

# The Spiritual News.

A RECORD OF THE PROGRESS OF SPIRITUALISM IN GREAT BRITAIN.

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## "THE SPIRITUAL NEWS."

As the work of the busiest part of the year is now nearly over, and as Spiritual periodicals can only be published at considerable loss, in time and money, we have resolved to suspend the publication of this little supplement to *The Spiritualist*—*The Spiritual News*—during the summer months. After the close of the summer, we shall give a supply of news at shorter intervals, and carry on the work with considerable vigour. *The Spiritualist* has been very favourably received; it has been steadily rising in circulation from the first day it was printed up to the present time, and very many subscribers, perfect strangers to us, have unasked been kind enough to take regularly several copies for distribution. In temporarily discontinuing *The Spiritual News* from this date, we have to thank those subscribers who have given it their support. The right to the title of *The Spiritual News* is retained.

### MESSRS. HERNE AND WILLIAMS'S MEDIUMSHIP.

LAST Saturday night a *séance* was held at 61, Lamb's Conduit-street, Holborn, at which about a dozen ladies and gentlemen were present. Messrs. Herne and Williams were the mediums. Those assembled sat round a large oval table, very close together, so that each sitter touched his or her neighbours, and no one could stand up without the fact being known. Mr. Herne sat at one end of the table, and Mr. Williams sat at the other. The lights were extinguished in order to obtain the direct spirit voices, and the room was then, as usual in such cases, pitch dark.

Flowers were first brought and showered upon the table; there were enough daffodils to fill two hats. Then came the voices. John King's voice was strong and powerful, as usual, and he moved about with much rapidity from one part of the room to the other, talking to various members of the circle. Several other spirits spoke audibly, and among them was one of a young man who "died" a few weeks ago, who was known to some members of the circle, and whose voice was recognised. Usually, at spirit circles, the voices are not the same as those of the same speakers while in the body, because of the difficulties under which the voice manifestations are produced. On this occasion, the conditions being favourable, some of the spirit voices moving about the room were very loud and powerful: a great volume of wind must have been necessary to produce them.

Then came spirit hands, carrying flowers and small articles from one member of the circle to another, and proving clearly that the owners of the hands could see to perfection in the dark. With the usual "furtive" palpitating touch, the spirit hands patted the hands of several members of the circle, and moved and turned while so doing, so that the whole of the spirit hands, the fingers, nails, palm, thumb, &c., should be felt. The hands were warm. While this was going on, a smelling-bottle, which had been taken from a lady at the other side of the circle, was placed in the centre of Mr. Harrison's hand, which was lying open on the table, and Katie (John King's wife) said to him, "Hold it tight!" He held it tight accordingly, and this is his testimony as to what then took place:—

"I held the bottle tightly in the left hand, thinking it very likely that John King, or some of his friends, would make a snatch at it, and only left the neck of it exposed; the neck and lid together formed a cylinder about an inch long, and half an inch in diameter. Presently down came a hand upon the little bit of the bottle thus left exposed, and gave it a tremendous tug, which pulled my hand and arm up as high as I could reach, and over the centre of the table. The upward pull, I guessed at the time, to be equal to a force of six or seven pounds. I do not know of any scientific appliances which would enable any mortal present in that room to see the position of my hand, and to see the protruding neck of the bottle, so as to seize the little neck at once without feeling about for it. I did not lose possession of the bottle, but held it in my hand, on the table again. Two hands then began, in a 'palpitating' way, to play round and round my hand holding the bottle; the palpitations became more and more rapid, till at last the two hands took firm hold of my closed fist, and pulled it up high in the air till it must have nearly touched the bottom of the chandelier over the centre of the table. There were then some hearty tugs at the bottle. After each pull the hands palpitated again before they regained a firm grasp. A strong warm wind was also blowing round my hand; it might have been John blowing round it with his mouth. Finding the force so strong that I was likely to lose the bottle, I put up my right hand to help the left, after which the power of the hands to grasp mine slowly declined. I said, 'John, let me take hold of one of your hands, if you can.' A finger was then placed in my right hand; I felt it—felt the nails, and then pinched it; it resisted pressure like flesh and blood. I thought of holding on to it, but it occurred to me that it would only melt away, as spirit hands have done, when seized by dozens of persons, and that a thwack over the head from John's paper tube would be the result of taking liberties. I regret now I did not ask his permission to hold on as long as possible, and will do so next time. All this time both my hands were over the centre of the table as high up as I could reach, and the spirit hands about them were wrists uppermost, the fingers pointing downwards. At last I said, 'John, you can't get the bottle, so I will give it

