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AND JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE.

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A Record of the Progress of the Science and Ethics of Spiritualism.

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July, 1876.

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DR. SLADE.

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in the *Times* newspaper. It contains a reprint of the letters in the *Times* from Professor Lankester, F.R.S.; Dr. H. B. Donkin; Colonel Lane Fox, president of the Anthropological Institute; Dr. Carter Blake; Mr. C. C. Massey, barrister-at-law; Mr. J. A. Clarke; Mr. A. R. Wallace, F.R.G.S.; Mr. A. Joy, M.Inst.C.E.; Mr. G. C. Joad; Mr. Park Harrison; Mr. Sergeant Cox; Professor Barrett, and Dr. Slade.—2d., post free.
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Republished from *The Spiritualist* for July 14th.

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The Spiritualist Newspaper,

A Record of the Progress of the Science and Ethics of Spiritualism.

VOLUME TEN. NUMBER SEVEN.

LONDON, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16th, 1877.

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SPIRITUALISTS FOR 1877.

THE Annual National Conference of Spiritualists begun on Wednesday, last week, with a *conversazione*, held at 38, Great Russell-street, London, and in the course of the evening an address was delivered by the President of the Association. On the following day, Thursday, the reading of papers began at 3.30 p.m., and the evening meeting began at 8 o'clock; two other meetings were held last Friday, and on the evening of that day the Conference came to a close. As the proceedings went on, public interest awakened more and more, until there were full attendances. Amongst the friends present were:—

Mr. Alexander Calder, President of the National Association of Spiritualists; Mr. Morell Theobald; Mr. E. Dawson Rogers; Mr. M. J. Walhouse, F.R.A.S.; Mr. Desmond Fitz-Gerald, M.S.Tel.E.; Mr. H. Wedgwood, M.R.I.; Dr. Blunt; Mr. T. H. Edmands; Mr. H. D. Jencken, M.R.I.; Miss E. Fitz-Gerald; Mrs. Maltby; Miss Maltby; Dr. George Wylde; Mr. C. C. Massey; Mr. H. T. Humphreys; Mr. W. B. Mawson; Mr. E. Parkinson Ashton; Mrs. Makdougall Gregory; Mr. Algernon Joy, M.Inst.C.E.; Mr. Benjamin Coleman; Mr. Alfred H. Louis; Mrs. Lowe; Captain John James; Mr. R. Pearce; the Rev. W. Miall; Mr. Thomas Shorter; Miss E. Shorter; Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Morse; Mrs. Limpus; Mr. A. B. Camm; Mr. G. R. Tapp; Miss Caroline Burke; Mr. A. Glendinning; Mr. C. E. Williams; Mr. Thomas J. Barratt; Dr. Carter Blake; Mr. Henry Cook; Mr. I. Mayo; Mr. A. Vacher; Miss Barber; Miss A. M. Collingwood; Mr. and Mrs. Regan; Mr. Musgrave; Mrs. Langhorne Burton Burton; Mrs. Alan Tennyson Ker; Mrs. Rogers; Mrs. Burke; Miss F. J. Theobald; Miss A. C. Williamson; Miss E. Williamson; Mrs. Michell; Mr. W. Herbert; Mrs. Dixon; Miss E. Withall; Miss H. Withall; Mr. H. Hales; Mrs. and Miss Brewerton; Mr. John Rouse; Mrs. Pritchard; Mr. John Glass; Mrs. William Crookes; Mrs. Humphreys; Miss Clara Wing; Mr. S. P. Field; Mr. C. Pearson; Mrs. Wiseman; Mr. A. T. Peterson; Mr. Potts; Mr. W. Eglinton; Miss Savage; Mrs. Hallock; Miss L. Newenham; Mr. and Mrs. G. F. Green; Mrs. Keningale Cook; Miss Ellen Crump; Mr. John Taft; Miss E. Kislbury; and Mr. W. H. Harrison.

THE OPENING PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS.

The following is the opening address, delivered at the *conversazione*, by Mr. Alexander Calder, President of the British National Association of Spiritualists:—

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

It having been suggested that I should address you this evening, preparatory to our Conference, which commences to-morrow, I purpose to review, however imperfectly, the most prominent features which concern us in the year which has passed.

Before proceeding on this task I feel it necessary to dwell on a matter which naturally occupies our attention as it is of immediate interest. I refer to the position of that eminent worker in our cause, Dr. Henry Slade. If the history of his trial and conviction, in spite of the "overwhelming evidence" in his favour, was thought unjust, what shall we think of the commencement of fresh proceedings for the same alleged offence, although he made a successful appeal at Quarter Sessions? The first proceedings were undertaken in the vain hope of suppressing Spiritualism, and the second or present are declared to be on scientific grounds. But surely science needs no such subterfuge. Surely every species of persecution degrades her fair name. She loves accuracy above all things. In this respect science resembles Spiritualism. Facts count for much, inferences for little or nothing. The strongest evidence against Dr. Slade when weighed amounts only to an inference, wholly insufficient to balance the weakest testimony in his favour; not one fact was proved against him, while many were given for him. This is the bare truth; let those deny it who can. It requires no man of science to discern that the charge against him is as light as a feather compared with the evidence in his favour, yet strange to say the insensibility to things spiritual is so great as to influence respectable men in the perpetration of illiberal acts. Nothing is truer than this proposition, that a man may be highly distinguished in one branch of knowledge, and yet be wholly ignorant of Spiritualism, and that simply because he has not made it his study. Grapes do not grow on thorns, nor are figs found on thistles. It is lamentable to think

of the deep ignorance in which men are content to dwell as regards the highest half of their nature, and painful for us now to believe that we are deprived of the use of the gifts of a great medium, whereby the minds of materialists might have been quickened into a better, because truer, knowledge of life and its mysterious relationship to the things unseen. If left to work among us unmolested it is not improbable that Dr. Slade would prove the agent to effect a revolution in public opinion by exciting a distinct desire for spiritualistic study. But this cannot, must not be. The Committee of the Spiritualists' Defence Fund weighing the fact of his shattered condition, see no chance of his restoration to health in an atmosphere already too charged with the elements of persecution: and they have firmly resolved to discourage his return to England until passion shall have resigned her place to the genius of investigation, the furious *matador* for the diligent inquirer. To pursue "elusive wild beasts" may be more in keeping with the character of the zoologist than that of the student of a higher science; but it scarcely helps to unravel what, to say the least, has proved a stupendous mystery. It is preposterous to expect that violence and haste can favour the cause of science, whose votaries are uniformly distinguished for meekness, patience, and dispassion.

Stepping aside from these unhappy considerations and looking abroad, it is a comfort to see the waves of truth everywhere rising. To say nothing of the movement in the United Kingdom, concerning which you are well informed, foremost in activity we behold in the West the United States, followed by Mexico and other places on the great Continent of America, while nearer us France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Holland, Belgium, Hungary are conspicuous, and further off, at the Cape, in India, and Australia the flood carries nourishment and fertility. In all these places societies—several of them being in correspondence with our own Association, are established and in active work—setting forth some of the wonderful testimonies of the spirit. All these independent self-supporting circles declare the solemn truth, which cannot be too often repeated, that the proper development of man must be through the spirit, and that Spiritualism is the noblest prize of religious freedom whereby a stronger impetus is given to virtue and goodness, the brilliancy of which has been sadly obscured by the sordid characteristics of the age.

Such being our view, it is a hopeful sign that everything around betokens the approach of the full light of the day of regeneration. In the field of literature the year has not been without fruit, as several new works have been published, and among them may be mentioned *Original Researches in Psychology*, by Mr. T. P. Barkas; *Life beyond the Grave*, by "Fritz;" two works edited by Mrs. Hardinge-Britten, *Art Magic* and *Ghost Land*; Miss Anna Blackwell's translation of Allan Kardec's *Mediums' Book*; and various interesting pamphlets on the Slade case. An important work has also appeared in the Dutch language, by our corresponding member, Mr. A. J. Riko, and various translations of standard writings on Spiritualism have been translated into French, German, and Spanish.

With thirty-eight Journals and Reviews flourishing in Europe and the United States, we have acquired an established position of some strength in the world; and the campaign of the year now fully entered upon promises fair probabilities of usefulness.

Descending to more minute particulars, I think we may be permitted to congratulate ourselves on the steady advance in the important work to which we have set our hands. Everywhere along the line of operations there has been a great display of energy marked in several spheres of labour with unparalleled success.

The genuineness of spirit photography received a remarkably striking solution early in the year, when a committee of seven practical photographers conducted a series of experiments at Cincinnati in the United States, Mr. Hartman, a rival photographer, who had obtained considerable distinction in this line, being the medium. Precautions having been taken that the experiments should not be conducted at his house, and that he should have nothing whatever to do with the manipulation of the plates, the certificate which was granted on the occasion declares that three distinct spirit pictures were secured, and the Committee express

themselves "satisfied that these forms were produced by some means unknown to them, and without fraud on the part of the said medium, for he never entered the dark room or handled the plates." This testimony, coming from a body of rival photographers, disbelievers in the phenomena, is most valuable, and their assurance is all the more satisfactory because it follows shortly after the defection and cupidity of the French photographer, Buguet; and the circumstance should go far to remove the doubt which was then cast on this branch of evidence. When we consider that ordinary photography was wholly unknown some fifty years ago, and the world was slow and reluctant at that period to believe in the possible production of one picture like those now produced daily by the cartload, we need scarcely be surprised at the large development of spirit photographs. We may be sure that when we know more of spirit power we shall marvel less at this production. Besides, all doubt and lurking surprise should wholly vanish when we remember the experiments conducted under scientific tests by those distinguished Fellows of the Royal Society, Messrs. Crookes and Varley, in that other department of psychology, the materialisation of spirits.

The account given by Mr. Varley last December under this head shows, among other matters, that the experiment he refers to was conducted at the residence of Mr. Luxmoore, in Hyde Park, where the medium was treated like a telegraph cable, a current being sent from her right wrist along her right and left arms to her left wrist. She was tested for what is technically known as "continuity and resistance" all through the sitting. For this purpose a reflecting galvanometer, a box of standard resistances, and the necessary keys and shunts were employed. By these means the medium could not break the circuit of electricity for even the hundredth part of a second without the fact being instantly revealed! "Yet," says Mr. Varley, "out came the materialised Annie Morgan. She spoke to us and wrote before us on paper; and, stranger still, she once appeared only half materialised from her waist upwards, the lower extremities being absent." Mr. Varley proceeds to say, "I shook hands with this materialised being, and at the conclusion of the sitting, which lasted over one hour, I was instructed by Annie Morgan to go to the medium and demesmerise her. I found Miss Cook, the medium, just as I had left her; the platinum wires were untouched, and she was in a deep trance, from which I speedily awoke her by cross passes." Mr. Crookes's testimony regarding similar manifestations is much to the same purport. In the presence of such clear proof of spirit materialisation, altogether distinct from the repeated examples occurring during the year at Liverpool and Newcastle, we may safely accept the genuineness of the lesser phenomenon of spirit photography.

Again, as if the testimony to spiritual phenomena were not complete and incontrovertible, we had accounts early in the year of plaster moulds having been taken from spirit hands. To Professor Denton, of Massachusetts, U.S., belongs the credit of having first devised this mode of evidence. Beautiful paraffin casts have been taken by him with perfect success, and the process has since been followed by several persons in England with equally favourable results under test conditions.

The phenomenon of direct spirit writing never received more striking illustration than during the year, creating a world-wide commotion, whose effects have not yet passed away and will long be remembered. While Spiritualism was fighting its way to the front, and as a science maintained its ground at the last annual meeting of the British Association, some boisterous individuals, more famous for physical than mental energy, made a raid upon that renowned sensitive, Dr. Slade. Whatever the motives which influenced these men, and whatever the nature of the issues raised, of one thing we may be certain, that no harm has been done to the cause but rather much good, since a knowledge of some of the facts of Spiritualism has been more extensively spread this year through their barbarous proceedings than in many years gone by. The fruits of victory being with us, the triumph is really our own.

Nor have these persons been alone in their assaults. Some older and more experienced men, who might have known better, have been busy trying to inflict as much injury on our cause as they possibly could effect; but their efforts are equally vain, and chief among them is our ancient foe, Dr. Carpenter, who in the first month of the past year appeared in the *Contemporary Review*, striving, with a simplicity which does him no credit, to dispose of the whole facts of Spiritualism on the ground of "prepossession." That word alone was sufficient to account for all the phenomena. The history of the conversion of any real Spiritualist would serve to show that the prepossession theory is simply ridiculous. Many hard-headed Spiritualists have testified to the state of their minds when accepting the Spiritualistic theory. At first they combated it with all their might, but were ultimately defeated and made captives. The dullest understanding might perceive that thou-

sands, nay, myriads of individuals, could scarcely be willing acceptors of a position exposing them to the adverse criticism of their more uninformed friends and neighbours, unless there were some imperious power behind, too great to be resisted, appealing to their conscience and binding them to go forward in the cause of truth. The objective reality of the phenomena is irrevocably impressed on the soul; and experience akin to it has prepared and sustained the martyr both in torments and in death. Dr. Carpenter, attracted by reports of slate writing, had a *séance* with Slade; and having been somewhat startled from his equanimity, promised to go further into the matter. A benevolent fit seems to have occupied him for a season, but it soon passed off, and he closed the year with two lectures at the London Institution, widening the distance between himself and Spiritualism by raising the phantom of insanity before his audience. He was preceded in this line of denunciation by another medical man, the inheritor of a distinguished name. Dr. Forbes Winslow's pamphlet, however well-intentioned, is full of gross exaggerations. Spiritualism will no more hurt a man than the study of botany, geology, or geography, though it is more than probable that an overdose of any of these innocent employments will fit a man for an asylum; it is the abuse of Spiritualism, or anything else, and not the use, which is dangerous. But surely both these physicians well know that lunatic asylums are chiefly peopled by those afflicted with religious mania, and that such was the acknowledged fact long before Spiritualism was heard of. That popular Christianity is one of the chief factors in filling our asylums, none better know than Dr. Carpenter and Dr. Winslow, yet when have they lifted up their voices against the preacher? Why do they not denounce the wretched dogmas preached in the name of the Almighty? Instead of insisting and insinuating that Spiritualism, of which they are so ignorant, leads to madness, and instead of going out of their way to handle it, they should rather denounce popular Christianity. Then would they stand on firm ground, and become public benefactors. So great and accomplished a student of mental physiology might safely take up his parable and admonish the religious leaders of the day; but there is this little difficulty in the way, he lacks the stuff of which true prophets are made. The small body of Spiritualists is enough for his provess. He has no sympathy towards the "half-starved, sickly creatures affected with diluted insanity." And yet when the Spiritualist is thus taunted and assailed, he may be pardoned if he points to these lines of Tennyson:—

"How pure in heart and sound in head,
With what divine affection bold,
Should be the man whose thoughts would hold
An hour's communion with the dead."

If the Materialist would ponder over this verse, it might prove a useful mirror in which to discover the secret of his bitterness against Spiritualism, and perhaps make him less furious and rabid.

Without dwelling on the important matters of clairvoyance and other manifestations, I would pass on to the subject of Organisation, for this, after all, is the one thing which, at this moment, we should study to promote with all our might. This is the age of co-operation. To unite in a common object or brotherhood is to show sound wisdom and strength. It is to gather together our scattered forces, and arrange them into a disciplined body. As volunteers dispersed over the country cannot compare with a regiment of regulars, so Spiritualists outside of organisation proclaim their weakness. When I hear of Spiritualists high and low thirsting for investigation into the mysteries of Spiritualism, it seems strange that they do not break their reticence and join our organisation, which possesses such advantages, for it cannot be doubted that the more comprehensive and perfect the organisation the greater the benefit to the cause. In proportion as our organisation extends is its power for good. All Spiritualists in the United Kingdom desirous of advancing a common interest should join this Association, either directly as members or indirectly as members of other societies allied to ours. They have learnt the truth and sacredness of the cause; they have, perhaps, tasted some of the consolations which their principles bring, and they should do something to impart to others the knowledge which they themselves enjoy. For without unity of action, however excellent our principles, we are continually exposed to the attacks of the unenlightened, who may even imagine that they would do God a service in attempting, if they could, our destruction.

Some have urged that because certain organisations have proved cruel and tyrannical, therefore ours must become so. They overlook the distinguishing fact that, unlike those bodies, our office-bearers are elected annually by ballot, and that our governing principles are more conformable to Nature and her universal rules.

Organisation is the chief sign of life, energy, and power. Under it we shall become aware of our strength; without it we know our feebleness. The utility of our organisation has never been more amply justified than in what we have witnessed in a recent crisis. Effectually to defend mediums from prosecution, and our cause from dishonour and persecution, we should marshal our numbers under some more complete system, so as to present a perfect and well-disciplined front; and when the extent of our numbers, as well as of our quality, is better known, we shall be more respected and treated as a power in the State. One effect of organisation is visible in the respectful attention of the Government. Had there been no permanent organisation, the waste of time, money, and the general confusion in taking public action would have been great, and the Treasury might have said of any Committee hastily put together that it was not a representative body; whilst those who elected it in undue haste might have said the same. Unquestionably an efficient permanent organisation, giving all its members a voice and a vote in the public business of the movement, increases order and strength, whilst disintegration is synonymous with weakness and inefficiency. Another result of organisation is the improved attitude of the press. The conspiracy of silence is passing rapidly away. The chief organs of public opinion treat us fairly, and some of them even with a magnanimity marked with friendship; others, through a groundless fear of injuring their circulation, frown on us with disdain; while some again exhibit hatred and vexation, which are the uniform sign of bigotry. These last stand greatly in need of our compassion, for they float wildly on the ocean of ignorance.

