholic periodical of Germany, with a view of making the table-turnings and the communications with spirits agree with magnetism. But we are obliged to put off treating upon this subject, and upon what we have still to say respecting modern necromancy, till the next article, as this has already perhaps exceeded the limits which a wish not to tire our courteous readers has set to us."

Magazine Articles for July.—The *Journal of Mental Science* has an article on "Consciousness and Unconscious Cerebration," by W. G. Davies, B.D. The *British Quarterly Review* contains an article on "Miracles, Visions, and Revelations." The *Theological Review* has a second article on "The Life after Death," by Frances Power Cobbe, and like her first article, in last October number of the same Review, is full of interest.

GHOSTS AND HAUNTED HOUSES.

[The following article from *Notes and Queries*, for April 5, is furnished to our contemporary by Mr. T. Westwood, of Brussels, who observes that the brief narratives were communicated to him by a friend in Belgium, who presents them "not as irrefragable facts, of course, but merely as faithful reports and impressions, as far as he is concerned."]

A HAUNTED HOUSE IN BRUSSELS.

"The superstition of haunted houses is not of frequent occurrence in Belgium. Even in the old Flemish towns, where solemn nooks, grim shadows, and lugubrious legends of a credulous past abound, a haunted house is a rarity. Modernised Brussels, however, from which antiquity and superstition have both been well-nigh banished, possesses one. It stands in that part of the upper town called the 'Quartier Léopold,' and is not noticeable externally, or suggestive of weird associations, having been cast by its architect in the same monotonous mould as its congeners. It was the property of a learned professor, who occupied it himself, with the exception of a set of rooms, which a bill in the fan-light over the street-door announced were to be let furnished. I am ocular witness that for five-and-twenty years the bill was never taken down. Lodgers there were a many, the situation being attractive, but never one that remained over the second day; for no sooner was the lodger installed than he began to feel an uncontrollable desire to cancel his agreement, and be quit of the house. The more plucky and pertinacious held out a trifle longer than the rest, but the result was invariable in all cases. One would have said an invisible tenant was already in possession, who resented the intrusion of strangers, and expelled them by an occult effort of will. The ghostliness went no further than this, and was unaccompanied, as far as I know, by any alarming sights or sounds.

"Some declared the professor himself to be at the root of the mystery. I knew him well by sight. His appearance was certainly against him. He was a living skeleton, yellow, haggard, hatchet-faced, mere cuticle and cartilage. He had a wife and daughter, but they were a forlorn pair. After a sickly season the wife died. Somewhat later I saw a long narrow coffin carried in at the door—it was the daughter's; and, finally, the professor died also, and went to his grave, the malicious insinuated, without a mourner. Since his decease the cobwebs have covered his window-panes, and the grass overgrown his threshold, but still in the fan-light may be seen the immemorial yellow *affiche*, 'Appartement garni à louer présentement.'

"I once went to look at this apartment myself, though not on my own behalf. The professor received me, and after showing

the rooms, which had a depressing appearance, he proceeded in a peculiar, far-away voice, that seemed on the outside of him, to lay down certain conditions and restrictions of an unusual character. While combating these, I became conscious of a rising desire to curtail the interview, and escape from the room and the professor's presence. Was this the current rumour influencing my imagination, or was the unseen tenant of the apartment already at work on me, with his peremptory notice to quit? Whatever the cause, my stay was of the briefest, and my impatience to be gone had probably betrayed itself, for as I went down the stair I heard a husky, rattle-snake sort of sibillation from the upper landing.

"I may add that, coming home one night by a side street which commands a view of the back of the professor's premises, I observed an upper window illuminated. As he and his were all dead and gone at that time, and the house shut up, it struck me as singular. The light, too, was singular in itself, being dull, uniform, and without radiation—not such as would proceed from lamp or candle. A policeman in the street attributed it to a reflection from some neighbouring window, but as the hour was late, and no other light visible in any direction, the solution failed to satisfy me. I should not, however, have given the circumstance further thought had it not brought to my mind an incident, analogous in character, connected with a so-called haunted house in England—in the county of Somerset—that I had heard of long ago. The following is my record of it:—

THE LUMINOUS CHAMBER.

"In the year 1840 I was detained for several months in the sleepy old town of Taunton. My chief associate during that time was a fox-hunting squire—a bluff, hearty, genial type of his order, with just sufficient intellectuality to temper his animal exuberance. Many were our merry rides among the thorpes and hamlets of pleasant Somersetshire; and it was in one these excursions, while the evening sky was like molten copper, and a fiery March wind coursed, like a race-horse, over the open downs that he related to me the story of what he called his Luminous Chamber.

