

The Spiritual News.

A RECORD OF THE PROGRESS OF SPIRITUALISM IN GREAT BRITAIN.

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SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS.

LAST Sunday week, Mr. and Mrs. Guppy, of 1, Morland-villas, Highbury-hill-park, N., invited a party of ladies and gentlemen to their house, to celebrate the birthday of Mrs. E. Guppy, the celebrated non-professional medium. Thirty-six guests were present in all, and in the course of the evening, a dark *séance* was held, at which the whole of the visitors were present. The proceedings took place in a drawing-room 24 feet long by 14 feet broad. The large round table in the centre, and the thirty-six guests seated on chairs and the sofa, left no room for anybody to walk about. In addition to Mrs. Guppy, Mr. Frank Herne, the medium, was present, also Master Turketine, of Kingston-on-Thames; through the mediumship of the latter, solid objects have very frequently been carried through brick walls at the residence of Mr. W. J. Champernowne, brewer, Kingston-on-Thames. In fact, the *séances* at Mr. Champernowne's house caused so much sensation in Kingston, that the clergy there held one or two public meetings in opposition to Spiritualism, at which meetings they admitted the facts of Spiritualism, but averred that they were produced by Satanic agency.

After Mr. Guppy's visitors seated themselves, some paper and pencils were placed on the table, the door was locked, and the light was put out. A rustling of paper was then heard, and in about a minute a call for a light was signalled in the usual way, by raps. Two large drawings on paper were then found on the table, which Mrs. Helen Louisa Chevalier, of 21, St. Ann's-villas, Notting-hill, W., said belonged to her, and that the spirits must have brought them from her house, about three miles off.* Another drawing was also produced, executed by the spirits themselves; the picture represented some angels carrying a little child upwards, and was not unlike the picture in the original edition of Dickens's *Old Curiosity Shop*, where some angels are represented carrying "little Nell" to heaven. The paper on which it was drawn had a bluish tint, but the angel-forms were white. This whiteness upon the blue background was not produced by colour laid on, but appeared to be caused by the discharging of the natural colour of the blue paper, as if by a weak acid. The paper was, however, quite dry; the whitened portions of it transmitted more light than the blue portions. The outlines of the figures seemed to have been drawn with a pencil.

The light was again extinguished, and soon a bird was heard flying about the room. A lady caught it, and expressed the opinion that it was a dove. Another lady remarked, "Oh, if you could make doves of us all, that would be a good manifestation." A few seconds afterwards, something soft was felt falling like snow, for about half a minute, perpendicularly downwards upon the heads and bodies of the sitters at all parts of the room, and somebody exclaimed, "Why, its feathers!" By this time the room had been in darkness about three minutes, and then a light was struck.

The scene then revealed was wintry in the extreme. Everybody and everything between the four walls of the room was covered with white feathers; the heads, shoulders, and knees of those present were thickly covered; the table in the centre looked like a large, circular cake of snow, and the tresses of the ladies, as well as the trimmings of their garments, were clustered with little white feathers. These feathers had fallen perpendicularly at all parts of the room; they fell vertically between the sitters, down on to the floor between the chairs. The bird which had been brought in was a pigeon.

Much laughing and noise, mixed with protestations as to the effect upon the dresses, followed this manifestation, as the smaller feathers and fluff clung of course to fabrics on which they fell. Mrs. Guppy complained that it would be several days' work for the servants to get the room clean again. An adjournment then took place to the supper-room. Mr. Thomas Shorter, of *The Spiritual Magazine*, and Mr. Harrison made a close examination of the room. The feathers had fallen at all parts of it, from wall to wall, with the exception of a space about a yard square near the door. They had fallen in a wedged-shaped layer, four or five inches thick at one end of the room, tapering down to about half an inch thick in the middle of the room, and to a thin layer, through which here and there a spot of carpet was visible, at the other end. The mantel-piece was thickly covered with feathers, and so were various small pieces of furniture.

We do not know that it is our business to offer to those who will not take the trouble to investigate spiritual phenomena for themselves, evidence as to the genuine character of this manifestation. However, it may be stated, that the room has an ordinary plain whitewashed ceiling, everywhere visible, and that

* Mr. Chevalier has written a pamphlet strongly condemning Spiritualism as the work of the Evil One.

above the level of the heads of the sitters, the walls were covered by nothing but a picture here and there. Below the level of the heads of the sitters, the only thing which might have concealed the quantity of feathers, was a cheffonier; this cheffonier was at the opposite end of the room to that where the feathers fell thickest. The fireplace was blocked up by a screen to shut out the light; our reporter and several other persons sat with their backs against this screen. Mr. and Mrs. Guppy, Mr. Frank Herne, and some others, were sitting at the table in the centre of the room while this manifestation took place, and they were surrounded everywhere by their guests. The house is an ordinary villa residence, of large size, which has been in the occupation of Mr. and Mrs. Guppy about three months.

Among the witnesses present were Mr. and Mrs. Guppy, 1, Morland-villas, Highbury-hill-park, N.; Dr. Dixon, 8, Great Ormond-street, W.C.; Mr. and Mrs. Ellis, 29, Devonshire-street, Queen's-square, W.C.; Mr. and Mrs. Combes, 15, Harper-street, Bloomsbury, W.C.; Mr. and Mrs. Pearson; Miss Georgiana Houghton, 20, Delamere-crescent, W.; Mr. and Miss Shorter, 23, Russell-road, Holloway, N.; Mr. W. J. Champernowne, Mr. Russell, and Master Turketine, all of Kingston-on-Thames; the Misses Williamson, 76, Tavistock-road, Westbourne-park; Miss Marie Scott, 76, Tavistock-road, W.; and Mr. W. H. Harrison, Chaucer-road, Herne-hill.