Spiritualists of all grades, children of light and truth, possessing advantages of knowledge and experience above their fellows, incur serious responsibility in holding aloof from organisation. Throughout the country there should be established organisations of Spiritualists who should correspond with and become affiliated to our central association.

The utility of organisation is being sensibly acknowledged in the United States; besides the National Convention of Spiritualists, other societies are being formed in various parts, and some of them evince signs of vigour and completeness worthy of admiration.

One of the most effectual means of popularising the facts relating to our higher nature is the expansion or widening of our organisation, and all Spiritualists, wherever residing, should do what they can to strengthen it, if only for the purpose of securing the bulwark of the future against that worst of plagues, the corrupt doctrines enunciated by certain daring but unconscious impostors, who in the name of science deny the existence of God and the immortality of man. Well may the aged philosopher of Chelsea lament the condition of society when he says, "Ah, it's a sad, a terrible thing to see nigh a whole generation of men and women professing to be cultivated, looking around in a purblind fashion, and finding no God in the universe." In order to show the reasonableness, nay the high value and necessity of the doctrine of Immortality, I would refer to a passage in the life of John Stuart Mill. This distinguished scholar, in his autobiography, describes a crisis in his mental history which suddenly brought him to the verge of despair. He says, "It occurred to me to put the question directly to myself, Suppose that all your objects in life were realised, that all the changes in institutions and opinions, which you are looking forward to, could be completely effected at this very instant, would this be a very great joy and happiness to you? And an irrepressible self-consciousness distinctly answered, No. At this," he proceeds, "my heart sunk within me. The whole foundation on which my life was constructed fell down. All my happiness was to have been found in the continual pursuit of this end. The end had ceased to charm, and how could there ever again be any interest in the means? I seemed to have nothing left to live for." And equally so would it be with most reflecting minds. The fallacy under which this philosopher laboured at that period of his life was the limitation of his views to the narrow horizon of earth; whereas, had he clung to the doctrines of immortality and eternal progression, he might have found immediate undisturbed tranquillity and happiness.

Well may the Spiritualist say with the Psalmist, "Thy testimonies are my delight and my counsellors." How great, how full, how many-sided are our evidences for immortality. What a grand truth, what a glorious idea, to live in the strong conviction that we shall meet again in another world those we love and have loved on earth. Can men of science offer the afflicted any solace compared to this? And if not, why disturb so innocent an enjoyment? Were it the merest delusion, why rob the believer of such unparalleled comfort? The phenomena of Spiritualism are not given to deceive nor betray. Ingrained in human nature throughout the world, spirituality demands development, or

man cannot reach the highest type of the race. The most explicit suggestions of nature cannot be disregarded with impunity, but if duly taken to account will produce inestimable blessings. Reverence for the active invisible intelligences tends to keep our hearts alive in sympathy with them; and a system of practical purification might well proceed from this awe-inspiring source. And again, what is greater, better, and holier than to understand the origin of religion, and through its channel to be daily quickened in a living, vigorous and practical faith? For it is important to have brought home to our mind's sense impressions of the phenomena, as by the operation we are raised into a higher existence. We are lifted up above the purely physical to the study and contemplation of subjects which give nobility to our thoughts, our actions, and our lives. An inner world, a higher life is revealed where an intellectual activity is excited to the attainment of a purer love and a loftier standard of morality and truth. Wherever virtue is loved and iniquity hated, wherever hearts are open and no secrets are hid, there will Spiritualism be welcome, and purity, consolation, and strength will follow; there, also, will recklessness give place to sobriety of thought and action. The experience of the past comes down through the channels of Spiritualism, as a potent means of warning, guiding, and controlling all the chief affairs of life. It is only from the phenomena working in our midst that the social fabric, already so rudely shaken, can be protected against the great evils which threaten it. A thousand Acts of Parliament will be found less efficacious to turn the people from any particular vice than the knowledge of Spiritualism.

While these considerations so mightily move us, the attitude of others appears unaccountably strange. Men of science, having contributed largely to destroy the structure of Religion, seem in no hurry to build on any foundation where the soul enters into observation and care. Instead of furnishing some stimulus to the formation of virtue, they uproot the only infallible source and standard of rectitude. The very idea of God's existence is extinguished along with man's immortality. And more singular still, the clergy, as a body, look silently on. While there is a rapid disintegration of all the moral influences now employed in the Church, and its dogmas are exhumed and, like, worthless dust, cast to the winds, the clergy should see that their power must inevitably give way to a better system, to a higher development, and that the time is come when they should take up seriously the education of man's higher nature. The Church would do herself and society real benefit if she would examine whence and in what manner her own power for good was originally derived, and in what it really consists? What of inspiration, and healing, and its other testimonies, known as miracles?

Amidst the strife of words and deeds, let it be ever well understood that the chief purpose of Spiritualism is to impart a spiritual nature. To become spiritual-minded is the great lesson—to attend to spiritual in an equal degree with physical things, for to the latter we have given hitherto overmuch thought. In a word, we have to adjust in a fair balance the proportion of attention to be given to each, so as to satisfy justly the claims of our twofold nature.

Let us hope that both the cleric and the man of science will, before long, obtain a truer sense of their position and responsibilities; and, laying their prejudices aside, enter closely, patiently, and devoutly into a study of the marvellous phenomena of nature called Spiritualistic.

Meanwhile, unmoved by their indifference, let us go firmly onward, having God, Immortality, and Eternal Progression as our everlasting Truth.

A PAPER BY MR. THOMAS SHORTER—SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHY: A REFUTATION OF PSEUDO-SCIENTIFIC THEORIES.

ON Thursday morning, last week, the proceedings of the Conference began under the presidency of Mr. Desmond Fitz-Gerald, M.S.T.E., and Mr. Thomas Shorter read the following paper:—

It is often said that there is nothing in Spiritualism absolutely new, and this is true so far as the general fact of spirit intercourse is concerned, and even as to most of the principal phases of it with which we are now familiar. The visible appearance of spirits, the manifestation of their presence and agency by sights and sounds, the movement of objects and persons, the entrancement of sensitives, communication by dream and vision, writing and drawing, inspiration and speech, the impression of forms and characters on material substances, with visions in crystals, mirrors, polished steel, and other bright surfaces, were all known centuries ago. They are to be found alike in the oldest Spiritualism and in the newest.

Still, the present movement may be considered as in some important respects a new departure; the veil of artificial mystery that had surrounded all spiritual intercourse has been rent in twain from the top to the bottom. It is no longer the exclusive privilege of a few initiates, who had to protect themselves by artifice and secrecy from brutal outrage and persecution, the effects of ignorance and superstition. A system of spiritual telegraphy has been introduced and its practice widely diffused. Spiritualism has been introduced in a scientific age, is prosecuted in a scientific spirit, and by scientific methods. It is now, like chemistry, a subject of experimental research, conducted by men of science eminently qualified for the work. Its phenomena are classified, and the conditions favouring their production are carefully observed and recorded. If science is only methodised knowledge, Spiritualism may fairly claim to be on its way, and rapidly growing to a science.

There are, too, I think, some phases of modern Spiritualism absolutely unique. One of these is that of obtaining in melted paraffin, from which plaster casts are afterwards taken, moulds of materialised spirit-hands, feet, and sometimes even of the face. They are such as would belong to persons of both sexes, are various in size and shape, and present all the delicate markings of the cuticle and other characteristics of the natural member. They have been microscopically examined; they have been examined by experts. They have been obtained in the presence of an investigating committee, with the materials placed in a box expressly constructed, and bolted, locked, and sealed. The wax has been accurately weighed before the experiment, and again immediately after it, and the difference in weight has been exactly that of the moulds taken. They have been repeatedly obtained in London, Manchester, Portsmouth, and in the leading cities of the United States. I understand that casts of some of them may be seen at the rooms of the British National Association of Spiritualists, 38, Great Russell-street; and at the Spiritual Institute, 15, Southampton-row.

Another phase of modern Spiritualism, so far as I know without parallel or precedent, is that of spirit-photography. It is one so astounding that I am not surprised at any incredulity shown concerning it, especially by those who have had no experience in other forms of spirit manifestation preceding and leading up to it. And this incredulity would of course be confirmed by the occasional imposture and self-deception from which neither Spiritualism nor any form of human experience can be wholly free. But after eliminating all that may be spurious, or doubtful, a large residuum still remains. There are so many concurrent streams of independent testimony, the evidence has been so continuous, abundant, and conscientious, that either spirit-photography must be recognised, or the validity of testimony in the matter must be denied. I do not propose to argue this question now; it has been so often and fully considered in the *Spiritual Magazine* and other journals of the kind, especially in the late able series of papers by "M.A. Oxon," in *Human Nature*, that I may refer the inquirer to these for further satisfaction, and if not content with testimony he may, with a little perseverance, obtain direct personal experience of its truth for himself at first hand. But assuming the truth of spirit-photography, as I consider I am justified in doing by the evidence referred to, and, I may add, by my own experiences, I purpose to point out briefly some of its bearings on pseudo-scientific theories invented to explain away the spiritual significance of the phenomena alleged to be spiritual manifestations. Some of these, I think, need hardly be specified in this connection. Snapping of toe and ankle joints, and involuntary muscular pressure, offered as solutions of the earlier mysteries of the spirit-circle, are obviously out of court as an explanation of the spirit-photograph, or, it may be added, of anything else, except the eagerness with which professors grasp at any hypothesis that may discredit spiritual agency in this modern time. But there are still theories that may profitably claim attention, and for the sake of economy and convenience, I shall group together those of the same family; they may, if they can, help each other against their common enemy the spirit-photograph, who, however, I think, will yet put them to the rout.

In 1852 Dr. Rogers, of Boston, published his philosophy of mysterious agents, human and mundane, elaborating with much ability and ingenuity a theory to cover and explain those startling phenomena whose unexpected appearance had so startled and bewildered all classes of American society. These phenomena, he ascribed to a force, emanating from all bodies, more especially the human organism, and to which Baron Reichenbach had given the name *Od*. This force, he argues, might be controlled either by the will or by the unconscious action of the brain, simulating intelligence, which he admitted was apparently associated with the phenomena. This theory found much favour both in America and in England, and the controversy to which it gave rise occupies considerable space in the early history of Spiritualism. It is little heard of now, but its spirit has been reincarnated in other forms, under the names "Nerve-fluid," "Nerve-aurea," and "Psychic Force." These theories all spring from the same root; they all ascribe the phenomena of Spiritualism to agencies human and mundane, to the exclusion of all spiritual intelligence *ab extra*.

Now, apart from all other objection, it appears to me that these theories are each and all effectually demolished by the spirit-photograph. No one capable of reflection will, I think, seriously contend that any mere force, physiological or psychological, can shape itself into the human form, put on the lineaments of a departed friend, and imprint itself on the photographic plate. And if I am told that it may be governed and guided to this result by those still in the flesh, I simply say, "Prove it." Spirit-photography was yet in the future when Dr. Rogers propounded his elastic theory, but which even then had been drawn to its utmost tension. Were he still in terrestrial life, I think he would hardly have stretched it still further in a desperate attempt to make it cover this and other later developments, of what has been called "the modern mystery"—a task so manifestly beyond its powers.

Another class of pseudo-scientific theories disposed of by the spirit-photograph, is represented by the phrases "unconscious cerebration," "dominant ideas," "mental expectancy," and "prepossession." To attribute these powers to our friend the photographic camera may be very complimentary, but it does not happen to possess them. It has no cerebrum, and cannot cerebration either consciously or unconsciously. It is not dominated by any ideas, has no expectations, and is entirely free from either prepossession or prejudice, which is more than can be said for the authors of ingenious theories who attempt to explain away unwelcome facts.

If I am reminded that these physiological and mental acts and states pertain to the sitter, I ask, even if it be so, how can these, without direct manipulation, imprint themselves on the sensitive plate into a perfect and clearly visible portrait? What proof is there that they do so? Let any physiologist, or other scientific person, test this dominant idea by experiment, and with mental expectancy abide the issue. Unquestionably, recognised spirit-portraits are sometimes obtained, and this is the crowning and conclusive proof of their genuineness; I suppose the true believer generally goes for a spirit-portrait with this dominant idea, but generally the result does not conform to this prepossession. His mental expectancy is doomed to disappointment; the dominant idea does not dominate. The portrait which appears on the plate beside his own may have been obtained under the strictest test conditions. But he cannot identify it. If this unanticipated unrecognised form has been projected by his cerebration, he is certainly unconscious of it.

Again, we are assured on high scientific authority, that Spiritualists are the victims of hallucination; that the phenomena of Spiritualism, so far as they are genuine, are purely subjective; the product of excited imagination, or of some abnormal state, like that of the mesmerised sensitive, as seen in the familiar experiments of what is known as electro-biology—in which the senses and faculties of the sensitive are under the control of the operator, and give no true or reliable report of objective realities. Well, let us put the photographic camera into the witness-box: it is an unexceptionable witness, of good character and strict veracity; is quite disinterested and impartial, free from passion and from prejudice; has no imagination to be excited, is not subject to hallucination, cannot be biologically: it does not depend on memory; its notes are all taken at the time, and on the spot: it will tell its tale in its own way; and can neither be bribed nor bullied, cajoled nor intimidated. Its testimony is always the same and never varies; it can be brought into any court at any time; and its evidence is most explicit and absolutely conclusive in the present instance. If Spiritualists are hallucinated, all who see this evidence at once share in the hallucination—a species of epidemic delusion Dr. Carpenter does not seem to have taken into account. In brief, I maintain that the spirit-photograph can hold its own, and maintain the truth and honour of Spiritualism against all comers. It is but a pasteboard shield, but it is strong enough to withstand all assault and break every opposing lance. In its weakness and humility it confounds the mighty and the proud; it yields

satisfaction to the honest and inquiring sceptic, is a solace to the bereaved, a witness for immortality, and a refutation of pseudo-scientific theories—the mere wastrel of science.

THE DISCUSSION—THE PHOTOGRAPHING OF THE SPIRIT OF SIR WILLIAM BAYNES—PHOTOGRAPHING THE DOUBLE OF A MEDIUM—THE PHOTOGRAPHING OF THE SPIRIT OF THE WIFE OF MR. LIVERMORE, THE NEW YORK BANKER.

Mr. Desmond Fitz-Gerald, the Chairman, said: Much discussion in relation to spirit photography has taken place among Spiritualists, and the questions at issue have been greatly complicated by the want of character of some of the professors of the art. In this branch of the subject, as in others, Spiritualism has had to suffer from the misdeeds of its mediums. I had conclusive evidence years ago in relation to spirit-photography. At a *seance* held at home, the name of a departed relation of mine was given, and he came at several subsequent sittings. His name was Sir William Baynes. One day he said that he thought that he could give us his photograph, and we arranged with him that at a certain time some of us would go to Hudson's to obtain the likeness. The ladies of my family had seen Hudson once or twice before, but he had no notion that we were coming on that particular day, nor did he know the object of the visit. My mother and wife went to Hudson's; the photograph was obtained, and it is so clearly that of the spirit whose name was given to us, that I venture to say that any tradesman of the late Sir William Baynes would recognise it at once as his likeness.

Mr. A. Glendinning: About twelve years ago I tried to get spirit-photographs with a friend who is a good medium, and we obtained several. At first we obtained curious markings on the plates, and had I had more experience I should have preserved those plates for careful subsequent examination, but, as a matter of fact, whenever we developed no distinct portrait, I rubbed my fingers across the plate, and put it in the wash-tub. Mr. Melhuish, secretary to one of the Scotch photographic societies, supplied us with the glasses and chemicals, and everything was done in good faith among private people. In one instance we obtained a portrait of the medium, in the same position which he had occupied about ten or fifteen minutes before the plate was exposed, and when he was half-way between the camera and the background. We had in the room the kind of planchette known as an "Indicator," which spelt out rapidly what we were to do, for the spirits said that they, at first, did not know how to produce the pictures, and that they had to try experiments; they told us to mesmerise the camera, chemicals, and so on. We did what they told us, partly as a matter of amusement, and partly as a matter of interest. When we questioned them why we obtained a portrait of the medium in a position he had occupied before the plate was exposed in the camera, they said that he had left his "influence" on the spot, and that had a clairvoyant been in the room he would have seen him there. I do not understand this, but it was all the explanation we could get. I have had several spirit-pictures done by Mr. Parkes, in whom I have every confidence. Once when I sat for him I was humming a hymn containing lines about angels bending their wings over us, and upon the plate came a female form with wings, I suppose in consequence of my thoughts having some influence upon the resulting picture. I did not recognise her features, but have every reason to believe that all that was done by Mr. Parkes was done in good faith.

The Chairman: The anatomical monstrosity of wings would have been difficult to account for without Mr. Glendinning's explanation.

Miss Kinsbury: Last night Mr. Calder, in his presidential address, told you how Mr. J. Hartman had obtained a spirit photograph under test conditions. I have some copies of that picture here, so they may be interesting to you to look at. They contain the following printed certificate on the back:—

TEST SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPH.