"Coming back from the hunt, after dark, he said he had frequently observed a central window, in an old hall not far from the roadside, illuminated. All the other windows were dark, but from this one a wan, dreary light was visible; and as the owners had deserted the place, and he knew it had no occupant, the lighted window became a puzzle to him.

"On one occasion, having a brother squire with him, and both carrying good store of port wine under their girdles, they

declared they would solve the mystery of the Luminous Chamber then and there. The lodge was still tenanted by an aged porter; him they roused up, and after some delay, having obtained a lantern, and the keys of the hall, they proceeded to make their entry. Before opening the great door, however, my squire averred he had made careful inspection of the front of the house from the lawn. Sure enough, the central window was illuminated—an eerie, forlorn-looking light, made it stand out in contrast to the rest—a dismal light, that seemed to have nothing in common with the world, or the life that is. The two squires visited all the other rooms, leaving the luminous room till the last. There was nothing noticeable in any of them: they were totally obscure. But on entering the luminous room a marked change was perceptible. The light in it was not full, but sufficiently so beneath them to distinguish its various articles of furniture, which were common and scanty enough. What struck them most was the uniform diffusion of the light; it was as strong *under* the table as *on* the table, so that no single object projected any shadow on the floor, nor did they themselves project any shadow. Looking into a great mirror over the mantel-piece, nothing could be weirder, the squire declared, than the reflection in it of the dim, wan-lighted chamber, and of the two awe-stricken faces that glared on them from the midst—his own and and his companion's. He told me, too, that he had not been many seconds in the room before a sick faintness stole over him, a feeling—such was his expression, I remember—as if his life *were being sucked out of him.* His friend owned afterwards to a similar sensation. The upshot of it was that both squires decamped, crest-fallen, and made no further attempt at solving the mystery.

"It had always been the same, the old porter grumbled; the family had never occupied the room, but there were no ghosts—*the room had a light of its own.*

"A less sceptical spirit might have opined that the room was *full* of ghosts—an awful conclave—viewless, inscrutable, but from whom emanated that deathly and deadly luminousness.

"My squires must have gone the way of all squires ere this. 'After life's fitful fever,' do they 'sleep well?' Or have they both been 'sucked' into the luminous medium, as a penalty for their intrusion?

THE SHUDDER.

"The only other occasion on which I came directly and personally under ghostly influences, or what appeared to be such was the following:—

"In a lonely neighbourhood, on the verge of Enfield Chase,

stands an old house, much beaten by wind and weather. It was inhabited, when I knew it, by two elderly people, maiden sisters, with whom I had some acquaintance, and who once invited me to dine with them, and meet a circle of local guests. I well remember my walk thither. It led me up a steep ascent of oak avenue, opening out at the top of what was called the 'ridge-road' of the Chase. It was the close of a splendid Autumn afternoon: through the mossy boles of the great oaks I saw—

'The golden Autumn woodland reel
Athwart the smoke of burning flowers.'

The year was dying with more than its wonted pomp, 'wrapping itself in its gorgeous robes, like a grander Cæsar.'

"On reaching my destination, the sun had already dipped below the horizon, and the eastern front of the house projected a black shadow at its foot. What was there in the aspect of the pile that reminded me of the corpse described by the poet—the corpse that—

'Was calm and cold, as it did hold
Some secret glorying?'

I crossed the threshold with repugnance.

"Having some changes to make in my attire, a servant led the way to an upper chamber, and left me. No sooner was he gone than I became conscious of a peculiar sound in the room—a sort of shuddering sound, as of suppressed dread. It seemed close to me. I gave little heed to it at first, setting it down for the wind in the chimney, or a draught from the half open door; but, moving about the room, I perceived that the sound moved with me. Whichever way I turned it followed me. I went to the furthest extremity of the chamber—it was there also. Beginning to feel uneasy, and being quite unable to account for the singularity, I completed my toilet in haste, and descended to the drawing-room, hoping I should thus leave the uncomfortable sound behind me—but not so. It was on the landing, on the stair:—it went down with me—always the same sound of shuddering horror, faint, but audible, and always close at hand. Even at the dinner-table, when the conversation flagged, I heard it unmistakably several times, and so near, that if there were an entity connected with it, *we were two on one chair*. It seemed to be noticed by nobody else, but it ended by harassing and distressing me, and I was relieved to think I had not to sleep in the house that night.

"At an early hour, several of the guests having far to go, the party broke up, and it was a satisfaction to me to breathe the fresh, wholesome air of the night, and feel rid at last of my shuddering incubus.