you.' I then opened my hand, and felt the bottle taken up out of reach. Shortly afterwards the lady, to whom it belonged, said it had been returned to her. Soon afterwards twinkling lights, as big as pearls, began to sparkle about the room; I mean lights visible to eyes in their normal state, and not such lights as are often seen by seeing media. Sometimes four or five of these lights were seen at once at different places; they moved about, went up to the ceiling, and sometimes descended to the centre of the table. They would sometimes expand, contract, and die away. They were sometimes brighter than luminous phosphorus, and had more of a 'sparkling' nature. Sometimes there were feeble traces of smoke from them, but usually none at all. There was no smell of phosphorus, or of any kind. They were not of the cold bluish-white colour of the lights seen through Mrs. Everitt's mediumship, but warmer; they contained more yellow rays. The lights were reflected by a looking-glass in the room. While two of them were sparkling very brilliantly, close up to the ceiling, I said, 'John, I have never seen spirit-lights illuminate any material object, though they are reflected by a mirror; I wish you would produce some on a sheet of paper.' Just before saying this, unknown to anybody, I took a piece of note-paper out of my pocket, and held it in my hand. Directly the remark was made, the two stars came swiftly down from the ceiling, something solid (two fingers, I should guess, by the sound) carrying the light, tapped the paper in my hands, the two lights fell upon the paper off whatever had been carrying them, rolled round the paper in circle, and went up to the ceiling again. I instantly applied the paper to my nose, to learn if it smelt of phosphorus. It had no smell. The flowers brought at the beginning of the *séance* had been gathered up, when a light was struck, and placed in a heap on a little table behind my chair. After the spirit-light ceased, I heard a rushing noise among the flowers behind me, while the sitters on either side of me were motionless, and instantly all the flowers descended in a shower over my head, so as to cover me with daffodils. While all these manifestations were going on, nobody could have risen from his seat without its being known. The two mediums were in their seats, and conversing with the rest of the company about the manifestations we were all observing; and though lights, voices, and hands, were very busy, usually between the heads of the witnesses and the ceiling, there were no feet or noises on the top of the table. There were raps now and then in answer to questions. The room was an ordinary one with a whitewashed ceiling. John King is the same John King in voice, manner, character, and mentality, as the John King who speaks at Mrs. Mary Marshall's *séances*. At this *séance* he spoke to me of things he had done there while I was present; I said, 'Oh, I may have spoken about some of those manifestations; tell me something I have not talked about.' He asked me whether I remembered how a friend of mine, who had been puzzled with the voice manifestations, went one day with a companion, and painted the fiddles over with phosphoric oil, in order to see them flying about. John added, 'I made him wipe off the oil before the manifestations began.' After some thought, I remembered that a friend of mine had gone to Mrs. Marshall's about two years ago, and been treated as stated. I moreover had not talked of the incident, because he was one of the many who did not wish it to be known that he was inquiring into Spiritualism. At one part of the sitting, while talking to John, and cross-questioning him about some of his statements, Katie's voice struck in with the remark, 'That's right! puzzle him! puzzle him!' and she seemed to be vastly pleased that all he said was not unhesitatingly accepted."

The *séance* closed with a prayer by Mr. Alsop, of 2, Great Turnstile, Holborn. John said, when it was finished, "Amen. Good night; God bless you."

### MRS. BASSETT'S MEDIUMSHIP.

ON Thursday, March 16th, Mrs. Bassett, a non-professional medium, of 25, Thornham-grove, Leyton-road, Stratford, E., gave a *séance* to the Brixton Society of Spiritualists, at 98, Lothian-road, North Brixton. Before the *séance* began a few members of the Society were taking tea together, with Mrs. Bassett, in the room in which the sitting was to take place, when suddenly a round table, with a top about a yard in diameter, standing near Mrs. Bassett, began to slide along the floor, moving about three inches each time. Nobody was touching the table, which from top to bottom was in full view of the assembled company; there was plenty of light from three gas flames; the medium was about a foot from the table. Also, under the same conditions, and while she was not touching it, raps came from its upper surface. Afterwards, at the public *séance*, the room was darkened, and the voices incidental to Mrs. Bassett's mediumship were heard. The voices were heard under test conditions only by those who sat close to the medium; and those who sat so close as to touch her, were quite sure that one of the spirit voices was speaking from a point about two feet above her head.

Last Thursday week Mr. Tapp and Mr. Harrison had a *séance* with Mr. and Mrs. Bassett at Stratford. A violin lay upon the table, and in the dark *séance* its bow was raised by one of the spirits. In the pitch darkness Mr. Tapp raised his hand in the air and asked the spirit to touch the tips of all his fingers in succession with the fiddle-bow. This was done. Then, by request, touches were given to his right and left ears. Afterwards, absolute evidence of the same kind was given to Mr. Harrison that the holder of the violin-bow could see to perfection in the dark. He pulled the end of the fiddle-bow, and found that the power carrying it was very weak, only just sufficient to float it in the air.

Some conversation took place with a spirit of the name of James Lombard, who, while speaking about human illness, said that "when a child dies, it is all a mistake to say God took it; children die because of ignorance—ignorance on the part of society, it may be, whereby certain children are surrounded by conditions which prohibit healthy life, or ignorance on the part of the parents, in consequence of which the child contracts diseases whereof it dies prematurely; the exercise of intelligence will in time prevent such unnatural deaths." When the speaker finished these remarks, one of the visitors told him "he knew all that long ago,"





and the spirit replied, "I am glad to hear it." James Lombard, who is the deceased brother of one of the servants of the Great Eastern Railway Company, said that "he produced the spirit voice by collecting the atmospheric emanations thrown off from the persons composing the spirit circle, but he used chiefly the emanations from the medium. These emanations he moulded, almost as a man would mould clay, into a throat and speaking apparatus, which apparatus he was then using above the head of the medium, to make his voice heard. The voice heard by the listeners was not the voice with which he spoke while in the flesh; he was very sorry to talk at circles just as though he had a cold in his head, but how could he help it when he had to use the rubbish thrown off by human beings, to make his voice heard at all?"

Another spirit of the name of Robinson then said a few words. The voice of this spirit always comes from near the medium's neck and shoulders—James Lombard speaks from above her head. Mr. Harrison asked Robinson, "Why can we get no good evidence that Faraday, or some other well known philosopher, is working from your side of the grave in the attempt to perfect this method of communication?" The spirit said, "I will not give you the reply I thought of giving. No, I will not. You go on observing, collecting all the information you can; you will get the truth in the end, and no spirit either in or out of the body has any wish to deceive you." This reply was a little remarkable, as the enquirer was a comparative stranger to Mr. and Mrs. Bassett, so the spirit showed considerable knowledge of the habits of the questioner. This very interesting *séance* closed with a feat accomplished by a spirit known to Mr. and Mrs. Bassett as "Charley," who brought a dinner plate and an apple by some means through the walls, from the room of the adjoining kitchen, and placed them on the table.