This picture was made December 25th, 1875, in Cincinnati, by Jay J. Hartman, under the most rigid test conditions, in a gallery he had never visited before, with camera, glass, and chemicals of a sceptical photographer. All of the manipulations of the plate were done by a sceptical photographer, Mr. Hartman simply standing by the side of the camera, with his hand resting thereon, never entering the dark room, nor at any time seeing or handling the plate, and all the time closely watched by sixteen respectable, intelligent gentlemen.

"Cincinnati, December 25th, 1875.

"We, the undersigned, having taken part in the public investigation of spirit photography given by Mr. Jay J. Hartman, hereby certify that we have closely examined and watched the manipulation of our own marked plates, through all the various workings in and out of the dark room, and have been unable to discover any sign of fraud or trickery on the part of Mr. Jay J. Hartman.

"We further certify that during the last sitting when this result was obtained, Mr. Jay J. Hartman did not handle the plate, or enter the dark room at any time.

"J. Slatter, V. Cutler, E. Saunders, Jos. Kinsey, E. Hopkins, J. S. P. Gelpert, Robert Leslie, Wm. Warrington, Benj. E. Hopkins, G. A. Carnahan, D. M. Morrow, M.D., J. P. Weekman, F. T. Moreland, Theodore Teeple, W. V. Sullivan."

Mr. W. H. Harrison: I agree with all that Mr. Shorter and Mr. Fitz-Gerald have said. As a scientific amateur, I have had great experience in nearly all branches of photography. I have taken some thousands of pictures in my time, and for the last ten years I have been an article writer for one of the photographic journals. My opinion is that although in exceptional cases spirit photography furnishes about the best evidence of the truth of spiritual phenomena, in the majority of cases it does not do so, and it is, generally speaking, surrounded by such conditions that the study of it can only be pursued in private. In other words, recognisable portraits of deceased friends unknown to the photographer—the production of which cannot be accounted for on any imposture theory—are the exception. Unrecognisable and indistinct pictures are the rule, and as these latter can usually be imitated with ease by numerous methods of producing sham ghosts well known to photographers, the medium is safe to be assumed to be a trickster by the public, and when his pictures are genuine the populace will not give him the benefit of any doubt, he will be unable to obtain an honest hearing in the newspapers, and any court of law will pronounce him an impostor. A good instance of the production of a recognisable spirit picture was the case in which Mr. Livermore, a partner in one of the largest banks in New York, went to Mumler, the spirit photographer in that city, and obtained an unmistakable likeness of his departed wife, who was unknown to the man through whose mediumship the picture was produced. Mumler was prosecuted as an impostor, and the expenses of the prosecution were shifted upon the backs of the public, as usual in these cases; but the evidence was so strong that this likeness did not come through any trickery of his own, that in spite of all prejudices the case was dismissed. In England he would probably have been condemned.

Mr. Thomas Shorter remarked that what Mr. Glendinning had said about the photographing of the human double reminded him of the case of a friend of his, a clairvoyant, who, upon entering an empty compartment of a railway carriage, saw in it several people who had been sitting there some time before. He did not think the value of spirit photography was much lessened

because such a small proportion of the pictures was recognised. Many of the pictures were taken by persons not peculiarly interested.

The Chairman proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Shorter for his paper.

Mr. Benjamin Coleman: I have much pleasure in seconding the vote of thanks to Mr. Shorter. Mr. Livermore sent me the likeness of his wife. He wanted to disprove the fact of spirit-photography, and went to Mumlér for that purpose; he also twisted himself just before the cap was taken off the camera that he might upset any arrangements possibly made by Mumlér to bring out a spirit on the plate in an attitude bearing some relation to his first position. There is no doubt that it was a perfect likeness of Mr. Livermore's wife, recognised by all his friends. Mr. Livermore was no enthusiast in making these things known, and only came forward to state the facts in the witness-box at the earnest request of Judge Edmonds. Mumlér was consequently acquitted.

The vote of thanks was given by acclamation.

A PAPER BY MR. T. P. BARKAS—PHOTOGRAPHING A MATERIALISED FORM—THE PERSECUTION OF MEDIUMS BY PROPOSED MEN OF SCIENCE—THE SCIENTIFIC ASPECTS OF THE ALLEGED MODERN SPIRITUAL PHENOMENA—EXTRAORDINARY APPEARANCE OF MATERIALISED SPIRITS.

The following paper by Mr. T. P. Barkas, F.G.S., of Newcastle-on-Tyne, was then read by the Secretary:—

There can be little doubt that the vast majority of those who enter upon the examination of the phenomena commonly known as modern Spiritual manifestations, have arrived at the conclusion that they are produced by supra-mundane agencies, but a certain proportion of those who have examined them, and accept their genuineness, have either reached an entirely opposite conclusion, and believe them to be the result of occult natural laws, or that the evidence is insufficient to justify them in accepting either the mundane or the supra-mundane hypothesis. The latter section, therefore, leave the theory which shall cover and interpret the phenomena an open question.

It is not my intention to express an opinion as to the theory that appears most satisfactorily to cover the entire facts, but I desire to place before you a record of such phenomena as justify my acceptance of their reality and genuineness, and offer strong grounds for urging their examination by the most highly-trained scientific minds.

In all periods of the history of the world phenomena such as those I am about to describe are recorded as having occurred spontaneously, on many occasions, and on every portion of the habitable globe. Making every allowance for the exaggeration which frequently occurs in descriptions of extraordinary phenomena, it would appear that there is, nevertheless, a large residuum of fact in those that have been recorded as taking place during the whole historical period.

Marvellous as were the phenomena, they appear not to have been extensively investigated until the advent of what has been termed modern Spiritualism; the reason probably being that, in past ages, the reign of law, the correlation of forces, and the inviolability of physical laws, were not so well understood—scepticism, therefore, as to the interposition of supra-mundane agencies was less rampant than in our own day, and the phenomena were accepted as genuine, without critical investigation. Now, however, all phenomena must demonstrate their right to acceptance, and especially those that assert claims to supra-mundane origin.

The opponents of the reality of these phenomena may attempt to defend their position in two ways—viz.: First, by examining the phenomena and endeavouring to discover the means by which they are produced, and producing them under similar conditions; and, second, by calling into requisition hitherto obsolete laws, and endeavouring to suppress the facts by the persecution of the agents through whom they occur.

The former, although not the highest or most commendable course that might be adopted, is, nevertheless, perfectly justifiable; but the second, in view of the evidence that has already been adduced by credible and competent witnesses as to the genuineness of the phenomena, is simply impertinence and imbecility.

If the phenomena be genuine, and the vast majority, if not the whole of those who have thoroughly examined them, believe that they are, then legal prosecution by the stretch of antiquated, unabolished law, is the act of a coward and simpleton, and the facts which are attempted to be repressed will spread throughout a wider area, and be investigated under conditions which antiquated and absurd laws will not reach, and cowardly opponents will have no sphere for the exercise of their mistaken ingenuity.

To prosecute promoters of truth in relation to occult phenomena, notwithstanding the antagonism of the public, and especially when the phenomena are not limited to any special class or social grade but may be developed by any earnest investigator in the privacy of his own home, is in the last degree absurd, and is certain to extend a knowledge of the reality of the phenomena in question.

The only justifiable mode of suppressing supposed errors, is by exposing their fallacy, under conditions perfectly analogous to those in which they take place. Conditions lie at the root of all valuable research, and it is probable, nay almost certain, that difference in conditions has aggravated the germ and no germ controversy, which for some time has excited the scientific world. This has lately been proved by Professor Tyndall.

I propose, without broaching any theory, to place before you facts as well authenticated as are any occult psychological or physical phenomena with which we are familiar.

I shall state the conditions under which the phenomena took place, refer any respectable person to those who were present during their occurrence, and give reasons for their objective reality such as I think would be perfectly satisfactory to any body of gentlemen who have not arrived at the conclusion that such phenomena are impossible, and incompatible with the laws of nature.

I could give personal testimony to the reality of independent motions of material bodies, independent writing, and many of the ordinary phenomena which are said to occur at seances, but I shall best consult your feelings and the interest of the movement we have met to promote by directing your attention to two or three of the more prominent facts, in a long series of phenomena which have come under my personal observation during twenty-four years of almost hypercritical investigation of this much controverted subject. Nothing short of personal examination under crucial tests could have influenced me to accept the phenomena as genuine.

The only effect of credible testimony would have been to induce investigation, not to produce conviction, and that in reality is precisely the course that all sensible investigators desire unbelievers to follow.

I shall confine my descriptions to one of the more extraordinary psychico-spiritual phases of these remarkable manifestations, viz.: materialisation of alleged spirit-forms, out of previously invisible matter, under various test conditions, the evidence in each of the cases being to me perfectly satisfactory as to their reality and genuineness. They cannot under the conditions be referable to optical illusion, nor indeed to the illusion of any of the senses, except on the hypothesis that all sense impressions are illusions and have not their origin in any objective reality. These phenomena rest upon the same bases as do the recognitions of colour and sound, and all other facts in psychico-psychology. I propose, 1st. To describe a seance at which a materialised form was photographed. 2nd. Materialisation in an open room with the medium sitting in the centre of the circle of sitters, the materialised forms growing out of apparent nothingness. All these phenomena

took place either in lamplight, gaslight, or amidst the blaze of the magnesium light.

The mediums were Misses Wood and Fairbank; seance room, the private drawing room of a Newcastle merchant, and the meeting on the evening of Friday, Feb. 19th, 1875.

There were present in the circle four ladies and seventeen gentlemen, inclusive of the photographer and his son.

One corner of the room, on the right of the fireplace, was partitioned off by a four-folding screen as a recess. Within the area enclosed by the screen were two cushions on which the mediums reclined. The mediums, who wore dark dresses and were covered with dark cloaks, entered the recess at 8.27. The mirror over the mantelpiece and the fireplace were draped with dark green cloth as a background for photographic purposes. A chair was placed opposite the fireplace, at about 30 inches from the edge of the folding door of the screen, which when opened permitted egress from the recess.

The magnesium lamp, to be used for photographic purposes was placed on a small round table near the screen, and Mr. Laws, sen., sat on a chair near it, for the purpose of manipulating the light when it was required. A square piano, about eight feet long, was drawn forward to a distance of about ten feet from the fireplace, and was placed in the centre of the room. On the piano was placed a photographic camera, which was focussed for the space between the screen and the chair already referred to. Three pieces of white paper were pinned to the green cloth covering the fireplace, at the height of the mantel-shelf, which is exactly four feet high. These papers were placed, as may be seen on the photographs, for the purpose of indicating the height of the figure that was expected to appear.

The sitters sat in rows at each end of and behind the piano. I sat at the left end of the piano and immediately opposite the folding edge of the screen, out of which the psychic form was expected to come.

All the sitters took hold of hands; the lights were turned down until we sat in comparative darkness. For about an hour we sat in this dim light, and during that time Pocky and Cissy, the controls of the respective mediums, both talked with us in an amusing and sometimes very logical manner. At 9.30 we were told by knockings, and by the voice of a medium under control, that the gas was to be turned up, the spirit-lamp used by the photographer to be lighted in order to accustom the psychic who intended to appear to bear a quantity of light, having a near approach to the bright magnesium light to be used for photographing. Spirit lamp, gas, and photographer's candle were all lighted, and we sat in a well lighted room.

At about 9.40 we were told to prepare the photographic plate, and make ready for the appearance of the apparition. As soon as the plate was prepared, and an intimation to that effect given, the folding door of the screen was pushed open, and a small female figure, or at least a figure draped like a female, emerged from behind the screen; she stood near the edge of the open fold of the screen opposite the camera, and at one side of the magnesium wire, which was at once ignited. We then saw her in the full blaze of the magnesium light.

Her garments were very profuse, and covered her entire person, with the exception of her face and arms, both of which were dark-brown, approaching black, although one arm appeared darker than the other. The garment had the appearance of plain muslin, which fell over her in long rolling folds, and was not in the least rumpled or soiled, as would have been the case had it been placed within small compass. Her face was dark brown, somewhat like that of a dark half-caste; the eyes were large, and the lids were large and heavy; the white parts of the eyes appeared dull and suffused with blood like the eye of an ordinary negro; the nose was large, being both long and broad; the lips were full and heavy, and had a vermilion redness of colour, they moved languidly, and not like the rapid movements of ordinary Caucasian lips, but with a motion more than usually slow for a negro. The face was not prepossessing, far from it; it had a blank, half-timid, and at the same time amused expression, like that of an uneducated person quite unaccustomed to society entering into the presence of critical strangers. When the magnesium light was shining fully upon her, I saw her face quite distinctly for several seconds, but she gradually turned it away from the light, which appeared to overpower her, and in the first photograph only a small portion of the space occupied by the face is seen, and the features are quite invisible. The dark shadows about the dress of the figure in the photograph are the dark shadows thrown by the folds of the garment, the magnesium light being at one side of the figure. The exposure in this case was about ten seconds.

After the figure had retired, we received a promise that she would endeavour to appear again. Another photographic plate was prepared, and all was in readiness for her second appearance.

On this occasion she faced us more fully than on the previous visit, and the face closely resembled that I had previously seen and have described. She made an apparently great effort to maintain her position facing the camera, but gradually turned her face from the light, and photograph No. 2 is also blurred. This exposure was twelve seconds.

We again requested her to stand and endeavour to keep her face steadily opposite to the camera; this she promised to do on condition that the members of the circle would close their eyes, and that the photographer and his assistant should alone look at her while the photograph was being taken. To this we agreed, and another plate was prepared, but before it was quite ready we were told that one of the mediums behind the screen would be led out by her control and sit upon the vacant chair for the purpose of giving power to the psychic while she underwent the photographic ordeal.

One medium, covered in her dark cloak, automatically moved from behind the screen and sat upon the chair opposite the camera. All now being ready, the small psychic form again appeared and stood near the clothed medium. The sitters, according to promise, closed their eyes, and photograph No. 3 was taken. It exhibits a faint outline of the face, which bears an indistinct but manifest resemblance to the face I saw during the time the first and second photographs were being taken. The third exposure occupied about fourteen seconds.

Psychic and medium retired within the recess at 10.25, and so great had been the strain upon the mediumistic powers of the two mediums that it was an hour before they were restored to their normal conditions, and they complained of being much exhausted.

It may be said, and that with some appearance of propriety, that in this case there were no tests used, such for example, as undressing and redressing the mediums, fixing them by strong and secure ligatures to the floor, or examining their dresses at the conclusion of the seance. All these objections are perfectly true, but notwithstanding the absence of tests of this kind, the presentation of a manifestly living human face, entirely different in form and in all its peculiarities to the faces of the mediums, is evidence sufficient that the form was not an exhibition of the face of either of the mediums, and that the mobile face was not a mere mask, but that of a person with all the ordinary characteristics of life. If, however, there yet remain doubts in the minds of those who hear me, or who may read this address, they ought to be removed by the phenomena that occurred at the seance I will now describe.

The said seance was held in a private sitting-room in Newcastle-on-Tyne, on the evening of Friday, Sept. 8th, 1875. There were present the lady medium, her young daughter, another lady, and eight gentlemen, including myself. The room in which we sat is without closets or recesses of any kind; we screened one corner of the room by means of a curtain suspended from an iron rod, and we placed a small deal table without drawers within the recess formed by the curtain. The lady medium and her little daughter sat in front of the curtain, and at a distance of about five feet from it the nine sitters sat in a quadrat of a circle, extending from wall to wall of the room, and completely enclosing the medium and her little daughter.

We all therefore sat in the open room, and were quite visible to each other. A

lamp was burning in the room with such brightness that I could see the medium and all the sitters easily, and could read the time by my watch. After sitting thus for about fifteen minutes we were told to remove the table from the recess, and materialisation would take place. The table was removed, and we sat in the open room, in the same order as before. After sitting about ten minutes, during which time I saw the hands of the lady medium fall by her side, a small white flickering substance, about the size of a man's hand, appeared above the knees of the lady medium; it increased and diminished in size and brightness, and at last continued to grow until it covered the head, shoulders, and body of the medium in a fleecy white cloud. It then took a more solid and definite shape, and, descending to the floor, appeared like a young female, at least five feet high. This form was perfectly visible for about fifteen minutes. It gradually declined in height and width where it stood, and during the whole of the time I saw the right hand of the medium hanging passively by her side. The form decreased until it was about eighteen inches high, and again rose and increased in bulk, but this time it resembled a stooping old lady, wearing a Quaker bonnet, who moved freely on the floor, touched the hands of four of the sitters, taking them between her fingers and thumb, and also permitting them to feel her dress. This figure was visible for about twenty-five minutes, and at one time it rose to a height of about eight feet, bending over and overshadowing the medium. The form descended, assumed a normal size, and, coming forward past the medium, took a hand of one of the sitters between its finger and thumb. The form then turned to a position opposite the medium, at a distance of two feet from her, and gradually declining in size, flickered away upon the floor.

This closed a very remarkable *seance*, and gave demonstrative evidence of mediumship and materialisation to any mind not absolutely blinded by preoccupation, and utterly incapable of trusting the evidence of its senses.

This description is taken from my diary, in which it was entered on the day following the *seance*, when all the phenomena were fresh upon my memory.

On reflection at this distance of time from their occurrence, I see no escape from their inexorable logic short of denying the evidence of our senses.