"When I met my hosts again, it was under another and unhaunted roof. On my telling them what had occurred to me, they smiled, and said it was perfectly true; but added, they were so used to the sound it had ceased to perturb them. Sometimes, they said, it would be quiet for weeks, at others it followed them from room to room, from floor to floor, pertinaciously, as it had followed me. They could give no explanation of the phenomenon. It was a sound, no more, and quite harmless.

"Perhaps so, but of what strange horror, not ended with life, but perpetuated in the limbo of invisible things, was that sound the exponent?

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

SPIRITUALISM IN AUSTRALIA AND CHINA.

Dr. Richardson, of Melbourne, in a recent lecture at the Cavendish Rooms, fully confirmed the reports we have published of the rapid spread of Spiritualism in the Australian continent. Speaking more especially of Melbourne, he tells us that the Melbourne branch of the Victorian Association of Progressive Spiritualists, formed of 11 persons in October 1870, of which he was elected the first president, numbered when he left Melbourne 150 members. A children's lyceum in connection with the Melbourne Society was opened last November, with 60 children, and had in April 120. The society has weekly lectures and addresses which are generally well attended. Mr. Peebles addressed audiences of 3,000 persons in one of the Melbourne theatres for four successive Sunday evenings. His lectures were reported at length in two of the Melbourne newspapers, the *Argus* and the *Age*. The *Harbinger of Light* is entirely devoted to Spiritualism, it reports the progress of the movement, and contains good solid articles, and is rational and unsectarian in tone. Miss Armstrong, niece of the present Archbishop of Dublin is one of their best mediums; and they have had every variety of spirit-manifestation, and of the most convincing nature. "Here then," says Dr. Richardson, "is evidence of facts occurring universally and independently of each other, and to the sceptic and scoffer this ought to be matter for serious consideration. These evidences are confined to no country, restricted to no class. Under whatever sky patient investigators meet, similar phenomena can be elicited by a careful attention to certain conditions."

Mr. Peebles gives us some information concerning the Maoris of New Zealand. We quote the following:—

"Relation to and communion with a world of spirits are beliefs almost, if not completely, universal. The native tribes and clans of these islands are not only aware of the method of holding intercourse with the so-called dead, but they understand its abuse, often using their medial privileges for selfish ends. During their wars with the English, they were uniformly made acquainted by vision, clairvoyance, or clairaudience, with the movements of the British troops before action in battle. Not a plan of her Majesty's officers could be kept from them. The leading chief of the *Han Hans* was a noted medium and medicine-man. He distinctly said that 'the spirits of the dead' guided him to his victories. The Maories in the north island still own much territory, have their king, and hold but little intercourse with *pakeha*—the white man.

"The medium-priest in a tribe is called *Tohunga*. The Maoris meet in close apartments, and chant their songs till the flickering fire fades away, when the *Tohunga* goes into his ecstatic state, and the spirit controlling tenders counsel, describes his new habitation in spirit-life, gives the names of those whom he has met, and bears messages in return to kindred in the higher life. That these *Maoris* of New Zealand talk with immortals, no intelligent man having lived among them disputes.

Mr. Peebles, who has also recently visited China, tells us "The Chinese are a nation of Spiritualists. They have the trance, clairvoyant, and writing mediumship, using a bamboo quill in place of pencil and a table sprinkled with white sand in place of paper. So far as I could learn by conversing with consuls, missionaries, and intelligent Chinamen, they all believe in a present communion with a spirit-world."

DR. SEXTON AND THE CONJURORS.

Dr. Sexton has now provided himself with all the apparatus by which the conjurors have been seeking to humbug the public by palming off their tricks as identical with spirit manifestations. He has been busily engaged in the Northern and Midland counties in exposing before large audiences the means by which Maskelyne and Cooke, Dr. Lynn, Herr Dobler, and others of the tribe effect their tricks, by reproducing them and explaining the *modus operandi* by which they are effected; pointing out the radical differences between these counterfeits and the genuine phenomena. This is perhaps the most effectual way by which the pretensions of these men and their abettors can be demolished; and Dr. Sexton is doing the work with much credit and success.

EXPERIMENTS IN SPIRIT-PHOTOGRAPHY.

Mr. R. Williams, M.A., Ph. D., Brunswick House, Hayward's Heath, writes as follows:—

"It is now (July 19th) more than eighteen months since I first 'tried for spirit-photographs,' during which time I have exposed some hundreds of plates; many have been marked in some way or other, giving me encouragement, and latterly my labours have been crowned with success in the shape of three photographs, each with part of the human form; one has the features distinctly marked, the eyes and nose being very plain. These photographs were obtained at a regular sitting that I hold for the purpose every Saturday afternoon at half-past three, although on three separate occasions. This afternoon, upon developing the third plate (nothing had appeared on the first and second), a well-formed figure of a man standing at the side of and looking at the sitter came out. I saw it distinctly for several seconds and after examining it proceeded to strengthen it by further developing, and which I succeeded in doing, when all at once it faded away before my eyes, and nothing is now to be seen of it."