Mr. Bassett has often braved public opinion in Stratford by telling the truth about Spiritualism, though there was a time when he condemned Spiritualists, as fit only for the lunatic asylum.

### THE KILBURN SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS.

On Monday, March 20th, a *soirée* of the Kilburn Society for Investigating the Truthfulness of Spiritualism, took place at the Carlton Hall, Carlton-road, Kilburn. About sixty ladies and gentlemen were present, and an excellent tea was provided. After tea Mr. Fabyan N. Daw was voted into the chair.

Mr. A. C. Swinton, secretary, then read the report, and he said he regretted the absence of Mr. C. W. Pearce, the President of the Association, whose energy had done much to make the work of the society in Kilburn so successful. The report set forth that the association had been formed on the 24th November last, with nine members; since then the number of members had increased to thirty-four. *Séances* had been held, a library had been established, large quantities of Spiritual publications had been sold or given away, and much publicity had been obtained by means of placards, handbills, and the admission of a free discussion of the subject in the *Kilburn Times* newspaper. Several lectures had also been delivered. The result is that eleven new spirit-circles are known to have been formed in the district, and there is strong reason for believing that there are many others besides. All connected with the association, including the lecturers, had cheerfully given their services gratuitously.

Mr. R. G. Bassett then read the Treasurer's report, which set forth that the total receipts amounted to £17 10s. 0d., and that there was a balance of £1 6s. 5d. in hand.

Mr. Durant moved that the report be adopted. He said that the motives of the managers of the society had been of the most exalted nature, and they had had to face many difficulties.

Mr. Harrison seconded the adoption of the report, and said that he did not know that the editor of any local London paper, except the *Kilburn Times*, had investigated Spiritualism before writing about it, and when he knew the facts of the case, had told the truth in his journal. As the society was called an association for the "investigation" of Spiritualism, he wished to ask the Secretary what had been the results of the investigation, and what laws governing the phenomena had been discovered?

The report was then adopted unanimously, after which

The Secretary said that the society was not formed to philosophically investigate the laws governing the phenomena; it was formed to investigate the "truthfulness" of Spiritualism, and had come to the decision that spirit communion was a reality.

Mr. R. G. Bassett said that all his life he had sought after truth, and when he gained the knowledge, had acted up to it as well as he could. He would give his experiences in Spiritualism; his testimony might be acceptable to some, and it would be very obnoxious to others. In November last he had stated publicly in that hall, that certain very extraordinary phenomena had been brought under his notice, by persons whom he knew to be incapable of deception. He therefore tried to obtain the phenomena at home, not in the presence of strangers, but with his own wife; they obtained such strange manifestations that he considered it his bounden duty to speak to the facts, and that night he did not feel ashamed to make the confession which he intended to make before he sat down. Having brought certain conditions to bear in his own house, he obtained results, after which he read five or six volumes on Spiritualism, including the books of Dr. Ashburner and Mr. W. Howitt; he had also attended *séances* with the full resolve to expose any trickery. A friend was then sitting on his left, who went with him to a *séance* one night on purpose to expose the imposture, but now that he had found it to be true, he was glad to help to make known to the world that it was true. (Applause.) That night, as a Christian man, and as a member of a large church, and notwithstanding all the consequences he might have to suffer in business matters and in relation to public opinion, he would state that he as much believed in the fact that disembodied spirits are now in communion with mankind, as he did that he was standing there that night. He knew this three months ago, but had been cautious, and had taken more time to examine fully; therefore he had much pleasure in proposing a resolution that the name of the society should be changed from "The Kilburn Association for Investigating the Truthfulness of Spiritualism," to "The Kilburn Society of Spiritualists." If he and the society had not come to some conclusion by that time, they ought to be ashamed to show themselves, and Mr. Harrison had done right to put the question as to the results. He knew scores of people in Kilburn who were fully aware of the truthfulness of Spiritualism, but who are so fettered in their business relations that they dared not speak out. People speak of money paid to mediums; he assured those present that he had never paid one single halfpenny to any medium up to the present time, and he had never paid a single halfpenny for admission to any *séance*.

The Chairman said that he was very pleased to hear Mr. Bassett speak out in that way, and it required some courage to do so, since such statements of truth bring down much sarcasm and abuse, and sometimes many personal sacrifices; besides, it often makes a man to be thought a fool by friends with whom he has walked from his youth upwards.

Mr. Bassett said that a friend had just suggested that he should speak as to the character of the spirits who had communicated with him. The public say sometimes that they "do not doubt the truth of Spiritualism, but the spirits who communicate must be evil ones, who personate deceased friends." He, himself, had had sufficient evidence that his own friends, and none others, had communicated with him. Among those friends were his own father, his brother, his sister, and some eight Christian persons, five of whom were members of Christian churches in the neighbourhood while they lived in the body. In their communications, each one had shown so much of the character of the person who purported to send the message, that he was inwardly convinced that they all were those who they represented themselves to be. Did not He who went about doing good say, "They shall be known by their fruits?" If his sister signalled out "Your shield—truth!" and gave other messages of a similar kind, why should he deem that they came from the Devil? If the Devil spoke truth, he would listen to him. (Applause.) He did not necessarily endorse all the various opinions which many Spiritualists hold; that night he would not touch upon any theological points; he only pinned himself to the one statement that disembodied spirits have the power to communicate with mankind.