On searching the upstairs rooms, it was found that in a bedroom, two stories above the room wherein the *séance* was held, all the bedclothes were in a heap on the floor, and the feather bed was gone. Where the feathers had been carried was clear enough, but from that day to this the "bed-tick," or the covering which once enclosed the feathers, has not been seen.

Later in the evening another dark sitting took place, and the spirit, "John King," made his voice heard, Mr. Herne being the medium. John King has a strong powerful voice, and a strongly marked character, so that between the two there is no doubt whatever that he is the same John King who speaks at the younger Mrs. Mary Marshall's *séances*. Mrs. Marshall was not present on this occasion. The fact that the same John King undoubtedly talks audibly in the presence of either of these two mediums, without the presence of the other, is as good a proof as any we know of, of the presence of an independent individual disembodied spirit.

THE MEETINGS AT THE BEETHOVEN ROOMS.

ON Monday evening, January 9th, Mr. Benjamin Coleman read a valuable paper at the Beethoven Rooms, Harley-street, Cavendish-square, on "The Rise and Progress of Spiritualism in England." The paper was printed in full in the last number of *The Spiritualist*, and contains matter of very great interest to the oldest and the newest workers in the Spiritual movement. The hall was crowded to excess, literature and science being well represented by many of those present. The following is the discussion which took place after the reading of the paper:—

IS SPIRITUALISM WITCHCRAFT?

DR. LOCKHART-ROBERTSON said—I am sure I am only expressing the feelings of this meeting when I say that I think nothing could have been more admirable than the discourse which you have given us this evening, and you need have made no apology on the score of its literary merits. You were kind enough to allude to a few words I had published ten years ago in *The Spiritual Magazine*, and you gave the meeting very fairly an honest history of the event. I think, however, you did me a little injustice in not referring to the conclusion of my paper, where I distinctly said I admitted those physical phenomena to have occurred, and phenomena which have been subsequently admitted by many other scientific men, for example, by Mr. Crookes, the great chemist in *The Quarterly Journal of Science* for last July, but I distinctly stated that I felt sure that they were not Spiritual manifestations. I said, if I had any theory on the subject at all, that it partook more of the old spirit of divination which we read of, and that I was still disposed to connect these things with the old witchcraft, the Sibyls and the soothsaying which we read of in Scripture, traces of which run through all history, and which is, I think, to some extent, perhaps, revived under the auspices of your friends and others. If I have a theory, that is my theory, and I would quote to this meeting the name of Dr. Maitland. He is known to be one of the most learned men who have written in our generation, and in a very curious pamphlet of his *Some Enquiries into Mesmerism*—as the subject was then called—he very much dwells upon this idea. His pamphlet is rather a rare one now, and I think it might very fairly be the subject of a reprint in one of those numerous periodicals to which you refer; and as to the contents and quality of which I must say I very much differ with you. However, referring to Dr. Maitland's essay, he points out, in a very learned argument, the possibility of the phenomena of clairvoyance being very similar to the soothsaying of the damsel who followed Paul, and he also refers to the exorcists that the Apostle speaks of. One might almost apply the terms to certain mediums whom I have seen. I must say I think the whole subject has been exceedingly unfortunate in its advocates. I think the literature of Spiritualism, and I have read a good deal of it, is a poor mixture of very weak philosophy, and of very secondary evangelical sentiment. And to think that the mighty dead come from their rest, and come from Hades in order to perform such physical phenomena, which I admit I saw, and yet I am unable to explain, is a theory I entirely reject. So much I think it due to



myself to say as I have been quoted on this point. I certainly have seen other phenomena which it is due to science, and to truth, to say I am totally unable to explain. I have seen writing mediums obtaining intelligent communications, which I certainly cannot put down either to fraud or imposture. I have also seen things which are more doubtful, and I have also seen clairvoyance, and other very extraordinary manifestations. I think that the whole phenomena and the subject are, as you say, extremely well deserving of the further investigation of scientific men. Some of my friends are present to-night, men of scientific standing, and we have been promised a *séance* during this present week with Mrs. Guppy. I can only say for myself, and I think I can fairly say for them, that we shall be prepared honestly to record the truth or falsehood of what we see. At this late hour in the evening, and with so very wide a subject, I do not wish further to intrude upon the meeting, but would just conclude with reading a few words I came across last night in Dr. Tyndall's address at Liverpool, which I think very truthfully and fairly represent the spirit in which scientific men are prepared to approach the subject.—“You never hear really philosophical defenders of the doctrine of uniformity speaking of impossibilities in nature; they never say what they are constantly charged with saying, that it is impossible for the Builder of the Universe to alter His work. Their business is not with the possible, but with the actual; not with the nature which might be, but with the world that is. This they explore with a courage not unminged with reverence, and according to methods which, like the quality of a tree, are tested by their fruits. They have but one desire—to know the truth. They have but one fear—to believe a lie. And if they know the strength of science, and rely upon it, with an unswerving trust, they also know the limits beyond which science ceases to be strong. They best know that questions offer themselves to thought which science, as now prosecuted, has not even the tendency to solve. They keep such questions open, and will not tolerate any unlawful limitation of the horizon of their souls. They have as little fellowship with the Atheist, who says there is no God, as with the Theist, who professes to know the mind of God. ‘Two things,’ said Immanuel Kant, ‘fill me with awe—the starry heavens and the sense of responsibility in man.’ And in his hours of health and strength, and sanity, when the stroke of action has ceased, and the pause of reflection has set in, the scientific investigator finds himself overshadowed by the self-same awe. Breaking contact with the hampering details of earth, it associates him with a power which gives fulness and tone to his existence, but which he can neither analyse nor comprehend.”