A SPIRITUAL PICNIC.

"I candidly confess that, up to a recent date, I had not given Spiritualists—*quâ* Spiritualists—credit for being a cheerful or convivial people. Though there exist upon the tablets of my memory recollections of certain enjoyable dinners, cosy teas, and charming *petits soupers*, eaten at the mahogany of believers in the modern mystery, yet those were purely exceptional events, oases in the desert of spiritualistic experiences. Generally speaking, the table, instead of groaning under its accumulated bounties, leapt about as if from the absence thereof; and the only adjunct of the inhospitable mahogany were paper tubes for the spirit voices, handbells for the spirit hands, and occasional accordions and musical boxes for the delectation of harmonious ghosts. It was a 'flow of soul' if not always a 'feast of reason;' but as regarded creature comforts, or any of the ordinary delights of mundane existence, a very Siberian desert. A grave subject of discussion (I am not, I assure you, indulging in a sepulchral pun) at the recent Liverpool Conference was how to feed mediums, and I fancy the preponderating opinion was that fasting was a cardinal virtue in their case—a regimen that had come to be in my mind, perhaps unfairly, associated with *séances* in general, I was glad, therefore, when I read in the columns of the *Medium* the announcement of the spiritual picnic or 'demonstration' at the People's Garden, Willesden. Still, I wanted to see Spiritualists enjoy themselves in the 'normal condition.' I sympathised with the avowed object of the gathering that the followers of the new creed should know one another, as surely the disciples of a common school ought to do. Armed, therefore, with a ticket, I proceeded, *viâ* the North London Railway, to the scene of action. It was not what we materialistic people should call a fine August day. It was cold and dull, and tried hard to rain: but it was far more in keeping with the character of the meeting than what Father Newman calls the 'garish day' one looks for in mid-August. In the words of the circle the 'conditions were excellent;' and as I journeyed on, reading my *Medium* like a true believer, I marvelled to see, by the evidence of its advertisements, how the new creed had taken hold of a certain section, at all events, of society. Besides a dozen public mediums, who

paraded their varied attractions at terms ranging from 2*s.* 6*d.* to 21*s.*, there were spiritualistic young men who put forward their creed as a qualification for clerkships—perhaps they had no other claim—spiritual lodging-house keepers, and even spiritual undertakers, all pervaded by what we may literally call a common *esprit de corps*.

"In due course we reached the People's Garden, the popular title whereof seemed to have been given on the *lucus a non* principle, for the London folk have not, as yet, affected it largely. Why this should be so one cannot guess, for it is the very ideal of a Cockney Paradise, and is admirably worked by a body of shareholders, most of whom belong to the artisan class, though under very distinguished patronage indeed. When I got to the grounds the Spiritualists were indulging in a merry-go-round during a refreshing drizzle. A temporary rush under cover ensued, and then the weather became more favourable, though the skies preserved their neutral tint. Mrs. Bullock, a suburban medium, who had become entranced, had located herself in a bower, and beckoned people from the audience to receive her 'benediction,' which was given in a remarkable dialect. I thought it was Yorkshire, but a spiritualistic gentleman explained to me that it was 'partly North American Indian.' The Osborne Bellringers next gave a campanological concert, which was exceedingly good of its kind, the small gentleman who played the bass bell working so actively as to suggest the idea that he could not long survive such hard labour in his fleshly condition. These campanologists are said to be big mediums, and occasionally to be floated or otherwise spirited during their performances; but nothing abnormal occurred at the People's Gardens. Then there was dancing on the monster platform, which is, I should think, correctly described as 'the largest in the world.' This was indeed a new phase of Spiritualism; the terpsichorean Spiritualists generally let their tables do the dancing for them, as Eastern potentates hire their dancing-girls. Donkey-races, croquet, and other unspiritual diversions varied the order of proceedings; and as for the one-and-ninepenny teas, I can only say I should think the Garden Committee did not get much profit out of them, for the Spiritualists regaled themselves in the most material fashion. During the afternoon the arrivals were fast and frequent. All the medium-power of London seemed present; and the only wonder was that we were not all floated bodily away. There was Mrs. Guppy, who in answer to my demand whether she had been "floated" from Highbury, informed me that she had come far less romantically—'nine in a cab!' There was Mr. Monk, too, a Nonconformist clergyman, who has lately been taking aerial journeys of the Guppy order about Bristol. In fact, the *élite* of the sect were well represented; and during the whole afternoon, despite the dirty-looking day, the fun was fast and furious, and all went merry as the proverbial marriage-bell.