Mr. Taunton seconded the motion.

Mr. Tapp said that he did not oppose the resolution, but he thought that it was a little mistake to change the name of the society so soon. The Dalston Society, of which he was a member, had a title very nearly the same, and if they changed it now, they would shut out many enquirers who would otherwise join its ranks.

Mr. T. Everitt said that he could not agree with Mr. Tapp about the undesirability of changing the title. When the association arrived at the conviction that Spiritualism was true, they did right then and there to declare the conviction, and every private individual should do the same. He believed Spiritualism calculated to make grand revolutions in modern philosophy and thought.

The resolution was then passed.

Several songs and recitations were given. Among those who took part in the proceedings of the evening were Miss Nisbet, Mrs. Everitt, Mrs. Pearce, Mr. Towns, and Mr. Ashman. Mr. Towns spoke well of the labours of Mr. Pearce and Mr. Swinton, both of whom had done so very much to promote the welfare of the Kilburn Society.

The company separated at about ten o'clock.

### Correspondence.

#### SPIRITUALISM IN BIRMINGHAM.

SIR,—The conferences and lectures are continued here with increasing success, and are now, by means of the collections, self-supporting. The audiences have gradually increased so as to fill the hall on the Sunday evenings, and the Sunday afternoon conferences still attract a fair sprinkling of the Secularists, and a goodly number of young and inquiring minds. The so-called orthodox world is conspicuous by its absence, except in one or two instances. At the conference on Sunday, the 19th instant, a certain Philistine of the press was present, and came down upon us with three-quarters of a column in the *Birmingham Daily Post*, gave a splendid advertisement of the meeting, and afforded a few laughs, no doubt, to the general public. A letter in reply to the article was inserted on the following day, which threw a little useful light on the subject. We have also had the services of a highly educated and well-developed American gentleman, Mr. Alston, who has lectured on two Sunday mornings, and is to do so on Sunday, the 2nd of April. This gentleman is advanced far beyond the average of high-class mediums, as an impressionable speaker and writer—is extremely profound and abstract in his ideas, but very few of us here are able to comprehend the full import of the discourses. Mr. Alston also lectures every evening in the open air, to fair audiences, at the back of the Town Hall, and these lectures are said to be much more intelligible.

The conferences and lectures are to be continued some six weeks longer; they have already produced very useful results, and altogether the prospect is highly encouraging.

R. HARPER.  
Birmingham, March 28th.

SPIRITUALISM IN DALSTON.—Last Thursday night a dark *séance* was held by the Dalston Society of Enquirers into Spiritualism, at 74, Navarino-road, Dalston, E. Messrs. Herne and Williams were the mediums. The conditions were unfavourable, more than thirty persons being present—much too many for good manifestations. At the beginning of the sitting flowers were brought, and some of the sitters had the flowers given into their hands, so these received them under test conditions. Mr. Blyton, the secretary, held his hand vertically in the air, without telling anybody, and a flower was placed in it at once. After sitting for half-an-hour, no further manifestations could be obtained, except a sentence or two at long intervals from John King, who said he could not get power to speak. The circle was then re-arranged, many of the sitters changing their places, but after trying for perhaps half-an-hour longer, this again proved to be a failure. Then, to catch trains, many of those present withdrew, after which a smaller circle was formed. The manifestations were then a little better, and John King was able to hold fragments of conversation with different members of the circle, emphasizing his remarks now and then by knocking one of the "unbelievers" present on the head with his paper tube. The young gentleman in question was called "Rufus" by his companions, probably because of the colour of his hair, or it might have been his real name, and as Rufus and his friends were unacquainted with Spiritualism, and anything but prejudiced in its favour, Mr. Herne asked Rufus to sit by him. Rufus and his companions then sat in a row on the right hand side of Mr. Herne, and Rufus held Mr. Herne's right hand. For some purpose, not yet explained, Rufus rose from his chair in the dark, and instantly his chair was placed before his nose on the top of the table. As he was touching Mr. Herne's hand at the time, that chair was either placed on the table by Rufus and his companions, or by invisible intelligent agents. Directly afterwards, those alongside Mr. Williams (who was sitting on the other side of the table) said that he was rising in the air, and soon he fell heavily on the table. A light was struck, and Mr. Williams was seen lying on the table in the trance state, and in front of Rufus were two chairs standing on the table, which had been raised from different sides. Mr. Rufus, who was an intelligent good-tempered enquirer, was then asked how his chair came to be upon the table. He said that he could not explain. As a whole, the *séance* was a failure, and we recommend the society to get up another, to thin the attendance down to twenty persons, and to invite the strangers who attended the last one for the purpose of gaining information. Three ladies, all undeveloped mediums, were curiously influenced in the course of the evening. Mrs. Bassett was present, and the spirit voices which speak through her mediumship were heard once or twice.



## VACCINATION.

ANYTHING which tends to disembody human spirits before the proper time, clearly forms a legitimate subject for consideration in a Spiritual periodical, and as small-pox and vaccination sometimes cause death, these subjects are selected on the present occasion. For some weeks past an outcry, originating in a great measure with the doctors, has arisen in London about the prevalence of small-pox; the alarming rumours have a moderate proportion of foundation in fact, but the returns of the Registrar General show that the mortality in London from all causes during the past two months, has been rather less than usual at this time of year, though too large a percentage of the deaths has been caused by small-pox. The panic has resulted in the transfer of some thousands of pounds into the pockets of the doctors, who, however, have overshot the mark, raised not a little indignation, and drawn much attention to the work of the Parliamentary Committee now engaged in making inquiries into the question whether vaccination is beneficial to the nation or the reverse.