CLAIRVOYANCE AND THE IDENTITY OF SPIRITS.

Mr. C. F. VARLEY, C.E., said—Ladies and Gentlemen, I should like before we close to tender the thanks of this meeting to our friend, Mr. Coleman—not only for bringing us together to-night, and for the concise, but rapid statement of events which he himself has witnessed, or of which he has had evidence through other channels equally as good as his own observation; but we are also indebted to him for his long career, fighting that battle against superstition which all scientific men have to fight to introduce new discoveries. Although he declares himself not a scientific man, still he has been carrying on that fight which must always bring down upon him the respect of all men whose respect is worth having, and therefore I wish, before the evening advances too far, that we should give an expression of our thanks to him, for what he has done to advance truth not only this evening, but prior thereto. I take this opportunity to join Dr. Robertson in the remark he made: that unfortunately Spiritualism is unlucky in its advocates. All he has said upon this point I certainly agree with. There are a few sections of society, however, which stand out, free from the charge which he very properly brought against the great majority of Spiritualists. Let us see of what the world at large is constituted. Last year, when going to one of Dr. Tyndall's lectures, I drove through some of London's principal thoroughfares, and saw crowds of people going to theatres, to Mr. and Mrs. German Reed's, and other similar places of mere amusement, which were open by the dozen, but there was but one place open that night for the exposition of the truths of science. Now Spiritualism is a phenomenon which has in nearly all ages broken out chiefly amongst those whose heads have not been driven into a groove by hard erroneous study; they are people who are particularly natural, who, as it were, have not yet been perverted by the teaching of the day; and, therefore, at first sight, it is not to be expected that we should find amongst Spiritualists a larger percentage of intelligent people than we find elsewhere in society. A great deal has been said about the hypothesis, that these phenomena are not due to spirits but to clairvoyance, or some other action of one living brain upon another. Now if people will admit that the phenomena called Spiritual are due to clairvoyant action, they will at once admit the greatest part of the difficulty. To me, who am well acquainted with the phenomena of mesmerism and Spiritualism, there is nothing so incomprehensible as clairvoyance. They may say, “Oh, it is clairvoyance!” but they have to explain what clairvoyance is. Will these gentlemen explain how it is that a clairvoyant, sitting in a room, can read the mind of another person. Ordinary people in their normal state possess no such thought-reading power. One striking case of clairvoyance which arrested my attention was brought to my knowledge by Dr. Dixon. A friend of mine was unwell; he was a great sceptic as to mesmeric power, but having been strongly advised to go to Dr. Dixon and consult his clairvoyant, he asked me to accompany him, and I went. On arriving at the house the clairvoyant was brought in and was entranced by the Doctor. She then described my friend's ailment and prescribed for him. After he had been prescribed for, I said, “I am not very well; I should like to see whether the clairvoyant can tell me what I am suffering from, and the nature of my ailment.” I accordingly sat down. Mark this—the doctor and the clairvoyant did not know I was going to consult them, and I had no idea beforehand of so doing. She was evidently a person in a very humble situation of life. I sat down, and took her hand; she described where and why I was feeling pain. She then said, “Oh, there is something in his brain which is doing all this, and until he gets that out of it he will never be well.” I could not for the life of me think what she was alluding to. She then described a machine which I had not then actually constructed, but which I had invented; it was not then even on paper. It existed only in my brain. She described that machine so clearly that I recognised it. The machine has been constructed, and is daily doing good work. You may say, “Oh, it is clairvoyance,” but I should like to know what was the power by which that person was able to know what was in my brain. Those who content themselves by saying it is simply clairvoyance have really explained nothing. I have seen much of Spiritualism and mesmerism, and I can see no difference whatsoever between the trance produced by a man in the body, and a trance produced by a man out of the body; they are so exactly alike that to me there is no difference, and the moment you admit clairvoyance you at once admit nine-tenths of Spiritualism. The question comes, are we or are we not deluded, we who believe that our “departed ancestors do come out of their graves to speak to us?” as the doctor puts it in accents such as to indicate that it is so