"Part of the programme was an entertainment by a gentleman bearing the delightfully sepulchral name of Dr. Sexton, whose mission in life it is to 'expose' the tricks of Dr. Lynn and Messrs. Maskelyne and Cooke. How those gentlemen are to be 'exposed' seeing that they only claim to deceive you by legerdemain, I cannot comprehend; but they made the Spiritualists very angry by taking their names in vain on the handbills of the Egyptian Hall, and more than insinuating that there was a family likeness between their performances; and, consequently, the conjurers were to be 'exposed;' that is the public were to have their visit to the Temple of Magic spoilt by being shown beforehand how the tricks were done. Aided by an expert assistant named Organ, Dr. Sexton soon let us into the mysteries of the cabinet business, which seemed just as easy as making the egg stand on end—when you knew how. It is perfectly true that, after hearing Dr. Sexton's exposition—rather than *exposé*—it is quite easy for any one to frustrate the designs of these clever conjurors, if he wishes to do so. I am not sure that the *exposé* is wise. Illogical people will not see the force of Dr. Sexton's argument, and will possibly think it 'proves too much.' If so much can be done by sleight-of-hand and ingenious machinery, they will argue perhaps that the Davenports and other mediums are only cleverer conjurors still, or have better machinery. Alas! all my fairyland is pasteboard now. I know how the man gets out of the corded box—I could do it myself. I know where the gorilla goes when he seems lost in the magic cabinet. It is all a clever combination of mirrors. The blood-red letters of some dear

departed friend are only made with red ink and a quill pen, and the name of the 'dear departed' forged. Well, I suppose *I* am illogical too. If one set of things is so simple when it is shown to you, why may not all be? I fear the Willesden outing has unsettled my convictions, and shaken my faith in most sublunary things.

"The gathering clearly proved the growth of Spiritualism in London. That such numbers could be got together in the dead season bespeaks a very extensive ramification indeed."—"*Daily Telegraph*," *August 21st.*

Dr. Sexton not only demonstrated *how* the conjurors performed their tricks in imitation of spirit-manifestations, but also clearly pointed out the *essential difference* between these and the *conditions* under which they were performed, and the genuine phenomena of mediumship, which do not admit of explanation by mechanical contrivance or legerdemain.

SCIENCE ANTICIPATED BY CLAIRVOYANCE.

Professor E. Whipple, in a communication to the *Banner of Light*, of August 5th, writes:—

"We have at last a verification of the prediction made by A. J. Davis in 1846, that a *ninth* planet would eventually be discovered in the solar system. The following is from the *Boston Journal* of Monday, June 16th:

"The Smithsonian Institute at Washington received at one o'clock on Saturday a telegram from Prof. Watson, of Ann Arbor, Mich., announcing the discovery of a new planet in 17 hours 16 minutes of right ascension south, and 21 degrees 43 minutes of declination, rapid motion north, 11th magnitude."

"When Mr. Davis, by a method which professed to transcend the limitations of science, assumed the existence of both an *eighth* and a *ninth* planet (*see* Revelations, p. 160), Neptune had not been discovered. Mr. Davis's declaration was in manuscript in March, 1846. In September following, the planet was discovered. It is true that Le Verrier had already predicted the existence of an *eighth* planet, but that prediction did not reach this country until the summer following Mr. Davis's declarations. Still, critics insisted that Davis *might* have had access to Le Verrier's calculations, and so would not admit the validity of his claim.

"But no one will assume that the existence of a *ninth* planet was even suspected by astronomers in 1846. Yet by clairvoyance and spiritual insight Mr. Davis anticipated scientific discovery 27 years. Will our scientific *savans* acknowledge this simple fact, and credit clairvoyance with at least one well-established claim?

"And yet in a still more important matter has Mr. Davis anticipated scientific discovery. He declared 27 years ago that the

outermost planets of the solar system enjoy inherent light several hundred degrees greater than what our earth receives from the sun. And this description of celestial phenomena has been verified through the revelations of the spectroscope within the last year.

"In number three of the *Popular Science Monthly* Mr. Proctor publishes the results of recent investigation. The luminosity of Jupiter is so great that his satellites appear like dark bodies when they pass across his disc. When Mr. Davis dictated the 'Revelations,' the self-luminous peculiarity of the large planets was not suspected."

Notices of Books.