Without asserting that a trades-union of medical men works as selfishly as other trades unions, it is plain that the medical profession, as a whole, will, where it has the power, sacrifice the public good to its own private interests, as proved by the opposition it raised to the advent of lady doctors. Again, the placards now displayed all over London about small-pox, drawn up by the doctors engaged by different parish authorities, give all kinds of instructions and orders about getting vaccinated, but as a rule say not one single word about the methods of preventing contagion when small-pox breaks out in a house; they say not one single word about isolation, ventilation, cleanliness, or disinfectants. This is because vaccination pays, but the other things do not. Therefore, in asking the doctors, in all seriousness, whether vaccination is a boon or the reverse, we appeal to a body in which the average selfishness outweighs the testimony of the very large proportion of independent upright men to be found in the medical profession.

Jenner's original theory that vaccination is a sure safeguard against the small-pox, is now altogether given up, and we are told that the vaccination is only efficacious for a certain time after the performance of the operation, though no information is given as to what that time is. Admitting, for argument's sake, that re-vaccination prevents some deaths from small-pox, and that it usually does no harm to the person operated upon, it here and there makes them very ill. In some instances it brings on diseases resulting in death, and more especially is this the case with children, where vaccination sometimes brings on fatal attacks of erysipelas. And the worst of it is, that where the parents are not intelligent, the deaths in such cases are often entered on the medical certificate as caused by erysipelas, or the secondary disease brought on by the operation, so that the real number of deaths caused by vaccination cannot be gathered from the Registrar General's returns.

The Royal College of Physicians has issued a circular to medical men and others, pointing out the immunity from small-pox of the re-vaccinated nurses in the Small-pox Hospital; the circular says nothing about the effects of the disinfecting and ventilating arrangements in the said hospitals; and if those who issued the circular know of any instances of death from small-pox after re-vaccination, they have purposely selected one example in their favour, from others which tell against them, to further trade interests. According to the Registrar General's returns for one or two of the weeks recently passed, two out of every three persons who have died of small-pox, had not been vaccinated. In the first place were the facts accurately entered on the certificates? In the second, if all the persons killed by secondary diseases brought on by vaccination, had been added to the list, would the bills of mortality have shown the above balance in favour of the vaccinated? The doctors say that small-pox, which is an eruptive fever, has diminished since vaccination has been introduced. So have most other fevers, and the "black death" is now unknown in England, but is this due to vaccination or to improved sanitary arrangements? The doctors say that untold thousands now die of small-pox in Russia. While questioning the reliability of the figures, we may also ask whether the abominably dirty lives of the ignorant Russian peasantry can possibly do anything else than foster fevers?

Supposing unvaccinated men were not shut up daily for many hours in unhealthy offices and shops in the City, supposing baths were to be found in every home and were used by every person living therein daily, and supposing that the said individuals had two hours exercise at least daily out of doors in pure air, would it be possible for the said unvaccinated persons to catch the small-pox, except from contact with those already diseased? Small-pox, like every other evil, springs from our ignorantly breaking some law; when by scientific study we learn absolutely the cause of small-pox, and act up to the knowledge gained, small-pox will be abolished. In the meantime it is a question whether vaccination is of value as a palliative, which question a Parliamentary Committee is now considering. We have received a circular from an Anti-Compulsory Vaccination League, Hon. Secretary Mr. E. S. Gibbs, 1, South-place, Finsbury, E.C. This league is too quiet. Just at this time it ought to placard London with bills, telling people who know of injuries caused by vaccination, where to go to give evidence, and in this way bring so much pressure to bear on the wealthy and educated medical trades-union working on the other side, that between the two parties the public may be able to get reliable information as to the merits of the case. Unselfish medical men, and they are many, who try to introduce medical reforms which are palpably for the benefit of the public, but opposed to the vested interests of the profession, know it to be perfectly hopeless to expect aid in such cases from the medical profession as a whole.

The remarks herein made apply only to a large section of the medical profession; we wish simply to assist in obtaining a fair hearing for all anti-vaccinators.

## SPIRITUALISM IN DALSTON.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE EASTERN POST."

SIR,—In a letter, under date 22nd October, 1870, I promised to contribute a few extracts from the record-book of our *séances*, and with your permission, will now fulfil my promise. The following particulars are duly abstracted from our books, merely premising that I affix the date of the *séances* in successive order with the number of members present at the respective sittings.

December 8.—Eleven present; two of our members perceptibly touched by spirits; a lady discerned and described, a spirit present, who was thus recognised, a member was entranced and a communication made through him. Other spirits were discerned, described, and recognised.

December 15.—Five present; very rough weather, thus preventing many members from attending, no perceptible result ensued.

December 22.—Nine present; table freely moved, and a member partially entranced by an Indian spirit seen by another member present; a few communications were received.

December 29.—Nine present; several spirits, relatives of the president, announced their presence and answered various questions; a strange spirit of the name of Warren came and answered many questions in a satisfactory manner; table manifestations as usual.

January 5, 1871.—No record.

January 12.—Nine present; several spirit friends manifested through the medium of the table movements in an imperfect manner.

January 19.—Eleven present; usual table manifestations, and names of several spirits announced, but no communications of importance received.

January 26.—Nine present; ordinary table manifestations, and a few queries answered in a satisfactory manner.