dreadful an idea as to be an impossibility. Spiritualists know that our ancestors are not in their graves, and never were. Now, I should like to put this question to any person who has a family: Suppose a father or mother to have left this life when the children were young, and the mother to retain her individuality, can that mother be happy while those children are not progressing satisfactorily? can she be happy without a knowledge of what they are about? Do you think a mother can give up all her love for her children the moment she passes out of her body? If she does, she loses her individuality, and in fact ceases to be the mother of those children. If she remain a mother still, with all her motherly instincts (quickened, it may be, by passing away) she will naturally be anxious for her children, and should she find the means and opportunity of guiding them aright would she not do so? The fact—for fact it is—that departed parents and friends are among us, and endeavour to help us as they did in life, seems to me exactly what we ought to expect. Now that I have gone through a training of Spiritualism and close thought on the subject for the last fourteen years, so far from it appearing to me to be unreasonable, I now see that it could not possibly be otherwise. I will mention one case which was a very remarkable one, and which has served as a sort of mile post whenever doubt has arisen in my mind upon this question. As there were three people concerned, and none expecting a communication, it is difficult to conceive a better test. In 1864, while occupied with the first Atlantic Cable—I ought to tell you I was working very hard, and did all I could to get the most rest out of the few hours left me—one night I was aroused by Mrs. Varley, who said, “There are such strange noises in this room that I am very nervous. I am really sorry to disturb you.” I asked, “What was the matter, and what she desired.” She said, “I wish you would let me have a little light.” I lighted the gas, and put the flame up about half an inch, as desired, and then went to sleep. I had not long been asleep before she aroused me again and said, “These noises terrify me; so I really must ask you to let me have a little more light.” I put the gas full on and said, “Will that do? are you nervous now?” She said she was no longer nervous, and I went to sleep again, but was aroused for the third time by rappings at the window and the door, which I heard even while asleep. I sat up in bed and said, “Let us see what this all means,” when for the first time in my life (since I have been of age at least) I had the intense satisfaction of seeing distinctly before me a *spirit*. I saw him for thirty seconds, and could see the pattern of the paper on the wall through him. He gradually vanished, and when I turned to Mrs. Varley and said, “Did you see that?” I saw that her eyes were dilated, and knew from that sight that she was being entranced. She quickly became clairvoyant, when the spirit spoke to me through her, and told me this—“I have just appeared to my brother in Birmingham, and have been able to make him understand that I have appeared to you; I could not make him understand any more. I wish to send a message to him; will you send it?” I assented, and he gave me the message, which I sent to the brother the next day by post. The spirit only did that, but he told me that he met with his death when at school in France, and that his death was occasioned by being stabbed by a Frenchman; that his mother and brother went to Paris, and as the father was very ill at the time, they took council together, and fearing the shock would disturb the father to a dangerous degree, did not let him know that the death was not a natural one. The spirit added, they concealed the blood by placing oiled silk and blotting paper over the wound. The only people who knew it were his mother and eldest brother. The eldest brother came up on a visit the Saturday following, and began talking the matter over with me. When I gave him the above statement of his departed brother, he turned deadly pale, and said it was a thing which nobody knew of except himself and his mother. This is a case which I think that it is impossible to explain away by clairvoyance. I never saw that man in his earthly body; I have frequently communicated with him since. I never saw him before his “death,” and his career was wholly unknown to me. Mrs. Varley had known him slightly when a young child. This is a very clear case: there were three of us engaged in it, one at a distance of 120 miles, and none of us expecting any communication—things wholly unknown to Mrs. Varley and me were correctly revealed, and the identity of the communicator clearly identified by vision in the first place, and the exposition of the nature of his death in France and other details. I cannot conceive how you can explain this, excepting that you admit that this individual did retain his identity after death, and did appear to both of us—to myself at Beckenham, and to the brother at Birmingham, and communicated these facts to me, which were unknown to anyone except the brother in Birmingham. If these phenomena are capable of being explained—as two speakers have insisted—by our own brains acting by clairvoyance upon the entranced person—how will the speakers account for the fact that the communicators declare they are the spirits of others? I will not detain you longer, but ask you to return our most cordial thanks to Mr. Coleman.

ARE THE MANIFESTATIONS PRODUCED BY THE SPIRITS OF LIVING PERSONS?

DR. WYLD said—As you are aware, Mr. Coleman, I have been a believer of the phenomena of Spiritualism ever since the mediums first came to this country. I was one of the very earliest in this room to witness the manifestations which accompanied Mr. Home, and from that time up to the present, I have never had any reason to alter my impressions as to the cause of these phenomena. I believe in the physical facts; I have seen them over and over again, and I must believe in them; but my interpretation has always been the same. It is a very simple one. I believe that the phenomena are produced by spiritual power; the only difference betwixt myself and the usual Spiritualists is—that the ordinary Spiritualist believes that these phenomena are produced by the power of the spirits of departed individuals; I believe they are produced by the spirits of the living individuals present. Man is a spirit. It is common to say that man has a spirit, but I say man *is* a spirit, and *has* a body, and if departed spirits can produce these phenomena, I cannot see why the spirits of men not departed cannot equally produce them. The argument against that is this:—those who believe in these phenomena, believe that they have evidence that they are produced by the spirits of departed relatives, and they say, “How is it, if our spirits produce these phenomena, that we are unconscious of it?” At first sight that is rather a difficulty; but if you think over it a little, the difficulty to a very great extent disappears. The nature of man is totally unknown to himself. For instance every night we go to bed, and we fall asleep; we sleep for six or eight hours, and we are totally lost to ourselves. During that period of sleep we have no knowledge of ourselves; when we awake, we have no knowledge of what has passed during our sleep; when we are asleep, we have no knowledge of what has passed whilst we were awake. Therefore, I say, man is unknown to himself; that there is in the construction of his spiritual being a condition of things which he cannot explain; that he has two sides, the day side and the night. I believe it is this night side, if I may use the expression, which, unknown to ourselves, produces these phenomena. The same effect is often produced in fever; a man in fever says and does many

things which he is totally unconscious of when he recovers. If a man takes too much alcohol or narcotics, he also says and does things of which, after the influence of the alcohol and narcotics has worn off, he is totally oblivious. That shows that a man may do things and yet not be aware that he does them. Indeed, there is a continually recurring, and very familiar illustration of this in the mere absence of mind. You wish to turn off the gas at the wall in your dining room; you turn it off at the lamp, and you again turn it off behind the shutter. The moment after you have left the room, you may say to yourself, "Have I turned off the gas at the shutter; I have no recollection of it?" You go back and find that you have. There you have done a thing only a minute before, which you are totally oblivious to a minute afterwards; you have done it automatically; you have done it rationally. There has been some kind of reasoning going on in your mind which has compelled you to turn off the gas, and yet you have no knowledge or recollection of it. I think that is a familiar illustration of the fact that the phenomena may be produced by one side of our minds, totally unknown to the other side. My doctrine is this, that these phenomena are produced by spiritual agency, but the agency is the spirits of the living, and not the spirits of the dead. I do not deny that the spirits of the dead may appear upon the earth, but all I say is this, that we know that we are spirits, and that if we know that we are spirits, why should we go to the spirits of the dead to account for these phenomena, when we know that there are actual spirits present?