A POPULAR EXPOSITION OF SPIRITUALISM.*

In the progress of Spiritualism as a popular movement it is useful every now and then to present a sketch of its elementary principles and latest developments, for the purpose, more especially, of giving information to those who are beginning to make enquiry concerning it, having no better knowledge of it than they have gained from the newspapers, and common report. This is the purpose of the work of which we give the full title below, descriptive of its character and contents. The author tells us in the preface, "The following pages profess to be little more than a compilation of the results of twelve months' study of the phenomena and literature of Spiritualism; and the object of the present publication is to convey to the public a better idea than seems at present to prevail, of what Spiritualism really is, and what is its use."

From the nature of the work it presents little, if anything, on the subject that is new, but this is no disadvantage to the end indicated in the above extract; and even those to whom it presents nothing with which they are not already familiar, will find it a convenient book for reference. It is, however, as a handy little volume for inquirers that it will be most serviceable.

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* *Where are the Dead? or Spiritualism Explained. An Account of the Astounding Phenomena of Spiritualism. Affording positive proof by undeniable facts that those we mourn as dead are still alive, and can communicate with us; that Spiritualism is sanctioned by Scripture, and consistent with science and common-sense; with specimens of communications received; extracts from its literature; advice to investigators; addresses of mediums; and all useful information.* By Fritz. London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co. Manchester: A. Ireland & Co. 1873.

The disposition of its matter is good, and its selections on the whole judicious, as are also the observations with which they are interspersed; though some of the remarks on what is called orthodox theology, are it seems to us somewhat needlessly belligerent, and not particularly calculated to win for Spiritualism a favourable hearing from those whose convictions are thus rudely dealt with.

The illustrations of Spiritualism it presents are drawn chiefly from the recent literature of Spiritualism—and more especially its cheap periodical literature. Of its earlier records in England, and of the earlier, and as we think more solid and valuable works by English Spiritualists, he manifests no knowledge beyond that of their title pages. Thus in the excellent chapter on painting and drawing mediums there is no allusion even to *Spirit Drawings: A Personal Narrative*, by W. M. Wilkinson. Though this is not only the first narrative of spirit-drawings in connection with Modern Spiritualism in England, but the best and fullest discussion of it yet presented. So with the works of Howitt, Brevior, and Mrs. De Morgan, our author shows no acquaintance. But here, again, in drawing his illustrations from mere fugitive publications, our author not only rescues what might otherwise fall into oblivion, but it may be is giving that lighter and simpler mental diet best adapted to popular requirements. Spirit photography, as the most recent phase of spirit manifestations in England, is treated with more completeness in outline than any other; and a fair *resumé* of its facts are given.

Of course in a work like this some errors are almost inevitable, but those we have observed in it are singularly few. In including Dr. Gully among those who have been converted from being a materialist by Spiritualism, our author does but repeat an error which Dr. Gully had already publicly corrected. While openly proclaiming himself a Spiritualist, and acknowledging his deep obligations to Spiritualism, Dr. Gully disavows having ever been a materialist. At page 174 some sentences are quoted as from a recent spirit-communication, which are really taken from an article in this Magazine. We point out these inaccuracies the more freely as they admit of being easily rectified, and the work as a whole, has been carefully compiled. That it meets a present requirement, and that its merits are appreciated, are evident from the fact that already in a few months it has reached a second edition. We hope this will be some encouragement to the author to persevere in his study of the phenomena and literature of Spiritualism. If this book is the product of twelve months' study, we may reasonably expect that farther and deeper study, especially of the higher philosophy and literature of Spiritualism

will lead to still more valuable results; and we shall be glad in any future work on the subject by our author, and in any future edition of the present work to see his name upon the title page.

THE COMING MAN.*

In a leading article in one of the early volumes of the *Family Herald* the editor says he attended a lecture given by a phrenologist. At its conclusion he went up to speak to the lecturer, who addressed him as the editor of the *Family Herald.* Being asked how he knew, the phrenologist said he inferred the identity from the peculiar conformation of his head. The photograph which forms the frontispiece to the first volume of this posthumous novel is a visible evidence of the truth of phrenology in its general principles. The high coronal region and the remarkable breadth of forehead indicate a man of reverent mind, and of comprehensive intellect. If this book had been published anonymously, no one who has read with interest the leading articles and "notices to correspondents" of the periodical which the author established, and made so famous, would have failed to discover in the comprehensive charity, the profound wisdom, and ready wit contained in every chapter of *The Coming Man*, the editor of this favourite paper. This novel, as we learn from the introduction, was finished in 1848, about six years after the commencement of the *Family Herald*, and nine years before the decease of its editor. Why it was not published by him we do not know, but we cannot regret the delay, since the thinking portion of the religious world is better prepared for such a book now than it was twenty-five years since. Spiritualism was then almost unknown; a medium was so rare a phenomenon that when one appeared uttering words independent of his own thought, he was regarded by himself and by his enthusiastic followers as a new prophet, whose words were to be heard with reverence, and obeyed without questioning; and regarded by the rest of the world as a conscious impostor.