The forms were seen to grow by all who were present. They were felt by four of the sitters; they appeared and disappeared in the open room. There were no visible means by which they could be produced by merely optical illusion, and personally I am as satisfied as to their abnormality, reality, and genuineness as I am satisfied that the Thames flows beneath London Bridge.

I offer no opinion whatever as to what these strange phenomena mean. Theories are generally much too hastily formed, and when once expressed they are liable to bias the judgment. I prefer, therefore, that for some time to come we devote our observations to the discovery of facts, knowing full well that in good time a suitable theory, covering the whole ground of the phenomena, will be evolved.

To men of science these phenomena should appeal for examination with overwhelming power, because if true they appear greatly to extend the recognised laws of physics and psychology, and open up a field of research which the philosophers and metaphysicians of all ages have but imperfectly examined, and respecting which they have failed in arriving at any satisfactory and definite conclusion.

THE DISCUSSION—FACT OR UNCONSCIOUS CEREBRATION?

The Chairman remarked that, although many of the public asserted Spiritualism to be a delusion, and said that it was a good thing that mediums were prosecuted, those who said so had not investigated the subject. The persons who came into Spiritualism were usually at first strongly opposed to it, but drawn in by the facts in opposition to their previous convictions. The paper just read showed how a man of a sceptical frame of mind, after giving twenty-four years' attention to the subject, adhered to the conclusion that Spiritualism was founded upon facts. The only newspaper men he had met with who had abused the subject were those who were so unacquainted with physics as to be unfit to take their seats in his junior class on that subject; as a rule they had given no attention at all to the phenomena they had attempted to discredit.

Mr. Morse wished to know whether the Research Committee of the National Association had had similar experiences to those of Mr. Barkas.

The Chairman replied that as yet the experiences of the Committee had not been very good, the reason being that when they had to deal with living intelligences they were obliged to conform to the conditions imposed, perhaps unnecessarily, by those intelligences, and not to substitute their own. Still, he hoped to report some good results.

Mr. Morse had witnessed good manifestations a long time ago through the mediumship of Miss Wood and Miss Fairlamb in Newcastle. At one of the sittings a spirit which came out of the cabinet was in some part dense and in others almost transparent.

Mr. Thomas Shorter said that in many cases some part of a spirit was reported to form first, after which the rest grew round it. Iamblicus, one of the best authorities of ancient times on spiritual phenomena, spoke of these forms thus growing and disappearing.

Mr. Camm stated that he believed in the phenomena, and that the result of his inquiries was that he was inclined to believe in the spiritual origin of the facts, but had not quite made up his mind. He had been to a *seance* lately where the name of a town in which he was interested was spelt out, and an allusion made to some business of his connected with that town. Nothing of this was known to the medium, nor were any ideas on the subject in his own mind at the time. The name was alleged to be given by the spirit of a person still living in the body. Could this be accounted for on the unconscious cerebration theory?

The Chairman remarked that unconscious cerebration was a horse which carried inquirers a little way, and then dropped them; it would not cover all the facts.

Mr. Morse asked whether it was known what was the physical condition at the time of the man whose spirit professed to communicate? Was the body asleep, or in a trance? and had the man any knowledge of the business in hand? He thought that the production of spiritual manifestations depended upon the degree of power of a particular spirit present, combined with the ability to produce the results.

Mr. Camm replied that his friends were sceptical as to the phenomena, and that they had never heard him mention the name of the town which had been spelt out through the mediumship of one of them.

A vote of thanks to Mr. Barkas, and to the secretary for reading the paper, was then passed, and the meeting was adjourned until the evening.

A PAPER BY MR. R. PEARCE.—ORGANISATIONS OF SPIRITUALISTS IN LONDON AND THE PROVINCES.—SPIRITUALISM IN LONDON, LANCASHIRE, LIVERPOOL, MANCHESTER, HYDE, LEIGH, OLDHAM, ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE, BOLTON, ROCHDALE, BARKWILL-FURNACE, HALIFAX, SOWERBY-BRIDGE, KEIGHLEY, LEEDS, HUDDERSFIELD, OSSETT, SHEFFIELD, HULL, GRIMSBY, SALTBRUN-BY-THE-SEA, BISHOP AUCKLAND, NEW SHILDON, CHESTER-LE-STREET, SUNDERLAND, SOUTH SHIELDS, NEWCASTLE, CHOPPINGTON, GLASGOW, NOTTINGHAM, LEICESTER, NORTHAMPTON, BIRMINGHAM, BRISTOL, CARDIFF, MERTHYR, LLANELLY, PLYMOUTH, AND WEST CORNWALL.

At the proceedings on Thursday evening, February 8th, Dr. C. Carter Blake,

Lecturer on Comparative Anatomy at Westminster Hospital, presided, and Mr. Richard Pearce read the following paper:—

In the present paper I purpose to speak of Spiritualists rather than of Spiritualism—that is to say, I do not intend to deal with the scientific or philosophic phases of Spiritualism, but merely to give a cursory survey of its outward aspect as a movement, to speak of the number of its adherents, their methods of action (whether as investigators or propagandists), and especially of the organisation of Spiritualists, both general and local.

Looking at the movement as a whole, I think we may derive much encouragement from the advance it has made in recent years. There can be no doubt that the number of Spiritualists is rapidly increasing, both in London and the provinces. The attitude of the outside world in itself proves that much advance has been made; instead of being treated with contempt or silent toleration, with an occasional silly tirade from one or other of the public journals, we have now two powerful classes arrayed against us in active opposition—the religious and scientific worlds. When we consider that science has long been looked on as the arch-enemy of religion by the official dignitaries and representatives of the latter, it is eminently suggestive of the present status of Spiritualism to find parsons and professors joining hands to crush it and persecute its followers. The attitude now taken by these bodies will surely be a matter for surprise and wonder in the future, when Spiritualism has overcome the ignorance, prejudice, and bigotry now surrounding it, and stands out clearly in the fullness of its own light; it will then be seen that, instead of being the opponent of religion, Spiritualism comes as a powerful instigator to religious life and practice, and is capable not only of infusing fresh life and vigour into systems fast losing their former power and influence, but of stamping anew, with the seal of authenticity, the spiritual facts which are the basis of all religions. To science also our cause may be a powerful auxiliary; for the Spiritualist, too enlightened to look on the scientific man, in his proper domain, as adverse to spiritual growth, will welcome him as an ally in the cause of human advancement, and, actively co-operating with him, will open up new fields of work worthy of the highest powers of man's intellect.

But while we see Spiritualism making rapid strides, and gathering such inherent strength as to arouse strong feelings of antagonism, we become sensible of the need, on our part, of firmness and increased zeal and activity, individually and collectively. And if Spiritualism is to pass through a crisis which will test our strength to the uttermost, it is necessary that we should look within our movement, and know our weak points as well as our strength. In doing this, I do not think we have cause for unmixed satisfaction. It is gratifying to know that our ranks are being constantly recruited by men of a degree of intelligence, commanding the respect of the world, and that the phenomena have reached phases which challenge the investigation of men of the highest social, literary, and scientific standing, yet I think we have within us sources of weakness which call for our serious consideration. One of these, in my opinion, is that we are not united. "Unity is strength," but Spiritualists are divided into factions, and although the various sections are all working earnestly, and all have one common object, we have no common action; thus, not only our work as Spiritualists, but our power of resisting persecution, is weakened.

We have been told that organisation is not in harmony with the principles of Spiritualism, that a spiritual work cannot be carried on by ordinary material agencies, and a whole host of evils are held up to our view as the only sure fruit which can result from any attempt at the organisation of Spiritualists; a great deal, however, of what has been said and written on this question is very conflicting and indefinite, and not at all applicable to any plan which has been suggested or attempted.

Organisation is but systematic co-operation, and when we consider the struggles which Spiritualism will have to make, the difficulties to be encountered, and the powerful combinations which may be brought against us, it is evident that we on our side cannot work efficiently unless we do so as a united body, joined in one firm alliance, not only that we may be better able to encounter our opponents, but also for our mutual aid and encouragement, for the more effectual dissemination of those truths which are destined to accomplish a great and good work, and that we ourselves may be in the best condition to receive the further evolution from the spirit world of those facts and teachings which, when accepted and assimilated with our lives, make and constitute us Spiritualists. But whilst I firmly believe in "friendly united action," "systematic co-operation," or "organisation" (call it what you will), I distinctly repudiate all idea of opposition to any individual, or any class of Spiritualists. There is no worker, or any section of workers, within our ranks to whom I cannot give my hearty goodwill, no party in the broad field of Spiritualism with whom I could not work in the most friendly manner. As Spiritualists we can work to the fullest extent individually, each doing as seemeth to him best, carrying out each our own hobbies, or acting up to the best and noblest of our inspirations, and yet we can and should be all joined in friendly union for the general good of the whole. I believe this can be done without conflicting with any plan of work now in operation—without stifling in any degree our sense of individual responsibility, or curtailing our spheres of personal usefulness. Further, I think we have a basis for such friendly union and co-operation already in existence in the British National Association of Spiritualists, under whose auspices we have to-day met together.

It is with this belief that I give some particulars of the associative and other work which is being carried on, and I venture to hope that such information may be of interest to those attending this Conference, and that it will assist in bringing about a better understanding of the most effective means to promote the general welfare of our cause.

I should here, as a matter of duty, express my grateful acknowledgments to the many friends who have so kindly responded to my application and supplied me with information, with free liberty to use the same in this paper. Many of whom I before merely knew the names, I now look on as personal friends, so kindly has been the spirit with which I have been met in my attempt to gather reliable data as to the progress of Spiritualism and the various modes of action adopted for the dissemination of its facts and teachings.

As I have already indicated, my object is only to deal with the outer aspects of Spiritualism; I would, however, say to those whose knowledge of the subject is but slight, that all which is most worth knowing and most worth seeking for, is that which is most hidden. It is only in private home circles that the higher phases of Spiritualism become apparent, and its teachings best understood. No idea of its true beauty and utility is to be gained until its inner life is reached.

Formed in 1873, in accordance with a resolution passed at a National Conference of Spiritualists held in Liverpool, the British National Association of Spiritualists has steadily and surely advanced on a career of public usefulness; it may be said to be now in good working order, and has several hundred members scattered over all parts of the kingdom, and has also corresponding members in all parts of the world. Working solely with a view to the good of Spiritualism, its constitution is so framed as to prevent any undue centralisation of power, or the assumption of authority by any one individual. Friends now visiting these rooms for the first time will see that the Association is installed in a comfortable home, and also that it has large and valuable reference and lending libraries.

These rooms, open daily, afford visitors and inquirers facilities not to be had elsewhere. As an instance of the special work of the Association, I would refer to the labours of its Research Committee, who are carrying on inquiries of the utmost interest and value; there have been also the free *séances*, provided by the liberality of Mr. Blackburn, which have given means for investigation under the most favourable conditions. The monthly *soirées* of the Association not only give opportunities for the exchange of personal views and for friendly intercourse, but also serve as one of the best means of initiating inquirers into our movement. The moral effect which the Association has had cannot well be estimated, and the

influence it has thus exerted has been beneficial to all Spiritualists, of whatever class or locality. It aims at the good of all, its spirit is friendly to all, and I hope this same friendly spirit will be evinced towards it by all classes of our fellow-workers. I have not now time to enter into suggestions for the further extension of its work. I may only say that it rests with those who have not yet identified themselves with the Association to reciprocate its advances; the best means of carrying this co-operation into further practical use can be best ascertained when common interest in the Association has first been secured, and common wants made known.

Four of our local societies have already entered into alliance with the British National Association, the Dalston and Brixton Societies in London, and the Liverpool and Cardiff Societies.

Of the London local societies the oldest is the Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism, established in 1870. It holds experimental *séances* weekly, the last meeting in each month being usually of a special character. It offers many advantages to its own members, and initiated a plan for reciprocating privileges between members of different societies. It has also an excellent library. This society is carrying on a very useful work, and owes much to the energy of its able honorary secretary, Mr. Thomas Blyton. At present it has nine life members, 29 honorary members, and 29 ordinary members. Mr. Blyton, who has had much experience in Spiritualism says: "Propagandism is, in my opinion, advisable so far as encouraging home investigation, for which purpose every information is afforded by this Association, and at the present time an attempt is being made to arouse attention to the subject by distributing printed information broadcast in this district." The rooms of the Association are at 74, Navarino-road, Dalston.

The Marylebone Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism holds its meetings at 25, Great Quebec-street. It was founded several years since, but was reorganised last year. With rather more than a hundred members, it is carrying on good practical work. It holds free *séances* for members on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays; free lectures and discussion meetings on Tuesdays and Fridays, and *séances*, for admission to which a slight charge is made, on Saturdays and Sundays. Thus it will be seen that it works well and deserves our best wishes.

The Brixton Psychological Society was formed in 1871, and at present has 36 members. Mr. H. E. Francis, the honorary secretary, informs me that *séances* are held with known mediums, and some excellent manifestations have been obtained. Monthly discussion meetings are held, and are fairly attended. Attempts hitherto to form developing circles among members have not been very successful. Private *séances* are held by some of the members at their own homes, in one case with remarkable results.

For many years Mr. Cogman, an earnest worker, who has lately passed from us, did much for the cause of Spiritualism in the East End of London. His work is being ably continued by Mr. E. W. Wallis, at the East End Spiritual Institution, 15, St. Peter's-road, Mile End. Services are held every Sunday evening, with free admission, and are well attended. Developing circles are held on Monday evenings, and open circles on Wednesday evenings, for admission to which a quarterly subscription is payable.

Attempts to carry on work of a similar kind, or to form local societies, have at various times been made in other parts of London, but for some reason they have never reached a permanent form.

It would probably be difficult to estimate the extent to which Spiritualism is indebted to Mr. J. Burns and the agencies of the Spiritual Institution, Southampton-row. Mr. Burns's name will ever be connected with the cause of Spiritualism in this country, and I cannot but admire the energy and zeal with which he has devoted his life to his work. He has done much, among other means, by the publication of cheap literature, and I need only further refer, in this summary, to the Sunday services held at Doughty Hall under his management. With a "free hall" and a "free platform" these meetings have been a boon to a number of London Spiritualists.

We have in London excellent professional mediums, through whose mediumship occur wonderful physical phenomena. I may specially mention Mr. Willie Eglinton and Mr. C. E. Williams; we have, also, good mediums of other kinds. There is one whom we may claim for London who stands unique in this country, and of whom we are justly proud, and esteem as much for his personal qualities as for his value as a "servant of the spirits"—Mr. J. J. Morse. I should not leave this brief notice of London mediums without referring also to the work of healing represented by Dr. Mack and Mr. Ashman.

There are four distinct degrees of local organisation adopted by our country friends. Of these the most general in its operations is the District Committee; then we have societies; next "circles" held regularly at stated intervals; and lastly, the "Institutional" plan. The first-mentioned of these methods was originated by the formation of the Lancashire District Spiritualist Committee. For the following particulars of this committee I am indebted to Mr. John Hartley, of Hyde. It consists of an executive of six members, two secretaries, a treasurer, and a general body of district representatives to the number of about forty, who all resign office quarterly. At some of the quarterly conferences as many as eighty representatives have been elected; there are no "rules" or "members." Its business is carried on by propositions approved at the quarterly conferences, and by the minutes passed at the various meetings of the executive. The conferences are held on the first Sundays in February, May, August, and November respectively, with intermediate meetings if necessary; they are attended by representatives from north-east, east, and mid Lancashire, north Cheshire, and north Derbyshire. At each conference representatives from the various towns and villages are elected for the next ensuing quarter, and from these are chosen the president, secretaries, treasurer, and executive, who take in hand the management of the movement and follow up the work of their predecessors. The executive meet once a month, or oftener if necessary, and arrange for meetings to be held in the several towns and villages in the before-named districts, and appoint representatives to act in those places to arrange the preliminaries of the meetings to be held; the executive also provide the speakers. One of the representatives thus appointed (of whom there are usually four or five for each place) is the corresponding secretary, who attends every meeting; he forwards a statement of the receipts and expenditure at such meetings to the general secretary, and the surplus of the proceeds (if any) to the treasurer. Should there be a loss, which is usually the case, the corresponding secretary advances the money at the time, and gets repaid by the treasurer. The meetings are always best attended in places where no meetings on Spiritualism have been held before, and a second, third, or fourth meeting rids them of the lower elements, the residue being people of intelligence. Recent meetings have been very successful, and a permanent footing has been gained in many places, amongst which Mr. Hartley mentions Stockport, New Mills, Glossop, and Middleton. As a rule the meetings do not pay expenses, but leave a loss of from 20s. to 80s., except when a local speaker takes the platform free of charge. Great difficulty is met with through want of funds; there are sufficient speakers for the present work, but if more funds were at the disposal of the committee, a great deal more work would be accomplished. The loss arising from the meetings has to be made up by the local Spiritualists; as a reserve from which such loss may be partly met, a "guarantee fund" has been formed, and which is for about £30 per annum for five years. The committee has a plan for the distribution and sale of Spiritual literature; at all meetings held under its auspices there are books for sale and other literature for free distribution. The works of Mr. A. R. Wallace and Mr. W. Crookes are the principal ones sold.