The CHAIRMAN—They all say that they are spirits of the dead.

Dr. WYLD—I am aware most of them say so.

The CHAIRMAN—They all say so.

Dr. WYLD—Not all; I have often put the question. I have said, "Are these doctrines which I hold true?" and these individuals have replied "Yes." I have frequently met with that response from mediums. The difficulty in believing that they are the spirits of the dead arises partly from the contradictions that these spirits bring before us. A spirit will say: "I am the spirit of your grandfather." Three minutes afterwards the spirit will say, "No, I am merely joking; I am not the spirit of your grandfather." That is an experience which is continually recurring, and shakes our belief in the identification of the spirits. On the other hand, I must say this, that there is a universal belief among mankind as to the influence of the spirits of the departed. The greatest sceptic, the strongest-minded man, if he is reading a book, we will say, in a remote room in some dreary country house, as twelve o'clock approaches he feels an indescribable sensation of discomfort. Although he may be an entire sceptic, although he may deny in broad daylight that there is any such thing as spiritual power in the world, apart from the spirits of the living, yet all men, I may say nearly, have an indescribable conviction in their own minds, as the hour of twelve draws near, and passes, that there are such things as the spirits of departed individuals haunting this world. I admit that, and I think that that is the strongest argument we can have that these phenomena may be produced by departed spirits. I think universal belief held by people on any subject one of the strongest proofs we can have of the truthfulness of that belief. At the same time I recur to my first proposition, that I myself have never seen any phenomena which I could not explain on the theory of their being produced by the spirits of living individuals present.*

WHAT HYPOTHESIS MOST RATIONALLY ACCOUNTS FOR THE PHENOMENA?

Mr. LEIGHTON, of Liverpool, said—There is certainly no possibility of accounting for the facts of Spiritualism on the assumption that it is simply the embodied spirits around us who do the work. Statements are made which are absolutely opposed to our own convictions, and are thrust upon us by an intelligent agency, which is distinct from ourselves. How will Dr. Wyld's hypothesis account for that? Circumstances are stated to us of which we not only have no recollection, but of which we absolutely know nothing, and in many cases we have entire disbelief in what is affirmed. Dr. Wyld did not attempt to apply his theory to the facts mentioned by Mr. Varley, which are certainly duplicated by many others. I had a mesmerist patient who has told me not only things that I had forgotten, but things that I never knew, just as Mr. Varley was told things that he never knew. How is Dr. Wyld's hypothesis to account for this? One who has given attention to all branches of the subject knows very well, that there is no hypothesis whatsoever that has ever been broached, short of the Spiritual hypothesis, that accounts for all the phenomena. The Spiritual hypothesis is adequate to account for the facts, and until a rival hypothesis is started which equally clearly and fairly meets every part of the case, it is absolutely unphilosophical and unscientific for any men to stand up and oppose it. To me it is the greatest wonder that men of scientific reputation can put up with the inferior hypothesis that they profess to accept, and they are so distinctly capable of being riddled for their inadequacy, and set aside. I must confess I was a little amazed at Dr. Robertson's apology. I did expect something better from a gentleman capable of writing the articles I have read, than the apology that he has given for evading the Spiritual conclusion. The indefinite undetermined frame of mind in which Dr. Robertson is now, with regard to the Spiritual hypothesis, is very notable. But if he will do the same justice to the general phenomena of Spiritualism that he has done to the physical phenomena, whereby he was compelled to the conclusion that they were not the work of the embodied human beings present at their occurrence, I feel assured he will find himself landed just as positively and as certainly in the conclusion that the only possible explanation of the phenomena is the interaction of Spiritual agents with individualities as distinct as our own. That will be his first and most general conclusion. But, inasmuch as neither he nor anyone else has experience of any other class of spirits than the human (except, indeed, those of the lower—the animal—creation, which will scarcely be imported into the present discussion), he will find himself driven, at the next move, to admit that they are, what they themselves claim to be, disembodied human spirits. Of course, it is possible to explain the whole of the Spiritualistic phenomena upon the assumption that there is in the universe another order of beings, spirits not human, who are capable of producing the manifestations. We are obliged to acknowledge that that is a possibility. But then, as I have said, we have no knowledge of these beings, we have no experience of them; we only know the human being; and if the hypothesis of disembodied human spirits is sufficient to cover the ground, the other is gratuitous and unphilosophical. Professors of science and logic will discover, when they do Spiritualists the justice of knowing who and what they are, that there are amongst them, as Mr. Varley says, as large a proportion of clear, capable, scientific, cautious thinkers as there are amongst themselves. I know of many Spiritualists in my own walk who have been compelled to their conclusions against