February 2.—Six present; a lady was powerfully influenced, and efforts were made to entrance the secretary, but not effectually; all present were more or less influenced in different ways; a few table movements were obtained, but the spirits intimated that they desired the time for the development of media.

February 9.—Twelve present; a strange spirit came and intimated that he was known to a member present, but was unable to give any test as to identity. The spirit of Mr. Willesden then controlled the table in a most powerful manner, and great difficulty was experienced in keeping pace with its movements; at times it laid itself down on the floor, and, by alternate movements of the legs of the table, travelled from one room to another, most of the time the single hand respectively of two members being in contact with the surface of the top of the table, which precluded their moving the table in the above manner.

February 16.—Eight present; a visitor was entranced by a spirit relative who gave an interesting description of his spirit home and surroundings. On being entranced a second time, in this instance by an undeveloped spirit, a description was received of the unhappy condition in which the spirit was, consequent upon a mis-spent life while on earth. Usual table movements.

February 23.—Twelve present; a lady discerned, and described a spirit operating upon another member present, who was eventually entranced, and a few words spoken; a written communication was also made. Development of media was evidently the principal object of the spirits.

March 2.—Fourteen present; sat for some time without any result. Table tilts were then obtained, and instructions were received with reference to the constitution of the circle. The spirit of Mr. W. Pawley, lately a member, was clearly discerned by two ladies. The spirit of Mr. W. Willesden, who from time to time has given proof of identity, controlled the table in a very powerful manner, which increased in intensity on the members present joining in singing a hymn. A few distinct raps were observed.

March 9.—Six present; the rooms having been darkened, in accordance with the wish of those present, the circle sat for an hour without any result, excepting a member who was slightly influenced.

March 16.—Seven present; rooms darkened in pursuance of general desire, when table moved freely. The spirit of Mr. W. Pawley was again discerned, and communication received. A strange spirit was also discerned, described, and numerous tests of identity received, which were confirmed. Table moved with great rapidity and power. A lady member again influenced by an Indian spirit. Sounds were noticed during the evening, and lights were observed by several.

In conclusion, permit me to intimate that it will give me much pleasure to render any information on this subject, to the best of my ability, to any earnest enquirer into Spiritualism, while trusting this letter may interest such as are anxious of our progress. I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

THOMAS BLYTON, Secretary.

"The Dalston Association of Enquirers into Spiritualism," 74, Navarino-road, Dalston, E., March 22, 1871.

## SPIRITUALISM IN FOREIGN LANDS.

From "The Year-Book of Spiritualism."

DR. C. JOUIS writes from Suresnes, France,—“Your 'Year-Book' will be valuable to the future, as a record of the progress and rapid growth of Spiritualism in its infancy (if I am allowed to speak thus of so ancient a doctrine), compared to what it will be years hence; for the ebbs and flows are not to be found in the physical laws only, but in the spiritual ones too. The alternation of ages of belief with ages of incredulity is a fact which history teaches us as happening, at intervals, in the long-run of centuries and thousands of years. We are just emerging from such a period of unbelief to reach another and more consoling age; although the struggle between error and truth bids fair to be dreadful, in our Europe at least, where materialism has yet such a hold on the minds of men.”

From Florence, Baron Kirkup writes,—“We lately have had no phenomena but the usual ones of the table. It answers all our questions by rising, and rapping on the floor. . . . When they have more to communicate beyond yes or no, I give the child a pen; and they write with her hand. I do not entirely trust either writing or trance mediums. My table cannot be a trick, for it is well scrutinized; and the trumpet still less, moving about and sounding with violence close to the ceiling, which is seventeen feet high, and witnessed by five persons: so that it could not be my imagination; for I saw it (with plenty of candles), heard it (deaf as I am), and touched it, and picked up the pieces after it had dropped on the floor, and broken.”

Mr. W. J. Terrey, of Melbourne, Australia, in a letter dated May 1870, gives a list of twenty-five or thirty mediums of varied powers, some of whom prefer to remain unknown to the public at present. His mediumship is somewhat peculiar; he is able to converse with spirits mentally. The eyes close: there is a tension on the forehead, and gentle shocks significant.



of yes or no; and, in this condition, he takes the diagnosis of diseases, and prescribes accordingly. He proposes to enter the field as a lecturer on Spiritualism, as there is a great demand in his country for a better understanding of its phenomena and philosophy. The only lecturer who has heretofore taken the field is Mr. B. S. Nayler, an able and earnest believer.

From Calcutta, India, Pearychand Mittra sends friendly greeting to the Spiritualists of America, and remarks,—“... I have been a Spiritualist for many years. My knowledge of the Spiritual philosophy in different parts of the country is quite limited, and, I fear, cannot be of much service to you. I have never taken much interest in external manifestations, preferring to devote my attention to the study of my soul, and its varied phenomena in connection with the external world. This study is enabling, inasmuch as it raises us above all creeds and sects, and brings us into intimate communion with God, His will, His providence, and His angels. I have got to say a great deal on the subject of Spiritualism from my own experience, which with me is an *accomplished fact*. Though I have read a large number of books upon Spiritualism, I confess I have found in most of them a great deal of error, or what I have known otherwise in my own experience.”

A private letter from Mrs. Emma Kid, who has, with Mrs. Boyd, a European reputation, manifests the feelings entertained by German Spiritualists, as well as the affection which mediums sometimes feel for their controlling spirits:—“Last night, Mrs. Boyd took the planchette; and, after laying your letter on the table, we placed our hands on the ‘Morceau de Bois,’ and Luos came and wrote, ‘Read the letter.’ As soon as it was read, Luos began to write to you, when he suddenly stopped, and the planchette became violently agitated under our hands. It flew off to a round table, and began apparently resisting and warding off something very adverse to the power. It seemed to be talking emphatically to something invisible to our eyes. It raised itself erect, flew off, passing the lamp, and then bending its course under the table. I never saw anything so extraordinary and unexpected. The movements continued for half an hour, when it wrote, ‘Disturbing influences prevent communication for the present.’ Dear Luos would so rejoice to write to you! He is our controlling guardian, and never would suffer frivolity or trifling.”