Taking the various towns in which Spiritualism is most known, in the best order I can as to locality, I will start from Liverpool, where, for many years, the movement has had a firm hold. This town has an efficient organisation in the Liverpool Psychological Society, which has at present about fifty members, a number which appears to be less than the past average. Some members have recently withdrawn on account of an alteration in the rules, by which member's

subscription has been raised from 4s. to 10s. per annum. The energy of the society appears at present to be concentrated on its Sunday lectures at Meyerbeer Hall. There are no professional mediums at Liverpool, but eight or ten private ones, some of whom are very good; many private *séances* are held. A correspondent says there are "thousands" of Spiritualists in the town, but they are divided and do not work well together. The conference held in 1873, at which the resolution was passed for the formation of a National Association, was convened by the Liverpool Psychological Society, and the two Associations have always been in alliance.

In Manchester, also, there have been many earnest workers for years past. One of these, Mr. R. Fitton, informs me that some seven or eight years ago himself and a few others resolved to bring Spiritualism more to the front in Manchester, by holding meetings for the reading of essays, and for lectures and discussions, to which the public were invited; the result was the formation of a committee, and the work was extended to holding *séances* and public meetings for trance-speaking on Sundays; still later (in 1873) these friends were consolidated into the Manchester Association of Spiritualists, when a prospectus and rules were drawn up. This society has about forty members, who pay a quarterly subscription of one shilling; they are entitled to the use of the library of the Association, which contains about 100 volumes of the best of the Spiritual literature. The public meetings of the Association are held at the Temperance Hall, Grosvenor-street, on Sunday afternoons. Many circles are held in private families, and there is a large number of Spiritualists in the city. Mr. Fitton gives no estimate of their number, but another correspondent puts them down as 300 or 400. Four public trance-speakers reside in or near Manchester—Mr. Jackson, Mr. Johnson, Miss Barlow, and Miss Hall. These, like all provincial mediums, with one or two exceptions, can hardly be called "professional mediums," as, although they are engaged for public speaking by the various local societies, they only take a small fee for their services, or receive payment of travelling expenses.

The following particulars of the early days of Spiritualism in Hyde, near Manchester, are from Mr. Hartley:—"Some seven years ago Hyde first commenced its public investigation into Spiritualism; at that time its upholders had none of the advantages of to-day—no books, publications, or weekly organs of the movement to enable them to persevere in their inquiries; it appeared to be intuitive on the part of the sitters, for none knew the peculiarities of the physical manifestations, yet the results were marked with a degree of success which I believe the Research Committee of the National Association has not yet attained. It would be impossible, in a short letter, to give anything like a detailed description of the progress of spiritual manifestations in those early days. The newspapers were fully occupied for months discussing the subject pro and con, and although nothing definite was arrived at, it gradually got to be a settled opinion that there 'was something in this Spiritualism.' Its adherents were subjected at the time to various insults from the clergy, as well as from the populace, threatened on one hand, hooted and anathematised on the other; but they were so fully convinced of the reality of the strange manifestations, that the threatening of a few dominant clergy, and the shouts of an ignorant mob, did not make them forsake the truth and the evidence of their senses. The manifestations were of every phase that I, so far, have seen, read, or heard of; we had clairvoyance, elongation of the body, materialisations, and other forms of mediumship, which appear strange to the ordinary mind. With one medium, when in the trance condition the hair on his head was like a stiff brush, if it was pressed down it sprang back to its wire-like tension; at the same time his whole body was similar to an inanimate object charged with electric fluid. The gift of healing was much developed amongst the sitters. The splendid poems and orations given through one medium were remarkable for their fluency and perfect grammatical construction, although the medium, in his normal state, was an ordinary workman, but with a well-balanced head." At the present day there are said to be about a dozen prominent Spiritualists in Hyde, and perhaps a hundred more who do not publicly declare themselves as such. Mr. Hartley further adds:—"I think it very necessary that something should be known of the movement in the provinces. I should indeed be glad if all provincial Spiritualists would go hand in hand with the British National Association of Spiritualists."

In Leigh Spiritualism is prominently brought before the public by the Leigh Spiritualist Association, which numbers twenty members. It has no rules, members are admitted at the ordinary meetings, and executive officers are elected quarterly. Many public meetings, discussions, and lectures have been held during the past year; the chief opposition met with comes from the local dissenting denominations. Mr. F. Turner says: "It is difficult to advise as to the best method of propagandism. Considerable sums of money have been spent in our effort here to spread a knowledge of the subject; lectures (normal and trance), discussions, *séances* with professional mediums, the distribution of literature, all have been tried, only to meet with the most bitter opposition and ridicule from the religious bodies." Mr. Turner says there are fifty Spiritualists in Leigh and an area of three miles round.

Oldham is one of the strongholds of Spiritualism. Mr. T. Kershaw and Mr. Samuel H. Quarmby have both publicly stated that there are two thousand persons in the town who believe in spirit communion. The latter gentleman, who is secretary to the Oldham Society of Spiritualists has repeated that estimate to me, and furnished me with the following particulars of the society. It has no system of membership and no rules. The committee for the time being institute a course of action which is liable to be altered or confirmed by the next. The fact of attending the meetings and contributing in any way to the expenses, constitutes membership. A committee with chairman, treasurer, and secretary are elected, usually half-yearly. Trance and normal speakers are engaged weekly, physical mediums occasionally, and literature is distributed. The meetings are usually attended by about a hundred persons, but this number is increased to three or four hundred when the meetings are of a special kind. Mr. Quarmby speaks strongly in favour of propagandism, if carried on judiciously. He says much injury has been done by foolish undeveloped mediums. A wise intermixture of normal speakers with the best trance mediums, and the distribution of literature, has worked well in Oldham.

From Ashton-under-Lyne I have a very different report. The society which existed here has been broken up. On the 19th November last a mob attacked the Spiritualist meeting room; the stairs and landing were carried by assault, but foiled in their attempt to force the room, the disturbers remained an hour singing hymns, when the police arrived. On the previous Sunday, while the usual meeting was being held, the door was forced in, although a police officer was in attendance to prevent a disturbance. The professing Spiritualists had not the courage to stand opposition of this kind, and the meetings ceased.

In Bolton the state of affairs is far more encouraging. The Bolton Spiritualist Association has thirty members, and a suitable room in which meetings are held twice on Sundays. The afternoons are devoted to *séances*, and the evenings to singing, prayer, and addresses. The speakers are planned in advance each quarter by the secretary. Mr. David Cordingley, who has furnished me with these particulars, writes as follows: "We have been steadily increasing ever since we formed ourselves into an association. We have no rules of any description; those are members who subscribe monthly. We appoint quarterly a committee, treasurer, and secretary, who manage all our business, and see to the respectability of the members. All are on an equality; there is no envy, no suspicion, and we have so succeeded in making our Spiritualism a thing of joy that it is rarely a member is absent from our Sunday gatherings. We have no professional mediums, but we have two good trance speakers, through whom we receive Spiritualism of a high order, and above a saleable value. *Séances* are held two or three times a week. During the early days of our Association we engaged mediums, but found the plan expensive and unprofitable; we changed our system of dependence on others to one of reliance on ourselves, and have found it much

better in every way. We get all the Spiritualist literature we can afford to buy. In summer we make picnics to favourite spots in the neighbourhood, and have tea parties and entertainments in the winter. We aim at elevating ourselves and each other, and delight to meet and converse to each other's happiness as much as possible." From the foregoing I should judge the Bolton friends to be a happy community, and think they set a good example.

In Rochdale the Spiritualists have no public place of meeting. One was taken for three months, but was badly supported by those who should have assisted. A friend writes: "There are a good many private circles—I should say twenty—in our town and neighbourhood, and I believe they are doing a good work. I have no idea of the number of Spiritualists here; there are not a few who believe but do not make it publicly known." Rochdale and the other Lancashire towns I have named work in union with the district committee.

There are several other places in Lancashire in which Spiritualism is making much progress, but I have particulars only from one of them—Barrow-in-Furness. Here four circles are regularly held, and some good mediums are in process of development. Mr. J. Walmsley writes as follows: "The mode we have adopted has been to introduce Spiritualism personally whenever we have opportunity, and to advise all inquirers to sit at home and investigate for themselves. We have had Mr. Morse here twice; Mrs. Scattergood and Miss Longbottom each twice, and three lectures from Dr. Sexton. Three thousand persons listened afternoon and evening to the ladies, so the subject is well known here. We have about twenty-five believers, but many more are favourable to it, and would join us did we form a society. There are also Spiritualists at Dalton, at Ulverston, and at Millom in Cumberland."

In Yorkshire there are, perhaps, more Spiritualists in Halifax than in any other town. The Halifax Psychological Society has fifty members. It has no rules, but persons wishing to join, subscribe their names in the members' book, and pay a subscription of not less than one shilling per quarter. Public services are held on Sundays, for which purpose a room is fitted up with platform, seats, and organ, and licensed in the same way as the chapels of dissenting religious denominations. There is great opposition just now by the various religious bodies in the shape of mock seances, &c. It is also said that a recent prosecution has done much harm to the cause of Spiritualism in Halifax. Miss Longbottom and Mr. Blackburn are public mediums, and there are five or six other mediums good for private circles, of which there are several in the town. Mr. Longbottom, the secretary of the society, thinks there are 150 Spiritualists in the borough. He speaks in favour of the distribution of "Rules to form Spirit Circles," and of encouraging home investigation. In addition to the Psychological Society there is also in Halifax a society of Christian Spiritualists.

At Sowerby Bridge, two miles from Halifax, there is the Sowerby Bridge Spiritualists Lyceum, with about forty members. The secretary, Mr. E. Broadbent, writes: "We chiefly carry out Andrew Jackson Davis's instructions as regards the Lyceum and the election of officers and their duties. We hold school morning and afternoon on Sundays, and services in the evenings. I should think there are 100 Spiritualists in this district, say within an area of two miles."

At Keighley, the local society is called the Spiritual Brotherhood Lyceum, and has from seventy to eighty members. The rules of this society provide for a committee of nine, of whom one-third retire each quarter, but may be re-elected. Applications from persons wishing to become members are considered by the committee, and their decision as to election is laid before the next following quarterly general meeting. There is no fixed amount of subscription—members contribute according to their inclination or ability, and sufficient funds are generally forthcoming. Meetings are held regularly on Sundays, morning and evening; the hall seats 150 persons, and the meetings are well attended, people coming regularly a distance of four or five miles. Occasionally the Mechanics' Hall is engaged for special lectures; it holds 1,300 or 1,400 people, and is usually filled. As with respect to several other places, I have not been able to get a close estimate of the number of local Spiritualists; Mr. Tillotson, the secretary to the Lyceum, says, in Keighley "there are a few hundreds."

In Leeds Spiritualism does not seem to occupy so good a position as it formerly did. There is no society, and although there are several Spiritualists in the town they are not, according to my information, united or known to each other. There are a few regular circles held.

The town of Huddersfield will be familiar to you on account of the recent prosecution there of Dr. Monck. A correspondent writing on the 14th December, says, "We have no organisation here; some years ago there were monthly meetings held, and there was also a library, but both have been discontinued. I am not aware that any meetings are now held."

At Ossett, near Wakefield, there is a Spiritual Institute, managed by a committee, and which has existed four years. Mr. Charles Hallgath says there are about fifty known Spiritualists in Ossett and Gawthorpe. "A few working men who are keeping Spiritualism before the public. We know its truth, and we want others to know it also."

From Sheffield there comes an encouraging report. It is said that twelve months ago there were only two or three Spiritualists in the town; now there is a society with thirty members, who pay a small quarterly subscription. Seances are held at the homes of members, who meet quarterly to report progress.

In Hull there is a Spiritual Institution under the proprietorship of Mr. Bland. It does not, however, seem to flourish, although Mr. Bland deserves to meet with better success. There is a small library at the institution for members, and seances are held weekly. There appear to be but few Spiritualists in the town, and these have no unity of action.

At Grimsby, on the other side of the Humber, three or four circles meet regularly, but the few local Spiritualists are divided by petty jealousies.

There are about twenty believers in Spiritualism in Saltburn-by-the-Sea, and about fifty who lean towards it. There is a strong feeling against the movement on the part of the orthodox party. Mr. J. R. Summers says, "I was the person who introduced Spiritualism into Saltburn, and although it was five years ago, I am to this day looked on as the devil of the place."

There are a number of Spiritualists in Darlington, where there is a Spiritual Institute, but I have been unable to obtain any particulars.

In Bishop Auckland the Spiritualists do not seem to get on well with their public work. The local society, the Bishop Auckland District Association of Spiritualists, is about to be dissolved on account of members falling off. Lectures and seances have been held for a long time past, but it has been difficult to get sufficient interest taken in them to guarantee a continuance of them. Mr. Gibson, the secretary of the society, says there are 200 or 300 Spiritualists within the town and a radius of six miles round. Writing from New Shildon, Mr. John Mensforth states that there are "about a thousand" Spiritualists in the locality, including Old and New Shildon, West Auckland, Bishop Auckland, &c. Meetings are held on Sundays in the Co-operative Hall, Old Shildon, for which a few friends pay a rental of about £16 a year. Week-night meetings are also held. The local workers meet with much persecution and opposition.

Chester-le-street is a colliery district, and for promoting Spiritualism there is the Chester-le-street District Committee, formed in June last. About twenty circles are regularly held in the neighbouring villages, and there are said to be 200 local Spiritualists. The majority of these appear to be hard-working men and very earnest Spiritualists.

In Sunderland there was once a society of Spiritualists, but through some discord it ceased. Mr. John Rutherford informs me that two private circles meet every week, and there are five private mediums, "three of whom may be classed as good for demonstrating the truth of Spiritualism to others." In his opinion propagandism is highly advisable. After a lecture in the town by Mr. Morse great interest was manifested, and a run made on the books on Spiritualism in the free library. Mr. Rutherford states that there are about seventy Spiritualists in the town.

He also gives a long list of books on Spiritualism which are in the Corporation Free Library, and the library of the Working Men's Co-operative Stores.

In South Shields there is no society of Spiritualists, but there is a local "Circle," with a president, secretary, and treasurer. It is limited to 20 members, which number might be doubled at any time if desired. Applicants for membership have to attend for a probationary period of one month, at the end of which time they are permanently admitted, if a majority of members vote in their favour. Three meetings are held weekly, one of which is devoted to obtaining materialisations, with good results. The medium is Mr. W. H. Lambelle. There are other smaller circles in South Shields, and the local Spiritualists are said to number 50, there being also an equal number in North Shields. Investigation is carried on with a great deal of secrecy.

I now come to Newcastle-on-Tyne, which, as regards Spiritualism, is one of the most important places in the kingdom. I am indebted to Mr. H. A. Kersey for the following particulars of the movement here. The local organisation is called the "Newcastle-on-Tyne Society for promoting Inquiry into Modern Spiritualism," which may be justly said to be "a somewhat cumbersome title." The Spiritualists proper would like to alter it, but this is opposed by members who are investigators only, so the matter is never pressed to a division. At a recent meeting of the Dalston Association, Mr. G. R. Tapp referred to the fact of there being always new friends at the meetings; the same thing came under my notice at the late Clerkenwell Society—each succeeding quarter there would be many new members, and yet the yearly average was always about the same. Mr. Kersey speaks of a similar fact occurring at Newcastle with the society there. For the year ending 30th September last, the first quarter began with 59 members and ended with 51; the second quarter began 71 and ended with 53; the third with 78 and ended with 52; and the last quarter began with 85 and ended with 47. Members investigate for a time, and then leave for a variety of causes; some get satisfied, others continue to investigate privately; but, says my correspondent, one thing is agreeably certain, that Spiritualism is fast spreading in Newcastle outside the society. There are a great many who, though they do not subscribe to the society, frequently attend its lectures, &c. At the last annual meeting the committee were desired to devise some means to keep these outside friends connected with the society, and it is thought probable that there will be two classes of membership—one with a mere nominal subscription, while the contribution for ordinary membership would remain as at present, 5s. per quarter, which provides for two seances per week. At present the society has no formulated rules, but is guided by the various minutes passed from time to time. The committee and officers are elected annually, and they appoint sub-committees for special duties. The society provides seances, encourages developing circles, holds lectures every Sunday, and frequently on week nights, with trance and normal speakers, distributes literature, promotes social gatherings, and adopts other means by which people may be induced to investigate Spiritualism. Mr. Kersey says the success of the society has been great; whilst it struggled on for years in obscurity it laid a foundation on which to build in the future, and it is the parent of all the circles about the locality for miles round. There are four public mediums in Newcastle—Miss C. Wood, Miss A. Fairlamb, and Mrs. Petty, and her son Willie. There are also some excellent private mediums, and a number of private circles are held. Mr. Kersey further writes: "Whilst thinking that public lectures are not without their value, I am decidedly of opinion that private advocacy and demonstration go far further to convince sceptics than public meetings or seances. Private propagandism is more sure, though perhaps not so showy as the public; your work is apparently more in detail, but the result is more certain. I do not believe in sudden conversions—a sort of mental dram-drinking à la Moody and Sankey—or that the effect of such is lasting. I am sorry I cannot answer your inquiry as to the number of Spiritualists in Newcastle, except to say those not connected with the society far outnumber those who are; the only guide I can give you, and that not a reliable one, is that our lecture hall has on some occasions been so full that we have had to lock the doors and refuse further admittance. The hall seats 200 comfortably; count the number when packed, and you have some idea of the state of affairs. I may state that the society's establishment consists of our lecture hall, with rooms for seances, committee meetings, &c. From another standpoint, the success of the society may be judged by the financial statement, which, for our last year, showed that £216 had been expended in furthering the cause of Spiritualism."