previous bias; in fact, there are very few of us that have not been so. It is not that we are led into it by natural proclivity to the spiritual; the mass of those that acknowledge themselves to be Spiritualists from an examination of the ordinary phenomena, will be found to be relatively deficient in the quality which makes people by nature believers in Spiritualism. Spiritualism is absolutely a scientific induction, and not at all—as it is supposed by popular writers, and those that have not really examined the facts—the easy and credulous acceptance of phenomena as Spiritual that they, forsooth, with their keen sight and infallible logic would never think of accepting as such. We know very well that, if they will just take the trouble to examine the phenomena as we have done, they will find themselves compelled to the same conclusion. Mr. Alfred Wallace, we have heard say he has never known any competent thinker or investigator to have thoroughly examined the subject without coming out a Spiritualist. That is a very strong statement from a man who must be acknowledged to be the peer of any of the scientific and philosophical men who doubt our conclusion. Dr. Robertson cannot conceive how the grand spirits of the past could leave their Hades to come and do the ridiculous things that are done. That is a very common statement amongst critics and opponents of the Spiritualistic philosophy. My friend Dr. W. B. Hodgson wrote me a very strong letter upon that very subject, averring that the spirits of the dead must have lost their wits, and so forth, and that it was a sad thing to go into another life, and to have to come back and do such frivolous and trumpery things. Men who use that argument only illustrate their want of acquaintance with the subject. They know a certain part, and they do entire injustice to Spiritualism in representing the whole by the part. Everyone will confess that there are frivolities in the phenomena of Spiritualism. But, on the hypothesis that these are done by disembodied human beings, I should like to ask any gentlemen what they would expect. Every tick of the clock sends a human spirit out of the world. In what condition do these human spirits leave this earth? Are many of them in a condition to do other than just the things you see, especially when those at the *séance* ask for them to be done? Dr. Robertson, I believe, himself asked the agency to break the table. That might be called a ridiculous thing, but it was requested by Dr. Robertson. I say it was done rightly; and, if judged rightly, it will be seen to be one of the most important facts that could have been stated; it bears consequences which demonstrate our case. Those phenomena which are called "low" are in mercy given to our scepticism. If the Master of us all could say to the sceptic Thomas, "Reach forth thy hand and feel the wound, and be not faithless, but believing," there was condescension there to do as low an act—simply feeling a physical substance. But what was the object of it? That is the thing to look to. I say nothing short of the moving of a physical substance, which we know to be inert matter, will demonstrate to a man of the scientific quality of Dr. Robertson—aye, and of myself too, for that matter,—the independent, intelligent agency. That is what we want,—a demonstration of intelligence without brain. I ask, is it a vulgar, a small thing, a poor thing, that you should have a demonstration of intelligence without brain? A pencil started up in my presence, and wrote this interrogative sentence upon a slate, "And is this world of strife to end in dust at last?"—a sentence that was not in any of our physical brains. There was an intelligence there that had prehensile power over that pencil, and which wrote that sentence out on the slate in my presence. There was in this a demonstration of intelligence without brain; and that intelligence claimed to be the disembodied spirit of a human being. Does Dr. Wyld, or anyone taking his view of the case, believe that any of our unconscious undiscovered powers were competent to do this act? But the intelligent agent which did it claimed, as I have said, to be a disembodied human spirit. I want to know on what hypothesis Dr. Robertson, or Dr. Wyld, or anyone, will dispute the validity of that claim? I say it is unphilosophical for them to think of any other intelligences, because they have no knowledge whatever of them. The scientific ground is that of the Spiritualist; the disembodied human being is the most natural hypothesis. It is one—I might say, it is the only one—that you are justified by the ordinary rules of logic in assuming, since it is the simplest that is competent to cover the whole ground, and to take up any other would be unphilosophical. Divination has been alluded to. What is divination? It is simply a proof that in the olden time they had the same faith we have ourselves. Divination is similar to the phenomena spoken of by Mr. Varley—clairvoyance. Divination has a great variety of characters. We believe, as scientific people, in the possibility of the witch of Endor and of her recorded action, because we see similar phenomena around us. The miracles of the New Testament are rendered credible to those who could not believe them before, because they see similar things done to-day. Human nature is the same this century as eighteen centuries ago. We are entitled to suppose that the human being, given the wants, will have those wants supplied. The tendency of man to the inductive philosophy, to the observation of sensuous facts, and the correlation of physical forces, led him to suppose that there was nothing else but matter and the functions of matter; and when that doctrine began to prevail, these manifestations came to show that the scientific men were all astray. I was told not long ago, by the father of one of the first wranglers in Oxford, that almost every professor in Oxford was a materialist. Think of that, the chief seat of learning of our country, given up so much to the narrow scientific philosophy of the day, as to suppose that the mind of the human being was simply a function of the brain, and when the brain was out, the man was done. I believe that is a just representation of the mass of our philosophical teachings; and these despised physical phenomena were the very things that were wanted to counteract that belief. But the theology of Christendom needed correction no less than its philosophy: it needs it still, for still the horrible doctrine is popular that human beings, when they die, pass, on the one hand, by a species of spiritual thaumaturgy into unearned eternal bliss, or, on the other, into aimless and unending misery. If the puerile and commonplace character of many of the communications, and the obviously undeveloped and tricky nature of many of the poor creatures who visit the spiritual *séances*, did nothing more than explode so gross a blasphemy against the loving Creator as this hideous belief, they would do a beneficent work. The one class of "low" facts explodes the physiological fallacy, that the mind is simply a function of the brain. The other explodes the theological blasphemy of eternal damnation.

The CHAIRMAN—I regret very much that we are unable to continue the discussion in consequence of the long time I unfortunately took. The thought has occurred to me that this would be a very good place to have a meeting entirely devoted to the subject, if Dr. Robertson, Dr. Wyld, and half a dozen others, would undertake to conduct it on one side, and we will find half-a-dozen to conduct it on the other. If we cannot maintain our own upon the spiritual basis, we must yield it; but nothing that Dr. Robertson or Dr. Wyld have said would in the least degree influence my mind. Dr. Robertson says I omitted a portion of his paper; I did it in common justice to himself, for the reason that it did not meet the facts at all. It would have been an injustice to

* At Mr. Everitt's circle the invisible power has sometimes seized a pencil without the intervention of human hands, and written long messages in Latin, whilst none of those present understood Latin. How does Dr. Wyld explain this? Again, the sooner we cut our connection with our unconscious halves the better, if they show such a shocking want of veracity, and persist in calling themselves the spirits of departed mortals.—ED.

him if I had quoted any more, because I must have also quoted the reply made to him at the time in the *Spiritual Magazine*, which was the most magnificent reply I ever read, and was so complete that I did not think Dr. Robertson would venture to express the same opinions again.