Modern Spiritualism has proved homœopathic to fanatic Spiritualism. Yet the manifestations of the latter are an interesting study to the psychologist. Eva—one of the two heroines of the story—is found by her cousin Edward, one of the two heroes, visiting a Southcotian prophetess. "But does

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* *The Coming Man.* By the Rev. James Smith, M.A.; author of *The Divine Drama of History and Civilisation*, &c. In two volumes. (*pp.* 401, 390). Price 21*s.* Strahan & Co. 1873.

she prophesy truly of common events?" said Edward, on their return home. "Is her word always or ever fulfilled?" "Very seldom," said Eva. "As for her prophecies, I would as soon believe in a gipsy's. Her great fault is that she is too anxious to prophesy." "Then if she be as you say, false in some respects, how can she be depended upon in other respects?" "She is not to be depended upon at all," said Eva. "I do not depend upon her. I go to hear her. She makes me think." Such a consummation is far superior to anything that could be effected by infallible communications, whether of spirits or angels, desired by those who would be saved the trouble of thinking. Spiritualism, as one of the signs of the time, occupies a very prominent place in these volumes, as may be seen from the headings of some of the chapters:—"Benjamin goes a ghost-hunting with a man and a horse;" "A Chaldean sage, or a man with an Oriental spirit;" "Peeping—a very ancient system of seeing;" "Astrology: its general truth maintained and defended, in spite of its particular failures and professional quackery;" "A spirit speaking with man's voice;" "Eccentricities of the spirit." From the latter chapter, evidently a record of facts, we select part of a memorable relation of a confirmed miser who "would not give a penny to save you from death." "This man seems like a fungus in society, fit for nothing, useful for nothing. But I am going to show you how his money has been used. He has a spirit himself, and on one occasion he was ordered out in the middle of the night to the corner of a street, and there to stand. So out he went and stood, and he stood a long time, till he was tired of standing, and he saw no use in being there. So he began to swear at the spirit like Jonah, as he often did. By-and-bye, however, he heard a man come whistling up the street, and when he came to the place where old James stood, he said, 'Well, this is a queer order. I was ordered out of bed to come and get twenty pounds at this street.' 'You were?' said James, 'Well, I wish you had come sooner then. I've been waiting here till I'm nearly dead with cold.' He gave the man the twenty pounds as commanded, and never asked him what he was to do with it."

The purpose of this most interesting novel may be best described in these concluding words of the author. "We now close our task, having developed according to our ability the leading idea of a coming age of universality, or charity, under the name of the *Coming Man*. Whether this man will be personified by an individual, or a series of individuals, or a system, we have not enquired. It was sufficient for us to treat of the predominant feature, the ruling spirit of the dispensation to come. That it

is one of charity and universality there can be no doubt; that we have well developed the idea may be a matter of doubt with many. Let some one else succeed and complete it if we have failed. It is a germ of life which will grow with time and with the culture it receives from the human mind." He believes from the analogy of important epochs of past history, that the next great era of change—this time a peaceful and spiritual revolution—will be 1876, and that the restoration of the German Empire must precede this new era. He hints also at the disestablishment of the English Church under the present reign. As the *Coming Man* is not a book to be read for amusement merely, but one that will bear repeated perusal and study, it is to be hoped that it will soon be made more accessible to the general public through a standard cheap edition.

Correspondence.

SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHS.

To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."

Augt. 14th.

Sir,—I had made an appointment with Miss Houghton, to meet her at Mr. Hudson's on August 11th, for the purpose of sitting for some spirit photographs, and on the previous evening at our usual weekly *séance*, my dear daughter Mitie wrote as follows:—

"My dearest Mother,—I will be with you to-morrow. Take Jim's picture, papa's and mine. I will try and do what you want by God's permission. Keep yourself calm—trust, and have faith; for with Him all things are possible. Is it not a great boon? *We* feel it such, as much as *you* do. Pray that it may be used to His glory first, and then be a great mercy and comfort to us."