“Baden-Baden.”

We have been informed that Mr. Rippon, the musical medium, is now in London.

Some good proofs of spirit identity have recently been given through the mediumship of Mr. J. J. Morse.

MR. JOHN JONES, of Enmore-park, Norwood Junction, published a letter in *The Christian World* last week, which is likely to lead to a discussion on Spiritualism in that journal.

**SPIRITUALISM IN DALSTON AND BRIXTON.**—Increased interest in Spiritualism is gradually manifesting itself in Dalston and Brixton, in consequence of the work of the societies in these districts, and the local papers are beginning to take up the subject. Neither of these societies has, as yet, done anything in the way of providing public lectures, and as Mr. T. Shorter, Mr. C. W. Pearce, and others, have had some experience in lecturing to audiences composed of people unacquainted with Spiritualism, could not arrangements be made with either of these gentlemen, or with somebody else, to give public addresses on Spiritualism in Brixton or Dalston? Public discussion on the subject would result in increasing the number of members of the local societies, and in raising the interest of the general public in the matter. The Kilburn Society, by its method of working, has caused more than a dozen new spirit circles to be started in different parts of Kilburn, and at some of these, before long, some good mediums are sure to be developed. Why has there been no lecturing at Dalston and Brixton?

**PAID MEDIUMS.**—No argument whatever can be brought against paid media, which does not tell with tenfold force against paid preachers, and for this reason:—the paid medium can give evidence that he really holds a kind of intermediate place between men and the spirit world; the paid preacher cannot give a scrap of evidence, beyond his own interested assertion, that he has any right or authority to assume to hold the same position. If in all sermons from the pulpit against paid mediums, the words “paid medium” be struck out and the words “paid preacher” be substituted, they will make capital articles for reprinting in Spiritual periodicals. In all fairness then, we apply the same rules to mediums and preachers, without favouring either. A paid medium need never take the trouble to answer any attack from a clerical source, beyond taking the attack itself, and substituting the words “paid preacher” for “paid medium.” This subject is a very ugly one for preachers to handle, for it will prove a boomerang in their hands, certain to hit themselves harder than anybody else, and the most intelligent of them know it.

**MESMERISM AND MAGNETISM.**—Last Sunday week, at the Cleveland Hall, Cleveland-street, Fitzroy-square, Mr. James Burns announced that Mrs. Hardinge was unfortunately unable to attend in consequence of indisposition, so he would deliver the evening lecture in her place. There was a fair attendance, the hall being about half full. Mr. Burns gave a very good address, in which he described the nature of the well-known phenomena of mesmerism, and gradually led the listeners on from the philosophy of mesmerism to the philosophy of Spiritualism. In what was otherwise a very good address, he made one error, to which we now call attention, because it may be prevalent. He said that Reichenbach’s sensitives and other seers see the magnetism which rises from steel magnets; that Mr. Varley had recently discovered that the force proceeding from mesmeric operators is not magnetism, therefore the said force must be some other kind of magnetism. The fact of the matter, however, is, that the flames which sensitives see rising from steel magnets are not magnetism at all, a fact of which Reichenbach and other educated people were fully aware from the first; the lines of magnetic force do not proceed in flame-like curves from the poles of a magnet, and magnetism has nothing in common with the other force which seers have made known to proceed from the magnet. The word “magnetism” has had a clear and definite meaning in England for some centuries, and the mesmeric forces proceeding from the human body might as well be called “gunpowder,” or “gooseberries,” as “magnetism,” for it bears quite as much resemblance to either of the first as it does to the last. If a sheet of paper be laid over a magnet, and fine iron filings be thinly and gently sprinkled over the paper, the filings will arrange themselves in beautifully curved lines, showing the lines of force of magnetism proper, and showing that they in no way coincide with the lines of force in the flames seen by sensitives. Moreover, magnetism attracts iron, which the mesmeric force does not. The use of calling attention to the misapplication of the word magnetism, by some Spiritualists, is to try to do away with the error, and thereby avert the prejudice frequently raised in the minds of intelligent enquirers who come among certain Spiritualists, and find such strange powers ascribed to the well-known force of common magnetism.

## 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.

### EVIDENCE THAT SPIRITUALISM DESERVES INVESTIGATION.

THE phenomena seen at spirit circles are so unlike those at present coming within the ordinary range of human experience, that nobody should believe them on testimony, but all should test them personally, and believe nothing until the absolute knowledge is gained that honest denial is impossible.

The following gentlemen who are among those who have investigated the subject have testified that the phenomena of Spiritualism are real and true, and not delusion or imposture; and more or less of their testimony is regularly printed at length in the advertising columns of every number of *The Spiritualist*. Here are their names:—Mr. C. F. Varley, C.E., F.R.G.S., Atlantic cable electrician; Mr. William Crookes, F.R.S., Editor of the *Chemical News*, and the *Quarterly Journal of Science*; Professor De Morgan, President of the Mathematical Society of London; Dr. Elliotson, F.R.S.; Viscount Adare, F.R.S.; the Earl of Dunraven; Lord Lindsay; Mr. John Bright, M.P.; Napoleon III. of France; the King of Prussia; Mr. A. R. Wallace, F.L.S., F.R.G.S., President of the Entomological Society; Mr. William Howitt; Mr. Robert Chambers; Mr. H. W. Longfellow (poet); Professor Hare, of Philadelphia; Judge Edmonds, of New York; Governor Tallmadge, of Wisconsin; and Dr. Ashburner, of London. With such evidence to support it, as well as a literature of books and periodicals extending over the last twenty years, it is clear that Spiritualism deserves investigation.