Mrs. HARDINGE—I would ask you to remain one moment. I would not intrude upon you at this late hour, did I not fear that the motion of our friend Mr. Varley to return Mr. Coleman the vote of thanks which he so amply merits, and which I am sure every one present, however they may differ with him in his conclusions, must accord to him in virtue of his kindness, and in virtue of the forbearance with which he has borne during many years the scoffs and sneers which such industrious and persevering investigations have deserved at the hands of the sceptics. In virtue also of the instruction which he has bestowed this night upon us all, not in the form of a mere essay, but in that of a complete volume, I am sure you will all readily join with me, though I have the misfortune to be one of Spiritualism's "unfortunate advocates." Nevertheless, standing as I do in such most excellent company as Dr. Ashburner, William Howitt, William Wilkinson, Mrs. De Morgan, and a few others whom our excellent chairman has named to-night, I may venture to felicitate myself upon my misfortune, and therefore I ask all here present whether you admit yourselves in the same category or not, to join with me most heartily in seconding Mr. Varley's vote of thanks to our respected chairman.

The vote of thanks was carried with acclamation. Mr. Coleman then announced that next Monday (January 16th) the Rev. Dr. Davies, a minister of the Church of England, would read a paper on Spiritualism in the Beethoven Rooms; and it would probably give rise to an animated discussion. He should be very pleased to see all the listeners present at the meeting on the following Monday evening.

The proceedings then closed.

PRESENTATION OF AN ADDRESS TO MRS. HARDINGE.

On Thursday evening, January 5th, at a meeting of Spiritualists held at the Beethoven Rooms, Harley-street, Cavendish-square, the proceedings began by the asking of questions, which Mrs. Hardinge replied to under spirit influence.

In answer to one question, she said that matter is governed by one set of laws, life by another set of laws, and spirit by a third set of laws higher still; these sets of laws do not clash with each other, and until these facts are recognised by scientists and Spiritualists, progress in the investigation of Spiritual phenomena is impossible. In reply to a question about the Spiritual significance of the present war, she said that through vast catastrophes of storm, tempest, and earthquakes, the earth has reached its present physical stage; so in the moral, intellectual and spiritual world of humanity, it is necessary that there shall be catastrophes to raise the state of mankind. We, in our blindness, attribute the ruthless butchery and destruction going on in Europe to the will of a few autocrats, but it is not so. "Be still, and know that I am God," is the lesson from age to age. These sufferings are educating men by hard experience, teaching them the rottenness of those monarchical institutions, which are now being tried in the furnace of affliction, so that princes and people will soon learn more about the sacredness of life, and the necessity of using reason to avoid the failure of war. This war will prove a blessing to Europe, and be the beginning of such happiness as is now found in free America. It will make men think for themselves, instead of through their rulers, and add another to the many lessons which will make war impossible among coming generations. In answer to another question, she said that idiocy is due to some malformation of the brain or spine, so that the spirit cannot control properly the bodily machinery; after death, idiots are sane, but like little children, since they have gained no knowledge or experience on earth, but angel friends teach them and educate them, directly they enter the spirit world.

Mr. BENJAMIN COLEMAN, the President, then read the following address:—

"TO MRS. EMMA HARDINGE.

"We, your friends, here assembled this evening, greet you with much love and sympathy.

"Many a worker for humanity would labour more vigorously and cheerily if he only knew how many were his friends, and how many their prayers for his success.

"We believe you know that our hearts are with you in your noble work. We would not leave you to conjecture, but would convince you of the admiration with which we witness your courageous, self-denying, and most effective advocacy of the truths of Spiritualism; and in expressing these sentiments we know that we do but echo the voices of myriads of enthusiastic admirers from London to San Francisco.

"Not like many, whose glory was their eloquence, have you left us to the mere memory of your orations, but in an elaborate and accurate History of American Spiritualism you have recited the wonderful story of a movement which we feel assured that coming generations will regard with fervent gratitude. With all earnestness we would encourage you to yield yourself still more unreservedly to those divine inspirations whereby you have revived and strengthened so many souls. Prove to the world yet more fully that the service of man is the true service of God, and that angels have no sweeter delight than when we unite with them in helping one another. Prove, likewise, with the accumulating evidence that the hour of death is no hour of terror, but a moment of elevation to brighter and serener spheres of development and activity.

"Hoping that your new state of married life may be one of uninterrupted happiness, and that your success in the past will be increased in the future, we beg you to believe that throughout your earthly pilgrimage you will ever carry with you our warmest sympathies and most tender regards.

"BENJAMIN COLEMAN, CHAIRMAN.

"LONDON, Jan. 5, 1871."

Mr. PEARSON proposed that the address be responded to in the heartiest manner.

Mr. ELLIS seconded the proposition. He said that he was a new Spiritualist, but the first objects in the new book were so bright, and beautiful, and wonderful, that he was dazzled by the realities of the present, as well as by the promises for the future.

At the request of the President the resolution was confirmed by those assembled rising from their seats, and the address was then presented to Mrs. Hardinge.