Newcastle is also the centre of the North of England Conference Committee, formed on the same basis as the Lancashire committee, to promote co-operative effort and union amongst the numerous circles springing up in the other towns and the country round about. The Newcastle people heartily backed up this movement, and the surrounding districts elected representatives on the committee, but have since declined to work with it—consequently but little has been accomplished.

At Choppington, near Morpeth, a society has been recently formed. It has twenty-three members. Public mediums have been engaged and literature distributed. There are said to be seventy or eighty Spiritualists within a four miles radius.

From here, for convenience, I go into Scotland. Spiritualism does not appear to thrive on Scotch soil. There was at one time a Psychological Society in Edinburgh, but it does not seem to exist now. The only place from which I have a report is Glasgow, from whence Mr. J. Brown writes as follows:—"I have not been practically engaged in the study and pursuit of Spiritualism for the last two years, and am incapable of estimating at all correctly its present status in Glasgow. Judging from the organisation which exists here I cannot say that it is in a flourishing condition. I know, however, from past experience that very considerable advance has been made in educating the public mind towards a more respectful recognition of the phenomena and claims of Spiritualism. It is now twelve years since my attention was drawn to the subject in this city, and it was an exceedingly difficult matter to find anyone who in any way sympathised with the teachings or was acquainted with the manifestations. Now in a general sense it is different, and there are hundreds who, while they may not have allied themselves with any association, are yet earnest and quiet students, who have either openly declared their faith or are decidedly inclined towards a belief in Spiritualism. The Association here, however, has never been a permanent success; its prosperity has ever been on the ebb and flow, the rise and decline. At present it is not in the ascendant, which, I think, is due to lack of good management and the attempt made some time ago to constitute a religious service, to which the public, without discrimination, were invited. There are few known good mediums. Mr. Duguid is the one most sought after, and has during the past ten years done more to make the manifestations popular amongst all classes of the community than anyone I know. I am not disposed to think much of propagandism as beneficial. From my experience I should say that the circulation of the better class of the literature of the movement is the most efficient mode of accomplishing an ultimate change in the public feeling towards the movement. The formation of family circles I consider also a very important method of effecting a change in the public mind, but I do not think it well to expend much energy in the public debate and proclamation of Spiritualism." Mr. James Simpson, the secretary of the Glasgow Association of Spiritualists, informs me that there are some seventy names on the list of the society's members, but only thirty or forty of these are paying members. He regrets that the older Spiritualists do not identify themselves more with the Association, and states that a number of very earnest men—of the working classes chiefly—form the present committee, and also that a great many strangers have come to the meetings during the past winter, anxious for information, as many as thirty or forty inquirers coming at one time.

Coming south again, I find a large number of Spiritualists in Nottingham. These are divided into two bodies, who, though separated and distinct, are friendly to each other. The Nottingham Spiritualists Society represents those who are called

the "progressive party," and there are also the Christian Spiritualists. The first named have about twenty-five members. The society has no definite rules, but an earnest desire to investigate, and the payment of not less than one shilling per quarter, constitutes membership. Officers are elected half-yearly at special meetings. Meetings for trance addresses are held on Sundays. Mrs. Hitchcock is the principal local public medium; this lady has been an earnest worker for over ten years. There are at least half-a-dozen private mediums, some of whom have given excellent tests in the trance at private sances. Mr. J. Ashworth, who for many years has been one of the most active local workers, says with reference to propagandism, "If we are in possession of a great truth it seems to be our duty to put others in possession of it. I think, at the present time, by lectures, and by the wholesale distribution of such information as will enable anxious inquirers to investigate at their own homes." He estimates the Spiritualists in Nottingham and suburbs at about 200. Of the Christian Spiritualists there are about thirty enrolled members. Mr. J. W. Billson, in a kind and interesting letter, writes:—"We have no printed or written rules, but are guided by principles, and in case of difficulty, by instructions through our mediums. Membership consists of agreement with our teachings and a desire to co-operate in their furtherance. We have but few officers, who are elected as circumstances require. Our name somewhat explains our work, and we have meetings at our room, morning and evening, every Sunday for worship and instruction, and also on Wednesdays; on Tuesday evenings we meet for healing the sick. During the summer months, for three years past, we have held our Sunday morning meetings in the forest about a mile from Nottingham, and have had large and attentive audiences." Mr. Billson also says there are numerous private sances, especially among the well-to-do classes. He thinks there are "several hundred Spiritualists" in the district. The sub-editor of one of the local papers is an ardent Spiritualist, and takes every occasion to defend the cause.

In Leicester, there are said to be 500 Spiritualists. Whether this is an exaggerated estimate or not I cannot say, but we seldom hear of anything worthy of special notice taking place in the town. The Leicester Society for Promoting Investigation into Spiritualism, has existed two years, and there are three trance mediums used for public speaking.

A Northampton friend, after consulting with other local workers, estimates that there are at least 500 Spiritualists in that town, but they have no society or organisation. There are four or five circles held regularly, each attended by from thirty to fifty persons, who in some cases pay a trifling subscription to defray any expenses incurred. It is also said that there are many private sances held in the families of the neighbouring gentry and well-to-do classes.

I have long had the idea that something radically wrong exists among the Spiritualists of Birmingham, of whom there are said to be about 400. There is no local organisation, but a working committee carries on Sunday lectures during the winter, and open air meetings in the summer. Mr. R. Harper writes:—"The work is exceedingly difficult to carry on at all, and progress is sufficiently slow to damp the ardour of the most enthusiastic worker. The effect of the lecturing is almost nil, both as regards the Spiritualists and the public, and it is proposed to abandon it except in the open air during the summer. The meetings of last summer did each as much good as ten lectures within halls. About only from fourteen to forty of the Spiritualists here attend the ordinary lectures. I believe in propagandism, and that the best form is sances, and the second best printed matter. I am clearly of opinion that we have ten times too much lecturing of the kind supplied, most of it being rubbish." Apart from the work of the above committee there are meetings held at the United Christian Spiritualists' meeting room, the secretary being Mr. W. Porks, who has been an earnest and hard-working Spiritualist for many years.

From Bristol Mr. George Tommy writes as follows:—"I regret to say that my report respecting Spiritualism in this city and neighbourhood will be extremely meagre and unsatisfactory, for the simple reason that for the present there appears to be a total suspension of any association in connection with the movement. We established a society here about twelve years ago, the members of which numbered between twenty and thirty, but our great want at that time appeared to be a good medium, and failing in this the interest gradually diminished, and the attendance fell off, the result being the breaking up of the society after an existence of about eighteen months. About four years ago we reorganised our society somewhat on the same basis as before. We got on rather more satisfactorily for a time, and obtained some good manifestations, but some of the members were suspicious respecting the phenomena; this produced some unpleasant feeling, resulting in division, and ultimately in the disruption of the society about two years ago, since which time there has been no association. I have no data on which to base an estimate of the number of private sances held, but judging from information I get occasionally in different and sometimes unexpected quarters, I believe private sances are held in a great many families in Clifton and other localities where they do not say much about it in public. With regard to propagandism, so far as our locality is concerned, I think the time is hardly yet ripe for lectures, or any public manifestations, on account of the bitter hostility which exists, but I believe this is a phase which will soon pass away, leaving the ground free for action. My own plan at present, when I meet with inquirers, is to recommend them to sit at home with a few friends in order to test it for themselves, and I have found good results from this in some cases."

Going into Wales I find a very unsatisfactory state of affairs in Cardiff. There are a number of Spiritualists in the town who do not avow themselves, and the society formed last year has met with very poor success owing to internal dissensions. It is about to be reconstituted, and I trust to some purpose, as from no other place have I heard of such want of unity as exists at Cardiff. Mr. Emery, who has worked with energy and tact for the society, says that perhaps 80 or 100 Spiritualists might be got to attend a public meeting, but he thinks there are three times as many in the town who privately accept the facts. Mr. G. Sadler has been a devoted worker in the cause. About a year ago he established a free library, and has since then lent works on Spiritualism to 180 different persons, and the demand for books is increasing. He has also given away a large amount of literature. His son, Mr. E. G. Sadler, is known as "the Welsh physical medium."

Mr. J. T. Docton, of Merthyr Tydvil, writes:—"We have no society here. The Spiritualist community consists of private sances meeting in private houses, to which inquirers are admitted if they can get the influence of some of the members. There are eight circles known to me personally; each selects an officer or 'conductor,' and meets regularly. We have half-a-dozen good private mediums. I should judge the number of Spiritualists in the town to be at least one hundred."

In Llanelly there are a number of Spiritualists, but they have no organisation, a society which once existed having broken up for want of a place in which to hold meetings. Mr. J. F. Young has done much for Spiritualism in the neighbourhood, and appears to be an enthusiastic worker.

In the south and west of England Spiritualists are fewer. We hear occasionally of meetings in Brighton, Portsmouth, Southampton, and other places. In Plymouth, Spiritualism has made some progress. Mr. Edward Snell, of Culver-park, Saltash, writes:—"I am not aware of any society of Spiritualists in the neighbourhood. I think the sittings are confined to some half dozen private circles in Plymouth and Devonport, where others, like myself, have discovered the truth of Spiritualism by manifestations occurring in their own families. The parsons have directed public attention to the matter by denouncing it as devilish, and the prosecutions of Drs. Slade and Monck excite interest among people who otherwise would never have heard of Spiritualism. Recently Mr. Burns has been lecturing and Dr. Mack healing here." In a later letter Mr. Snell says, "The cause has outlived ridicule here, and I am no longer considered a fit candidate for Bodmin Lunatic Asylum. A well-known solicitor who lives here, and who formerly con-

sidered me a mild kind of monomaniac, has discovered a powerful medium in the person of his only daughter, and now sits gravely down at dark sances in his own house."

In West Cornwall there are two or three Spiritualists, and I have heard of visitors holding sances at the Land's End; here I may appropriately end my discursive ramble. I think I cannot do so better than by expressing a wish that the motto of this western county may be adopted by Spiritualists in their efforts to make known the truth; it is, "One and All."

THE DISCUSSION—SPIRITUALISM IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT—PROVINCIAL ORGANISATIONS—SPIRITUALISM IN GLASGOW, LANCASHIRE, BIRMINGHAM AND THE CHANNEL ISLANDS—THE INFLUENCES GOVERNING THE FORMATION AND DISRUPTION OF SPIRITUAL ORGANISATIONS—SPIRITUALISM AND THE CLERGY AND NONCONFORMISTS—THE NON-RECEPTION OF SPIRITUALISM BY THE CELTS—SPIRITUALISM, DISSENTERS, SHAKERS AND RANTERS—THE RECORDING OF SPIRITUALISTIC STATISTICS.

A vote of thanks to Mr. Pearce, proposed by Mr. Rogers, and seconded by Mr. Tapp, having been passed for the paper,

Mr. Thomas Shorter said: I have had to do in past years with the collecting of Spiritualistic statistics, and can bear witness to the large amount of labour contained in the paper which Mr. Pearce has read before us this evening; I think it would be valuable if all the information contained in his paper were to be tabulated; it would be well to record the number of members contained in every organisation. I am surprised that he has not furnished us with information from Darlington, for there the first convention of Spiritualists was held. Again with regard to Nottingham, there was once a Lyceum there for children. Is it alive now? What is the state of Spiritualism in the Isle of Wight and in the Channel Islands? I was in the Isle of Wight last summer, and discovered that there were some good private circles there, and that Mr. Broderick is a very active local worker. There are discussions occasionally in the local papers, but no organised society, I believe.

Mr. J. J. Morse: I hope that the paper will be reprinted, because at present the people in one locality do not know what is going on in another. I am continually traversing the ground which Mr. Pearce has gone over, and I do not think he has overstated the facts in any respect. He made remarks about lack of unity, but that want of adhesion has its uses; there is internal lack of unity sometimes in the managing bodies themselves; there is also lack of union with each other in many instances of the various societies. When attempts are made to bring about union, local prejudices, ideas and interests come into conflict. Four of the chief societies in the country have entered into alliance with the National Association of Spiritualists, and I wish all of them had done so, for by union and by becoming acquainted with each other the welfare of the whole cause is promoted. I think that there is a species of natural selection at work in the provinces, whereby the movement, after all, is worked in the best way. The "institutional" plans spoken of I do not understand, for how it differs from a local society my brains are unable to grasp; it is simply a rose by another name. The Lancashire District Union of Spiritualists works well. Cannot we enter into some correspondence with this committee, to know whether assistance from us would be of use to it? I do not agree with Mr. Brown in what he says about Glasgow; he may know more of details than I do, but I do not think Spiritualism is at a low ebb there; for instance, a hundred and thirty people can be seated in the lecture hall belonging to the Glasgow society, which also possesses rooms which are let off. They have, besides, regular Sunday services. Scotchmen know how to behave themselves, and I do not think that what we consider to be good for ourselves is bad for the public, if we let them in to hear what is said. The society is not well sustained, but it has done very useful work. Mr. James Bowman has done a great deal for Spiritualism in Glasgow—(applause)—and has sacrificed time, money, and labour. He has also supported Mr. Duguid; in short, Mr. Bowman's labours are beyond praise. (Applause.) Mr. Duguid's mediumship is of a very valuable character; there is nothing to equal it in Scotland, and it has done much to convince a very hard-headed class of the community of the reality of spiritual intervention in mundane affairs. I am treating with the Glasgow society to lecture there next Sunday in the Trades Hall, which will hold eight hundred people, and I do not think that a society which has had energy enough to do all this can be considered to be in low water. I am thoroughly acquainted with the state of Spiritualism in Newcastle. If Mr. Kersey had not been so modest, he might have told Mr. Pearce that his disinterested labours have done very much indeed there to promote the welfare of the society. The old members of the society laboured continually for the development of the two celebrated mediums, Misses Wood and Fairbank, and at first they had few manifestations; but they fought the thing right through, and succeeded in developing some of the most astounding phenomena connected with modern Spiritualism. A year ago their hall was in a bad state, but now it has been renovated. Mr. Harper speaks despairingly about Birmingham, and, as he is a lecturer there, perhaps some of his remarks about public speakers refer to his own utterances. There is division among Spiritualists there. I was in Birmingham ten days ago, and on Sunday evening we had a good attendance in a large hall; the collection was a large one. Mrs. Green works hard in Birmingham to promote the interests of Spiritualism. As regards Wales, I have had a little correspondence with Cardiff Spiritualists, and although they are in a divided state, I think that the dissensions are not of a very deep nature; I have advised them to settle all these little matters at a general tea-meeting. In Llanelly Mr. Young has done much. In Jersey Mr. J. de Carteret was my host; we held meetings in the Prince of Wales's Assembly Rooms in St. Helier's, under the presidency of Lieut.-Col. Fawcett. Meetings were also held elsewhere, and these were the first meetings in connection with Spiritualism ever held in the Channel Islands. The people there are staunch Roman Catholics, who believe themselves to be irrevocably in the right. The audience in the Assembly Rooms was a respectable one, and one of the listeners suggested that the subject of the trance address from the spirits should be "The Horse which is to Win the next Derby." Where such information is desired from the next world, it is evident that the spiritual soil wants ploughing up. Spiritualism is extending very much in the provinces. The external work of Spiritualism is only half equal to that which we sometimes see accomplished in the provinces, for there it enters into the lives of the people—it is a vital reality governing their conduct. They often say at public meetings that their lives have been fired with holy fervour by the new revelation. Four British societies are working in alliance with this Association. I should like to see all the others doing the same. Let them tell us whether they wish co-operation. Union is strength, disunion is weakness, and we should all certainly gain by working together.