### HOW TO FORM SPIRIT CIRCLES.

An experimental trial at home, among family friends and relatives, often gives the most satisfactory evidence of the reality of spiritual phenomena. At the same time, as no fully developed medium is present among those who have never obtained manifestations before, the probability is that there will be no results. Nevertheless, it is a very common thing for striking manifestations to be obtained in this way at the first sitting of a family circle; perhaps for every one successful new circle thus started without a medium there are six or seven failures, but no accurate statistics on this point have yet been collected. When once manifestations have been obtained, they will gradually increase in power and reliability at successive sittings. The following is a good plan of action:—

1. Let the room be of a comfortable temperature, but cooler rather than warm—let arrangements be made that nobody shall enter it, and that there shall be no interruption for one hour during the sitting of the circle. Wet, damp, and foggy weather is bad for the production of physical phenomena.
2. Let the circle consist of four, five, or six individuals, about the same number of each sex. Sit round an uncovered wooden table, with all the palms of the hands in contact with its top surface. Whether the hands touch each other or not is usually of no importance. Any table will do, just large enough to conveniently accommodate the sitters. The removal of a hand from the table for a few seconds does no harm, but when one of the sitters breaks the circle by leaving the table, it sometimes, but not always, very considerably delays the manifestations.
3. Before the sitting begins, place some pointed lead-pencils and some sheets of clean writing paper on the table, to write down any communications that may be obtained.
4. People who do not like each other should not sit in the same circle, for such a want of harmony tends to prevent manifestations, except with well developed physical mediums; it is not yet known why. Belief or unbelief has no influence on the manifestations, but an acrid feeling against them is a weakening influence.
5. Before the manifestations begin, it is well to engage in general conversation or in singing, and it is best that neither should be of a frivolous nature. A prayerful, earnest feeling among the members of the circle is likely to attract a higher and more pleasing class of spirits.
6. The first symptom of the invisible power at work is often a feeling like a cool wind sweeping over the hands. The first manifestations will probably be table tiltings or raps.
7. When motions of the table or sounds are produced freely, to avoid confusion, let one person only speak, and talk to the table as to an intelligent being. Let him tell the table that three tilts or raps mean “Yes,” one means “No,” and two mean “Doubtful,” and ask whether the arrangement is understood. If three signals be given in answer, then say, “If I speak the letters of the alphabet slowly will you signal every time I come to the letter you want, and spell us out a message?” Should three signals be given, set to work on the plan proposed, and from this time an intelligent system of communication is established.
8. Afterwards the question should be put, “Are we sitting in the right order to get the best manifestations?” Probably some members of the circle will then be told to change seats with each other, and the signals will be afterwards strengthened. Next ask, “Who is the medium?” When spirits come asserting themselves to be related or known to any body present, well-chosen questions should be put to test the accuracy of the statements, as spirits out of the body have all the virtues and all the failings of spirits in the body.

Possibly at the first sitting of a circle symptoms of other forms of mediumship than tilts or raps may make their appearance. Information respecting the many kinds of mediumship will be found in Mrs. Professor De Morgan’s book, *From Matter to Spirit*, published by Longmans; and this is a good book to read before trying to start a new circle.

**SPIRITUALISM.—A SERIES OF LECTURES AND CONFERENCES** on this subject (with discussion) are being given at the Public Room, 31, Paradise-street, Birmingham, on Sundays, at Three o’clock in the afternoon, and Seven o’clock in the evening. A collection at each meeting to defray expenses.

On Sunday, the 2nd of April, the Conference will be opened by Mr. GILLMAN, of Wolverhampton. Subject:—“Spiritualism Weighed in the Balance;” and the Lecture in the evening, by the same gentleman. Subject:—“Pulling Down and Building Up.”

On Sunday, April 9th, the Conference will be opened by a FRIEND. Subject:—“Experiences of Spiritualism;” and in the evening the Lecture will be by Mr. FRANKLIN. Subject:—“Testimonies of Great Men.”

**AARON FRANKLIN, PRESERVER OF BIRDS, ANIMALS, AND DELINEATOR OF NATURE.** Museums and private collections attended. British and Foreign Birds’-skins, Stags’ heads, Fox’s heads, Shells, and Corals in great variety. *The Spiritualist* and kindred periodicals kept on sale. Established 1847. AARON FRANKLIN, 58, Suffolk-street, Birmingham.

**MESSRS. HERNE AND WILLIAMS, Spirit Mediums,** beg to inform investigators that they are at home daily to give private *séances* from 10 a.m. to 5 o’clock p.m. They are also open to receive engagements for private *séances* in the evening, either at home or at the residence of investigators. Address, 61, Lamb’s Conduit-street, Foundling, W.C.

**THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF SPIRITUALISM,** by Mr. Benjamin Coleman, recently published in the *Spiritualist*, reprinted in pamphlet form, on toned paper, with coloured wrapper. The discussion is also included in the pamphlet. Copies may be had at one shilling each, of Mr. E. W. Allen, 11, Ave Maria-lane, E.C., and are of especial value for presentation to those who are unacquainted with the subject of Spiritualism.

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