Mrs. HARDINGE said that her heart was too full to speak, and she must trust more to silent sympathy. In America she had met with very large masses of Spiritualists, kind and affectionate, having a sympathy with herself which she could hardly describe, but whenever she returned to her own country and her own people, she found a little cluster of true-hearted English men and women, with something so true about them, that she forgot the paucity of numbers. They were like the old oaks of our land, for they had a heart beneath their seeming coldness and apathy, and a firmness which would never permit the truth of Spiritualism to be uprooted. Years and years ago, her beloved spirit friends had given her the work of writing the History of American Spiritualism. Those spirit friends told her that a spirit of coldness would come over the movement as a prelude to a fresh outburst. She asked them, "Was it possible that this brightness and love should fade?" They told her that a mighty renovation was to come; that the waves of war would sweep over the whole

earth, and that until the sword of justice was sheathed, Spiritualism would apparently fail. They told her that not until the year 1875 would the wail from the battle-fields be hushed, and the worst of the disintegrated institutions of Europe and Asia be overthrown. Directly afterwards a mighty pentecostal wave will sweep over free America, and the people will learn that the Spiritual power is not for the gratification of the senses alone, but for the planting of deep and holy principles in the human heart. Be faithful then, and wait with trimmed lamps for the coming hour.

Mr. COLEMAN, who was much overcome while presenting the address, said that he could not help it, as he and Mrs. Hardinge had fought so many battles side by side, in the early days of Spiritualism in England. He, himself, had had little to do with the wording of the address; it was drawn up, for the most part, by Mr. William White, a gentleman of a very modest and retiring disposition, sitting at the other end of the room.

Mr. HARDINGE said that in the face of many difficulties, and of much abuse from a ribald press, Mr. Coleman had been perhaps the foremost in working for the cause of Spiritualism. He had proved himself to be a good and kind friend. To him they were all indebted for the weekly meetings in Harley-street, and she trusted that when he read his own paper on the following Monday evening, they would all attend and bring friends with them, with warm hearts and in all sympathy.

Shortly afterwards the proceedings closed.

SPIRITUALISM IN KILBURN.

LAST Monday week a meeting, convened by the Kilburn Society for Inquiring into the Truthfulness of Spiritualism, was held in the Carlton-hall, Carlton-road, Kilburn. Mr. Joseph Freeman presided; the admission was free, and there was a large attendance considering the inclemency of the weather. The object of the meeting was to hear a lecture through the trance-mediumship of Mr. Morse, at the close of which lecture questions were to be put by the audience.

After a few words from the President, Mr. J. J. Morse passed into the trance state, and said that the subject of his address was "Is man immortal? If so, why and how?" He then went on to say that man has a material body, and that the spiritual elements of the atoms composing that body are abstracted from the said atoms, and form an ethereal spiritual body within the material body. A spark of intelligence, holy and pure, governs the actions of the spiritual body with which it is connected by a link which, for want of a better term, he would call "vital magnetism." The spiritual body is connected with the material body by another link, which he would call "vital electricity." The object of the material body is to form the spiritual body within, and when this work is done the material body is no longer required, so begins to decay and finally passes away; this is why men die. Death is not the King of Terrors, but a bright and radiant angel, whose mission it is to set free the imprisoned spirit.

The speaker was proceeding to assert where the freed spirit goes to, when he was interrupted by a gentleman in the audience, who requested him to shorten his address. From this time there was a scene of confusion, caused more especially by one man, who, although told he was out of order, insisted on making speeches in which he insulted the chairman and others, and in this way monopolised to himself nearly the whole of the rest of the time of the meeting. There were some inquirers present who desired to quietly cross-question the speaker, but were prevented in the manner just stated. Mr. Morse, in the trance state, listened in a very quiet and dignified way to all the noise and hubbub, and when, in a chance interval of calmness, he had an opportunity of speaking, he answered one or other of the many questions which had been fired at him.

Kilburn had been placarded by the Society with bills, announcing that, at the close of the address, questions from the audience would be answered, "by spirits," through the medium. As a lecture through trance-mediumship can give no evidence to novices of the presence of disembodied spirits, and in this respect differs from the physical manifestations, some little disturbance at the meeting was not very surprising. With one or two exceptions, however, the audience behaved remarkably well. The trance-communications through Mr. Morse vary much in quality; this one was neither one of the best nor one of the worst.

* * * TO CORRESPONDENTS.—Reports of meetings of the St. John's Association and of the Brixton Society, also several letters, are crowded out, and will be in the next number of *The Spiritualist*.

THE HARLEY-STREET MEETINGS.—The Monday evening meetings at Harley-street, open to subscribers and their friends, have been originated and carried out chiefly by Mr. Coleman, and at his own expense, for, with two or three exceptions, he has received very little in the way of subscriptions. The experience of many weeks has proved that these meetings serve a useful purpose, for they have brought forth very valuable papers about Spiritualism, from several educated men of high attainments; they have also given opportunities to professional men, whose time is valuable, to say what they had to say for or against Spiritualism, before a cultured auditory, which listens impartially to opinions of all kinds without interruption. This is not always the case at free public meetings where noisy individuals, who are not worth hearing, often monopolise all the time. On the ground then that these meetings serve a useful purpose, we recommend those who attend them, to continue them through the winter, by joining heartily in subscriptions, which should be sent to Mr. Benjamin Coleman, 1, Bernard-villas, Upper Norwood, S.E.

The Spiritual News.

The Spiritual News, published on the first of every month, Price One Penny, is issued in connection with *The Spiritualist*, published on the fifteenth of every month, Price Threepence. A good supply of news is thus given at fourpence per month.

Advertisements in *The Spiritual News* will be inserted at a charge of one shilling for the first twenty-four words or portion of twenty-four words, and sixpence for every additional twelve words, or portion of twelve words. When five or more insertions of the same advertisements are ordered, a reduction of one-fifth will be made in these rates. All advertisements will be printed in closely-set type.

All letters intended for publication should be short, and to the point.

Communications intended for the Editor should be addressed to the care of the publisher, Mr. E. W. Allen, 11, Ave Maria-lane, St. Paul's Churchyard, London, E.C.

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