Mr. W. H. Harrison: I have been to many of the places mentioned by Mr. Pearce, and before the National Association was formed gave close attention

for several years to the influences which govern the formation, breaking up, and permanency of Spiritualistic societies. When a society first forms in any locality, Spiritualists of all varieties of opinion work together; they are at the outset glad to meet each other, and to have opportunities of talking over subjects alien to the mind of the outside world. As a local society gradually increases in power, and practical work has to be accomplished, the society tends to divide into two sections, the one consisting chiefly of critical people who accept the facts of Spiritualism subject to the dictates of reason and logic, the other consisting chiefly of emotional people who accept Spiritualism more as a matter of faith, and in whom the critical faculty is less developed. The latter believe every word uttered by a trance medium to come from a spirit, and do not like the undeniable circumstance to be pointed out that the phraseology and grammatical construction of sentences coming from the mouth of the entranced medium are usually the same as his own, therefore that the communications are in many cases—though not in all—to a large extent coloured by the mentality of the medium. After a time these two orders of mind find that they cannot work harmoniously together, and they at last separate. Such a separation once took place in the Dalston Society without any quarrelling, and a temporary new Association was started in the immediate neighbourhood. I know of two societies wherein this unavoidable state of division has been nearly reached, and any day we may expect to hear news of the actual separation. If anybody says that these two sections should work together in the same society, he makes a mistake; the mental food which suits the one does not suit the other, and the sooner they separate and work in their own ways the better. There is nothing to regret in the division, any more than we should be sorry that a tree has many branches instead of one, and those who demand that both shall work in unity are simply demanding an impossibility—are demanding that one of the laws of the universe shall be broken. The sooner they separate the better, rather than attempt to work together united by a jarring chain. By a process of natural law, which nobody can overcome, Spiritualists everywhere are separating into two great sections—into the critical and emotional orders of mind. It is not for me to pharisaically say that one of these orders of mind is superior to the other, but I do say that after the separation has taken place, both ought to work unitedly against the common foe, against the darkness and ignorance outside, but without attempting to interfere in any way with each other's management of their own particular organisations. The organisations formed by people of the critical order of mind are as a rule permanent; those formed by the emotional order have a fleeting uncertain existence. If the numbers of the members in organisations, and other exact figures, contained in Mr. Pearce's paper, could be tabulated, it would be good; it is work of a kind which some committee of this Association ought to have constantly in hand, and such tabulations should not be confined merely to societies existing in Great Britain. The other figures in the paper consisting of the opinion of one man as to the number of Spiritualists in his neighbourhood, without saying how many children he includes, or what he means by "Spiritualists," and whose guess would probably differ widely from that made by another Spiritualist living in the same town, are comparatively worthless. Before sitting down I should like to say that I know of no evidence of the reliability of Mr. Pearce's assertion that Spiritualism has enemies in the clergy. So far as I know the clergy have been liberal in the extreme in the matter, and they take to Spiritualism far more quickly and naturally than do the ministers of dissenting denominations. Mr. Colley, recently curate of Portsmouth, and new chaplain to H.M.S. *Malabar*, has long publicly avowed his Spiritualism, yet he has been in no way persecuted by the Church. The Rev. W. W. Newbould, Clerk in Holy Orders, is a member of the Council of this Association, and has not been persecuted or annoyed in any way whatever. We have also other clergymen among our members. Mr. H. R. Haweis, who does not profess to believe in Spiritualism, has spoken very highly of Spiritualists from the pulpit, and the Rev. C. Maurice Davies has over and over again, on the platform and in the press, certified to the reality of the phenomena; yet neither of them have been in the slightest degree ill-treated by ecclesiastical authorities. The clergy have more liberty than most dissenting ministers, the latter being completely under the thumbs of persons less intelligent than themselves, and whose rule necessarily tends to restrict liberty and genius. I say this from a perfectly impartial point of view, without being personally interested in the progress of either church or dissent. I look upon both from a scientific standpoint. In regard to what Mr. Morse said about Spiritualism influencing people's lives, I am inclined to dispute that those who make long speeches at public meetings about their newly acquired purity, are better than those who say nothing of the kind, and who do not attend public meetings at which "big talks" take place, simply because their time is too valuable, but who, when real work has to be done, quietly go in and do it. The lives of the latter are just as much imbued with spiritual principles, although they do not parade their virtues. (Mr. Morse: Hear, hear.) Notwithstanding the length of my present talk I detest talkers, and think those people infinitely superior who say nothing, but when anything has to be done go in and do the work without palaver.

Mr. G. R. Tapp: Mr. Pearce has given us a useful paper. Mr. Harrison says justly that in London we get no persecution from the clergy of the Established Church. I think we have scarcely a single enemy in the whole body; at least, I only know of one who has done anything against us, and he is a man of no importance. It is by the scientific people we are attacked, abused, and misrepresented. (Hear, hear.) I hope Mr. Harrison will not think that remark hard, because it is a fact.

Mr. Harrison: I quite agree with what you say, and if it had occurred to me at the moment should have said the same myself.

Mr. Tapp: Spiritualism is catholic; it comes to everybody, to each and to all—to Christian, Turk, Jew, Jumper, infidel, and heretic—consequently, in such a mixture there must be differences of opinion, but it is to be regretted if such differences lead to disunion. We have the outside community against us, therefore we cannot afford to quarrel with each other. Why not combine to fight the common enemy? Surely we might meet together under some common rules. Let each society appeal to its neighbour for aid; let us leave out of the question all theology, and meet on the ground of mutual organisation for defensive purposes. I hope our friend's paper will let our provincial friends know that we do not forget them, but take a deep interest in their welfare—that we believe we are able to help them, and that they can help us; the motto should be, "One and all." We should join to resist the attempt to stifle inquiry, originating chiefly with the scientific world.

Dr. Carter Blake (Chairman): The paper forms a groundwork from which we could construct a map, on which we might mark in colours the distribution of Spiritualism in various districts in Great Britain. It will then be possible to draw lines connecting these spots and describing definite zones, to give an idea of the general distribution of people who declare themselves to be Spiritualists. I mean maps on the same principle as those drawn

up by Broca for other purposes. I was surprised to see the omission of Ireland in Mr. Pearce's account, and do not know what statistics exist as to the spread of Spiritualism in that country. Why should we not have an almanack setting forth useful statistical facts? Every respectable grocer and keeper of a public-house has his almanack; why should we not have ours? (Laughter.) Mr. Morse has spoken of local jealousies; we can perhaps scarcely realise or understand them here in London, for in country towns such influences as the dresses worn by rival lady members may form topics of war, and consign an ephemeral society to eternal oblivion. (Laughter.) I do not think the religious difficulty is of any real importance whatever. I have never seen even from the great Nonconformist body any particular opposition to the truths of Spiritualism; there may be opposition in isolated cases, but not very frequently. Mere ministers of the Established Church favour Spiritualism than do those connected with the Nonconformists, but perhaps this depends not upon difference of doctrine, but upon the University education and greater culture of ministers connected with the Established Church; they are therefore more liberal and more disposed to receive the facts of Spiritualism; this I believe to be the real state of the case, and I hope that I make these remarks without offence to either religious body, for I am happy to say that I belong to neither of them myself. There are few Spiritualists in the south and west of England, and when my proposed map is prepared I think we shall see a refutation of what our Teutonic friends assert that Spiritualism flourishes with the superstitious typical Celt, who lives chiefly in the south and west of England, although in these districts there are few Spiritualists, which is a fact of great importance to us. I speak as a Celt.

Mr. Morse: From my experience in the provinces, I can support what Mr. Harrison has said about the clergy; the ministers of the Established Church either let us alone most severely, or are favourable to Spiritualism. The preachers who oppose us are the Stigginses of society—the narrow-minded Baptist preachers, and individuals of that type. The increase of culture and education is the best foundation for the spread of Spiritualism.

Mrs. Lowe: I wish some clear definition had been put forth as to what is meant by Spiritualism. It is said that there is a great absence of it in the south and west of England. If we mean by Spiritualism something which acts upon the body and mind of man, there is an enormous number of Spiritualists in the south and west of England, like the Shakers and Ranters who abound there, and who believe that they are moved by the Spirit. Therefore a clear and particular definition ought to be given of Spiritualism. If we limit the term to those who believe in spirits separated from the Great Spirit of the Universe, then what some of the speakers have said may apply to the districts just mentioned.

Mr. Shorter: I should like to put in a word on behalf of dissenting ministers; for although few of them support Spiritualism, there are some eminent men among them who are quite favourable to it, including Dr. Parker and the Rev. John Page Hopps. In my locality I know one who makes no secret of his belief in Spiritualism, and holds seances in his own family. I think we are ourselves much to blame for any opposition we get from religious denominations, for most of their attacks have arisen from passages offensive to them which have been found in certain spiritual journals and books; there has been too much virulent antagonism to Christianity in some of our publications to give us any reason to expect that such utterances can be quietly received. There should be a more tolerant and charitable spirit among some of us. I think Mr. Harrison's statement about the division of Spiritualists into emotional and critical people is true, but I do not think that emotional people are always ignorant, or that critical people are always the most intelligent; still, in the main, what he has said is true.

Mr. R. Pearce, in reply to the various speakers, said: With respect to my remarks about the clergy, I have been attacked upon all sides. I did not say "clergy," I merely said "parsons." (Oh!) But one or two instances have come under my own notice of persecution by ministers of the Established Church; in one case the persecution was very bitter; still, I am willing to believe it was an exceptional case. From all parts of the country I have heard of bitter persecutions from dissenting preachers—from Baptists and from those who conduct class meetings. From several of the localities to which I applied for information about Spiritualism I received no reply. From Darlington the only reply was a letter in a newspaper which gave no information on the subject. I think that in the future there will be a great many Spiritualists in the south and west of England. The replies of Spiritualists sent to me varied very much in the statements they contained as to the supposed number of Spiritualists in their respective localities.

Mr. Harrison: That is one reason why the tabulation of such guesses would do more harm than good, and why only the numbers in enrolled societies should be so recorded.

The Secretary (Miss Kislingbury) said that she would lay the suggestion about drawing up tables before the Conference Committee. Inaccurate numbers might be left out, but those which were accurate could be inserted, and the names of secretaries, mediums, and items of that kind might be arranged in columns for public use.

The meeting then adjourned until the following morning.

A PAPER BY MR. W. H. HARRISON—THE RELATION OF THE LAW TO PUBLIC MEDIUMS—SPOTTED TAIL "THE JUST"—THE DIFFICULTIES AND TRIALS OF MEDIUMS—THE INIMITABLE PERFECTION OF THE LAW.

Last Friday morning the proceedings of the Conference were resumed under the presidency of Mr. H. D. Jencken, M.R.I., Barrister-at-Law.

The Chairman said: The Bar pretty unanimously holds the idea that the Courts are in the wrong in some of their recent decisions in relation to mediums. It is to be regretted that men of science, who should be liberal, are so learned that they attack any other creed than their own, especially the Christian creed, which they so much deride, and for which they wish to substitute the theory of nothingness hereafter. It is to be regretted that they shield themselves under the cloak of popular prejudice, and protect themselves from new truths by recourse to the police-courts of this country. They are both prosecutors and persecutors on the subject of Spiritualism. Most theological beliefs stand upon admitted facts, without proof; Spiritualists assert that they are able to prove the said facts, and they invite the public to test them for themselves. "No," says science, "we will not permit this; we will howl down mediums and prevent the bringing forward of such evidence." A more cowardly line of action cannot be conceived, and the names of those who do these things will hereafter be received with opprobrium, because Spiritualism is, as a physical fact, a truth, therefore must and will be established in the future.

Mr. W. H. Harrison then read the following paper:—My subject of "The Relation of the Law to Public Mediums" may be dealt with summarily, for the law has no relation to mediums, and evidence which proves the genuineness of any spiritual manifestation is all that is necessary to be advanced to secure the condemnation of an innocent man, the hearing of witnesses for the prosecution being then superfluous. It is a fact, for instance, that materialised spirit hands form in the air near certain mediums, and that if any unscrupulous person chooses to charge one of those mediums with imposture the latter is sure to be convicted by a court of law, because the knowledge of the phenomena of the universe possessed by the legal tribunal is unconsciously assumed to include everything which takes place within the realms of nature. Those who bring before such tribunals evidence proving these new truths are in the position the Astronomer Royal would occupy did he submit to the judgment of the chief of the Kickaboos and his people the demonstration of the recession and advance of the stars, as revealed by the shifting of the lines in the spectrum. Does not he, the mighty chief, know that the stars are the eyes of the snake-gods, watching the deeds of heroism, the number of enemies slain in battle by his dark and lovely people? Have not all the tribes known this from time immemorial? Is it not certified by the great medicine-man, Howling Wind, the tall-talker, who every morning chatters more than all the rest of the tribe put together? And shall the mad white man come there with his idle jests to deceive a grave and intelligent people? No. He, Sitting Bull, will listen to the white astronomer with all the silence and dignity of his renowned ancestor, Spotted Tail "the Just," for the worst of impostors must have an impartial hearing; but he, the wise ruler, knows what the result will be; verily, the scalp of the white talker will soon be missing. The law courts cannot deal efficiently even with ordinary scientific cases, as proved by the evidence given by barristers and others before the last Patent Law Commission, at nearly all the sittings of which I was present. The evidence tended to prove that the decision in patent cases usually depended not upon real merits, but upon the extent to which the ignorance of the judge and of the jury about scientific facts was played upon by the litigants, and it was admitted that a case when thus decided by rule of thumb was a cheap one if the law costs amounted only to £800 or £1,000. In Spiritualistic cases there is a dead weight of popular prejudice as well as ignorance to fight against. It is a serious matter, and should deeply move the conscience of the nation, that certain subjects of the Queen are completely outlawed through no fault of their own. The more remarkable mediums are all the more helpless, because during much of their time they are under abnormal influences; they are then in a state of trance, and as completely under the control of another will than their own as is the mesmeric sensitive on the platform of a "biologist," and who can be made by the lecturer to believe or to do anything he pleases. The abnormal phenomena sometimes excite such religious prejudices that the medium is turned out of his own home; he is then abused by disbelievers, coldly treated by certain Spiritualists for taking money for his *séances* instead of starving, he is governed at times by unseen powers, and finally is liable to be imprisoned as an impostor at any time, whether he be guilty or innocent. Evidence strong enough to hang every man in London would not prove to a court of law any spiritual phenomenon to be genuine, though with strange inconsistency the whole nation professes in church every Sunday to believe in numberless manifestations which took place more than 2,000 years ago, writing on the wall by materialised spirit hands included. If on the Monday a friend offers to prove to the worshippers the truth of that which they on the Sunday in the sanctuary professed to believe, the friend is told that he is fit for a lunatic asylum. Limiting the number of public mediums will do no harm to Spiritualism, for we have but three or four, the great majority of mediums confining their *séances* to their own friends and families. But persecution of mediums dishonours the nation; it is "un-English" to be afraid of scientific inquiry, and to compel technical investigation to be carried on in strict privacy. The sanctity of private life the law cannot invade; philosophers are agreed that where political edicts come into conflict with social usages, the political power at the root of the edicts is overthrown, social custom being stronger than legal enactments. At present I do not intend to deal in detail with any of the legal or other points connected with the unprovoked attacks upon mediums which have recently come before the law courts, or to express any opinion, whether in some cases the onslaughts were not more or less well founded; nevertheless on some of the said points I entertain strong opinions. These matters may well be left to the legal gentlemen connected with this Association, gentlemen who have done so much to help us at the present juncture, and whose valuable assistance deserves our respect and our warmest thanks. Chief among these friends is Mr. C. C. Massey. (Applause.) Perhaps it would be well if the National Association of Spiritualists were to appoint a committee to collect and place in the library all the Acts of Parliament which in any way can be brought to bear upon mediums, and to draw up a report stating what the actual position is, and what should be done in the future. The police-court actions will have the reverse effect to that which various prosecutors have alleged that they intended, namely, imposture will be greatly encouraged thereby, because mediums, having to frame conditions which protect them from persecution, will be tempted to mix the real with the false when they are able to do so with impunity. Spiritualists would have preferred that mediums who practised imposture should come within the reach of the laws of the land, but if the innocent are to be punished with the guilty, the public are responsible for the taking of steps which will shield both. A great legal authority has written to me suggesting that every man who comes to a public *séance* shall have to sign his name in a book beneath a statement that he attends on the understanding that the origin or nature of anything which he may witness is not guaranteed. Such is one of the suggested subterfuges into which honest people may be driven because scientific truth is helpless before the law, and attacked by alleged men of science. That such un-English subterfuges should be necessary is a disgrace to the nation. No doubt the work of the Committee of legal gentlemen will be efficiently performed, everything done in order, and the official report duly signed at the end, perhaps, of the following concluding paragraph:—

In witness whereof we the parties aforesaid,
Hereunto put our signs and our seals and no more said,
Being all that these presents intend to express,
Notwithstanding, moreover, and nevertheless.

A farmer whose crop was burnt up by the sun in a dry season, comforted himself in a heathenish manner by the reflection that his neighbour had lost more than himself because of the heat. In like manner may we congratulate ourselves that however bad our legal system may be, in the days of old it was worse, as set forth in the following lines by a lawyer, on legal abuses repealed shortly before the verses were written:—

Such was the humanity
And wisdom of the law,
That if in his indictment there
Appeared to be a flaw,
The court assigned him counsellors
To argue on the doubt,
Provided he himself had first
Contrived to point it out;
But lest their clemency perchance
Be craftily abused,
To show him the indictment they
Most sturdily refused.
But still that he might understand
The nature of the charge,
The same was in the Latin tongue
Read out to him at large.

And lest his wily advocate
The court should overreach
His advocate was not allowed
The privilege of speech.
'Twas thus the law kept rogues in awe,
Gave honest men protection;
Discreetly framed, by all was named,
Of wisdom the perfection.

THE DISCUSSION—THE VAGRANCY AND WITCHCRAFT ACTS—CLAIRVOYANT POWERS PUNISHABLE AT LAW—AN ASTROLOGER IN SPIKE OF HIMSELF.

Mr. C. C. Massey, Barrister-at-Law: I do not wish to speak of "the perfection of wisdom." I do not think that the law is to blame for what we have lately undergone. I have been thinking of late upon what grounds we could frame demands to Parliament for a revision of the law, and I do not see upon what basis we could place any reasonable demand for a change in the criminal law. I do not think that the law is in fault, but the ignorance of the administrators of the law. The law is unobjectionable. The old Act of George II. might perhaps be strained to strike at mediumship apart from fraud, but it is difficult to say that such would be the case. I think the judgment of the Court of Exchequer in the Monck case about the applicability of the Vagrancy Act, to be thoroughly wrong. You bring a charge against a medium who may have acted under abnormal influences, and it is hard, under such circumstances, to shut him up in prison; at the same time, are we to go to Parliament to ask for a remedy for such offences? I could not sign a petition to that effect myself. Their mediumship being honest, there may yet be fraud, so ridicule and discredit are thus cast upon Spiritualism. That is the fault of our position, and not the fault of the law.