On the Monday morning I took with me the hair and the photograph (taken during the earth-life) of my husband, son and daughter. After a consultation with Miss Houghton, it was decided that I should place my husband's portrait and lock of hair on the chair by my side. The first spirit-portrait was not the likeness of either of the three, although I expect I may probably recognize it when I see it printed; but on the next negative I beheld my daughter Mitie more beautiful than even in this life, with no veil to shade her radiant features, but looking sweetly down upon me. There was yet *another* wonder—for upon the chair in addition to my husband's cartes-de-visite were

the *spirit* representations of the other two which I had *replaced* in my pocket, after taking his out—both more shadowy than the one that was there in material form, but clearly distinct.

H. C. RAMSAY.

TWO SEANCES WITH MRS. GUPPY.

WE have received the two following letters, together with a note from Mr. Guppy, confirming the accuracy of their statements:—

To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."

SIR,—On the 14th of August I was again privileged to sit at one of Mrs. Guppy's extraordinary *séances;* and very extraordinary indeed it was. The company on this occasion comprised Countess Powlett, Miss Houghton, Miss Mann, Mrs. Guppy, Mr. Isaiah Taylor, Mr. Guppy, and myself. Darkness being attained, the doors and windows secured, we sat down, all joining hands. After a few minutes we were requested to fetch a Bible. This done, Miss Houghton was told to read a portion of one of the prophetical chapters. This done, we continued our *séance*, when, in a few minutes, a rustling sound was heard, and each person found something laid on his or her knees, which proved to be a dinner napkin. Then a kind of wafting sound was heard, and something apparently bulky fell upon the table in our midst; this turned out to be a fine linen sheet doubled into four and knotted at each corner, this forming a table-cloth. We next heard what appeared to us to be very distinct footfalls on the floor of the room; then suddenly we heard a clattering noise, as if arising from above, when a mass of some kind of materials fell on the table, Mr. I. Taylor exclaiming at the same instant, "Good gracious, there's something hot put into my hands; I think it's a kettle." For fear of accident, a light was at once struck, when a kettle of boiling water was found in Mr. Taylor's hands, carefully secured by a cork put into the spout; also, on the table, six cups and six saucers, six tea spoons, two knives, six tea plates, a jug of milk, loaf of bread uncut, basin with sugar, plate of butter garnished with parsley, a large twelve-cup teapot with tea in it ready for infusion, two beautiful Madeira cakes, and a large dish containing several pounds weight of beautiful English hothouse grapes. Our spirit hosts kindly asking us to partake of the fare they placed before us, we willingly did so, and, speaking for myself, greatly enjoyed the tea, the cakes, and the grapes. Of the articles brought by our spirit friends, the butter, sugar, milk and tea had been found in the house; the uncut bread loaf, from its peculiar make,

appears to have been fetched from the house of one of the sitters, but whence the cakes and grapes none of us could form any idea, nor can we now. The crockery ware used belonged to Mrs. Guppy, with the exception of the cups and saucers, and the facts connected with these appear to me to form the most interesting part of our *séance*, for after we had our tea we extinguished the light, again continuing our *séance*, conditions as before, when within a couple of minutes a distinct rattling sound was heard above our heads, and we were ordered to strike a light, when, to our great astonishment, we found our half dozen cups and saucers—total strangers to every one present—had vanished from the room and from the house, and to this day we know not whence they came nor whither they went. Towards the end of our sitting my brooch was gently removed by spirit hands, and I concluded that for a time at least I should not see it again; but strange, most strange to say, about half-an-hour after the *séance*, in the full light, and in the presence of all the company, my brooch was thrown or rather wafted towards me. This *séance* reminds me of a chapter in fairy lore, of things one may read of but never hope to experience, and compels me to ask what next? And next?

Palm Terrace. MARGARET FISHER.

To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."

SIR,—On the 18th August I had an opportunity of joining in one of Mrs. Guppy's *séances*. I now send you a very short account of one or two of its most interesting incidents, in the hope that they may prove interesting to your readers. The parties present on this occasion were Mrs. Guppy, a lady friend of hers, Mr. Tawse, Mr. Guppy, Major Phillips, and his sister Mrs. H.

We sat round the table in the usual way, under the usual conditions. All hands being secured, we were desired to ask for something. It was known there was a goose in the house, and also some other poultry; it was requested that the goose might be fetched, to which request a negative was wrapped out, but before one could count five a couple of the ducks were gently hung round the neck of a lady sitting on my right. But, more strange still, the invisibles had effected a bond of union between Mrs. Guppy and Mrs. H., by attaching a copper wire to the back hair of the one, and carrying it across the table and affixing it to the head of the other. Something was evidently intended by this metallic connection, but what I cannot possibly divine. The wire appeared to have been brought from the garden, where a quantity was in use. The magnetic power in the circle was very strong, which is to be accounted for by the ruling harmony of the circle. JOHN TAWSE.