Mr. Hensleigh Wedgwood, M.R.L., one of the magistrates for the county of Middlesex, said: I think the only point in which the law is in fault is that clause about palmistry in the Vagrant Act. I think it is a gross injustice to send fortune-tellers to prison; it is merely their despised condition of life which causes them to be imprisoned. I think that the whole clause wants repealing, and that if anybody dupes anybody else, he shall be punished for the offence as a substantial crime, under the Act for obtaining money under false pretences. It is idle to say that the clause is necessary to protect people from their own ignorance.

Mr. H. T. Humphreys, Barrister-at-Law: I agree with the remarks of Mr. Wedgwood. The Act of George II. is really one of the superstitious edicts of our ancestors, and on going further back we find Acts of the same kind against witchcraft. I think we have grown out of any legislation of this kind, and ought to be more enlightened. No doubt much mischief is done by fortune-tellers, but the remedy is not far to seek. Mr. Harrison has pointed out some of the difficulties in the matter. The chief difficulty is in the want of education in the administrators of the law; they judge everything by their own limited experience. The question is a difficult one, but on abstract grounds I agree with Mr. Wedgwood. I also think it would be well to do away with the remainder of the singularly superstitious laws against witchcraft; at the same time I doubt whether the remnant of these laws can be made to apply to mediumship. Before going to Parliament we should wait, and take very great care that anything submitted to the legislature is well considered beforehand. There has often, in a *séance*, been unconscious imposture, and that is one of the difficulties of the case, because some of the spirits who produce manifestations actually attempt to practise deception without their instrument, the medium, knowing it; mesmerists, as well as Spiritualists, are aware of this. The fact that some imposture comes from the other side of life complicates the question considerably.

Dr. Cartor Blake asked whether the ordinary laws attending the reception of evidence had not, in recent cases, been strained severely against Spiritualists. Alluding to the case of Reg. v. Treadaway, decided recently, in which evidence had been given of previous conversations with the prisoner, at which the deponents were not present, and of which they only knew by hearsay, he asked the gentlemen of the long robe whether such evidence, admitted without protest by the Crown in this case, was not, as a fact, excluded in the Slado case, and if so, whether it ought to have been excluded in law? Secondly, experts were often admitted to submit evidence to the uncommon sense of a British jury—(laughter)—in matters affecting not only science, medical or otherwise, but even handwriting; the evidence of such experts in the Slado case had been partly rejected by the Bow-street magistrate, and he would ask whether such rejection of evidence affected the conviction of any person charged under the statute 5 George IV., cap. 83? He thought that scientific men were under a heavy debt of gratitude to the legal advisers of the Defence Committee, and especially to Mr. Serjeant Ballantine and Mr. C. C. Massey.

Mr. Dawson Rogers: I would also appeal to those who have been called "the gentlemen of the long robe," to help us to understand whereabouts we are. I thought I had grasped the position up to a certain point, but when I read the judgment of the Court of Exchequer on Monck's appeal, I confess it was beyond my understanding. I cannot make out on what ground that judgment was given, or what the effect of it will be. Somebody has suggested that we should try to get the laws altered, but any such attempts would be futile; we should merely be laughed at. I would rather appeal to the public than cringe to the Legislature, and would appeal on the ground of honesty and fair play. I have a suggestion, however, to make in regard to the Legislature, and that is that we get up a petition, very largely signed, requesting the appointment by Parliament of a Commission to inquire into the phenomena of Spiritualism, and offering to give every facility for investigation. (Applause.) As a matter of fact the proposition would be pooh-poohed by Parliament, but the application would get publicity, and we should gain the credit of not being afraid of inquiry.

Mr. Massey, who was invited to speak a second time, said: Mr. Edlin expressed the opinion that, independently of the defect in the conviction in the Slado case, it was no use amending it unless it were possible to show that even then an offence had been committed under the Act. The Act said "by palmistry or otherwise," and the whole question was as to the meaning of the two words "or otherwise." We said "they means something of the same nature as palmistry," the words "or otherwise" being in accordance with legal custom, restricted by the meaning of the special words which preceded them. I hope the superior court will overrule the decision of the Court of Exchequer. In fortune-telling there is a direct appeal to the superstition of the dupe who merely relies upon what is said to him, but Slado proposed to show certain things, and said, "I tell you my opinion as to their origin, but you must judge for yourself." The persons present had as many opportunities of judging as the medium had, so there was no appeal to superstition or to credulity. Any man with good eyes and a fair understanding might

be supposed to be competent to judge for himself. As regards Dr. Blake's question of the admissibility of scientific evidence, he must remember that Spiritualism is not admitted to be a science; the courts virtually say, "Pack of nonsense; we won't listen to such rubbish." We cannot create public recognition of Spiritualism as a science to make the evidence of exports available.

Mr. Harrison: Yes; that is the very point. I once thought that courts of justice decided cases upon the evidence before them, and were higher than instead of subservient to scientific men when they were appealed to for justice. What Act of Parliament places Law Courts under the jurisdiction of scientific societies?

Mr. Massey continued: Mrs. Everitt has proved that hundreds of words are sometimes written at *seances* in a few seconds. I cannot see why such evidence should not settle the Slade case, and be as relevant as any scientific evidence given by doctors as to the effect of drugs in cases of murder. I think the Slade case ought to have been decided upon the facts, and I do not find fault with the law, but with its administration.

The Chairman: Who would present the petition to Parliament suggested by Mr. Rogers?

Mr. Rogers: It is a common thing for a member to present a petition which he utterly abhors. (Laughter.)

Mr. Thomas Shorter: The plan suggested by Mr. Rogers was adopted many years ago in the United States; a petition requesting investigation of the phenomena of Spiritualism was sent to Congress signed by 30,000 persons. It was a very able document, and was presented by a gentleman who had no faith in the matter whatever. Of course it was laid on the table, but it made a great impression on the public mind, whereby the real object of sending it in was gained.

The Chairman made a few remarks to the effect that his opinion was that the decision in the Lawrence case was bad law.

Mr. Harrison: I agree with Mr. Rogers that it is not right to cringe to authority, but think that when the Treasury took certain steps in relation to a movement of which they were probably utterly ignorant, it was but right to give them full information before attempting to lay their conduct before the public. We ought to assume that those who govern the country are attempting to manage public business as well as they can, and if they do wrong unintentionally by acting too hastily, we should point out to them in writing the nature of their acts, to give them an opportunity to retrace their steps; if, however, they still persevere in that which is not right, we are then justly in a position to show the public that they do it knowingly. Some four or five years ago an old woman of the name of Mrs. Tranter was sentenced to be imprisoned for five years for pretending to discover lost property; if she is not released by this time, not many months of her sentence remain unexpired, supposing that she has been strong enough to survive the punishment. The decision of the Court was thought by the public to be a very hard one at the time, and some of the people in the town in which she lived complained about it to the Home Secretary, who, however, did nothing in the matter. I am not aware that she was either a medium or a Spiritualist, or that she ever heard of Spiritualism, and it is quite possible she may have been an intentional impostor; but to say that the enormously harsh sentence was a just one, under the worst of circumstances, is preposterous. The more serious point of the whole matter is, that the power actually exists of detecting the whereabouts of lost property by clairvoyance, as Mr. Alfred Russell Wallace and others have pointed out in their writings, and I have every reason to believe that the question, whether Mrs. Tranter possessed such powers or not, was never raised. The Act of Parliament strikes at the innocent and the guilty alike. The late Mr. Guppy thought the sentence a horrible one, and sent a man down to the town in which Mrs. Tranter resided, to make inquiries; he did his work inefficiently, bringing back news that on certain occasions she was rumoured to have actually been the means of recovering lost property, but he did not attempt to collect definite evidence to that effect. Before sitting down I will mention an extraordinary case of the finding of lost property. When an astronomer sets up an observatory not far from a poor neighbourhood, it is a common thing for the people in the vicinity to regard him as an astrologer, and to call upon him for assistance when the family cat is missing, or articles have been lost. A friend of mine with a good connection in scientific circles, told me that a celebrated astronomer, who lives in a celebrated observatory, recently stated that he had become quite disgusted with the applications made to him for astrological information, so one day when a woman came to him for information about her lost property he determined to punish her. Instead of saying that he was not an astrologer, he remarked: "My good woman, your house has a front door." "Yes, sir, quite true," was the reply. "And," said he, making rather a bold venture this time, "there is a small garden in front of your house." "Yes, sir, that's right." "And," continued the seer, "a path leads from your front door to the gate in the front garden." "Yes, sir! Quite true! Quite true!" said the delighted woman, whose faith in the prophet was rapidly rising. The revelator added: "When you come out of the front gate you can turn to the right as well as to the left, and if you turn to the right, and go far enough, you come to a third turning on the left." "Yes, sir," said the good woman, "that's perfectly true." "Well, then," said he, "go down that turning, enter the gate of the first field you come to on the right, and look out for a place where the ground has been newly disturbed. If you dig deep enough you will find your property." The thankful woman went away perfectly satisfied, and when, a few days later, the astronomer saw her coming towards the observatory, he lashed himself into a state of moral elevation, and prepared himself to lecture her about her superstition, and to tell her how thoroughly she deserved the hard labour he had given her as a punishment. He said, directly she entered the room—"Well, my good woman, did you do as I told you?" "Oh, yes, sir," I did everything you said, and I found the property, and you are the greatest astrologer that ever lived!" (Laughter.) The astronomer was completely staggered, and, to his great aggravation, his fame for discovering lost property is established in the neighbourhood. My friend, who told me this, believes the story to be true, and is rather doubtful whether impressionable mediumship is not connected with the matter. My own opinion is, that there is a strong after-dinner flavour about the narrative.

On Sunday evening, last week, Mr. Harper, of Birmingham, lectured at the Meyerbeer Hall, under the auspices of the Liverpool Association of Spiritualists. Dr. William Hitchman, President, occupied the chair. Mr. Harper's address set forth the necessity of a higher knowledge of social science. The question of sound physiology was largely dwelt upon, in regard especially to the influence of woman upon the rising generation.

THE SPIRITUALISTS' DEFENCE COMMITTEE.

DISBURSEMENTS FOR LAW EXPENSES.

DURING the past six weeks the committee have had eleven meetings, when much business has been transacted.

The Countess of Caithness, Messrs. Hensleigh Wedgwood, W. Oxley, Charles Blackburn, Mrs. Fitz-Gerald, the Rev. W. Newbould, Messrs. Wm. Tebb, and N. Fabyn Dawe have joined the honorary committee. The subscriptions amount to £875 2s. 3d. Some further sum is expected from the United States.

Applications having been made for aid to defray the legal expenses of Messrs. Monek and Lawrence, the consent of subscribers to the fund was solicited and obtained, whereby the committee were enabled to contribute to each of these cases the sum of £70.

Upwards of £300 has already been paid in law expenses in the cases of Messrs. Slade and Simmons, and there yet remains an unpaid account of about £250. A. Joy, Hon. Sec.

PUBLIC MEDIUMSHIP.

At the meeting of the committee last Monday, the following resolutions were passed:—

Resolved—"That in the present state of public opinion it is desirable that public mediums exercise great care, especially as to the admission to their *seances* of persons unknown to them."

"That, with a view to securing public mediums as far as possible from risk of legal prosecution, this committee strongly recommends—

"1. That no stranger be admitted without a formal introduction from a well-known Spiritualist."

"2. That a notice, similar to the form appended, be conspicuously posted in the *seance* room, and that the attention of each visitor be drawn to it."

"3. That such visitor be required to sign his or her name in a book kept for the purpose, after reading the above-named notice."

"4. That unequivocal test conditions be insisted on, and rigid order be maintained in all cases."

While this committee makes these recommendations for the better security of public mediums, it distinctly declines to incur the responsibility of defending actions at law which mediums have brought on themselves by neglect of precaution or by exercising their profession for gain.

This committee further recommends that public mediums should be saved for the present from the necessity of giving open *seances*, so far as may be, by being engaged systematically at the houses of leading Spiritualists who feel able in this way to introduce the subject to their friends. ALEX. CALDER,

Chairman of the Spiritualists' Defence Fund Committee.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION CONVERSATION.—The two last *soirees* of the National Association of Spiritualists have been badly attended, in consequence of the public not having been informed beforehand of the attractions provided. No special notice of the January *soiree* having been given, several persons who did not know it was to come off at all, were absent in consequence, and had the public known that Mrs. Ross-Church (Florence Marryat) had kindly consented to give dramatic readings on the occasion, a great number of friends would have been present. In like manner, if it had been known that at the February *soiree* the President of the National Association intended to review the progress of Spiritualism during the past year, a better attendance would have been secured. The public do not care for much reading or speaking at these social meetings, but about three-quarters of an hour well occupied in this way would be a great source of attraction, if publicly announced beforehand.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.—At a meeting of the Council of this Association last Tuesday night, Mr. Morrell Theobald laid upon the table an account of the receipts and expenditure of the Association for the year 1876. When the Association first took permanent premises two years ago, a guarantee fund from a few gentlemen, amounting to £200 a year for three years, was established, in addition to ordinary members' subscriptions, in order that the Association might carry on its work without getting into debt. Although £70 of this fund was not called in in 1876, and although the Association had not last year the advantage of a sum of £90 raised by a bazaar, as in 1875—making a total of reduced income from extraneous sources amounting to £160—the members of the Association have increased so in number that the auditor's report shows a balance in hand of £11 at the end of the year just closed. There is some talk of abolishing the guarantee fund this year, as the expenses may possibly be entirely covered by the ordinary subscriptions of members. The balance in hand at the end of last month was £90 13s. 4d. The outstanding liabilities of the Association are estimated at £5.

DALSTON ASSOCIATION OF INQUIRERS INTO SPIRITUALISM.—The ordinary monthly session of the Council of this Association was held on Thursday evening last week: present, Mrs. Amelia Corner (in the chair), Mr. Thomas Blyton, Mrs. M. Theresa Wood, and Mr. Jonathan Tozeland. Letters of general interest were read from Mrs. Emma Hardinge-Britten and Mr. J. J. Morse. Mr. James Garrard was elected an ordinary member. Presentations, received since the last meeting of the Council, were laid upon the table, and accepted, with a cordial vote of thanks to the donors—Mrs. Emma Hardinge-Britten and Mr. Fred. A. Binney. The honorary secretary, having reported arrangements for interchange of members' privileges, as regards attendance at ordinary meetings and *seances*, with the "East End Spiritual Institution," the arrangement was confirmed. Mr. E. W. Wallis's offer to visit the Association on Thursday evening, the 22nd instant, was reported and accepted.

DR. W. B. CARPENTER AT STOCKTON-ON-TEES.—On Monday evening last, Dr. W. B. Carpenter, of London, delivered his lecture on "Epidemic Delusions," in the Exchange Hall, Stockton-on-Tees, under the auspices of the Stockton Literary Association. At a recent meeting of the Literary Association, one of its members delivered an address favourable to Spiritualism, and afterwards answered questions on the same subject. He gave his hearers so many hard nuts to crack, that the Association brought Dr. Carpenter all the way from London to give his assertions—his "dried peas"—to the people of Stockton. His lecture was substantially the same as that which he has been in the habit of delivering on the same subject for many years. All the old hackneyed arguments against Spiritualism were adduced. The conclusion of the whole matter was, that "the best antidote to epidemic delusions—of which Spiritualism was probably one—was scientific training to methodical habits of thought. Three scientific men had already investigated the matter, and were favourably impressed with its truth; but although they had distinguished themselves in their own special departments, they had not received that early scientific training which enabled men to discriminate between that which was true and that which was false in a matter like Spiritualism." That was his (Dr. Carpenter's) opinion, and, as he had been requested to give it, he did so.

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By Mr. J. Burns—			
G. Damiani	1	0	0
J. C.	1	0	0
"Constantinople"	1	0	0
Smaller sums	8	10	6
Ditto, collected by Mr. J. Burns	3	19	3

FROM AMERICA.

The following consists of amounts advertised as received by The Banner of Light newspaper, Boston, U.S., towards the "Slade Defence Fund," up to the 27th Jan., of which £370 12s. 6d. has already been remitted to England.

Colby and Rich (Publishers Banner of Light), Boston	200	00
Epes Sargent, Esq., Boston	50	00
A. P. H. (a Spirit)	25	00
Mrs. Mary M. Hardy, Boston	25	00
Henry J. Horn, N. Y. City	5	00
Jefferson Cutler, Medford, Mass.	3	00
G. Sweet, N. Y. City	2	00
Isaac Gibbs, Springfield, Mass.	5	00
Harvey Howes, North Bennington, Vt.	5	00
John A. Day, Norfolk, Mass.	2	00
H. E. Parsons, Ashabula, O.	100	00
J. L. Donaldson, Boston, Mass.	5	00
W. H. R.	3	00
Chas. Levy, St. Louis, Mo.	2	00
A. Fuller, Waltham, Mass.	2	00
Emma Harding Britten, Boston	10	00
L. B. Wilson, Boston	3	00
F. A. Gould, Boston	10	00
G. H. Woods, Worcester	2	00
Wm. Benson, Albany, N.Y.	100	00
David Appleton, Lowell, Mass.	100	00
Andrew Williams, Lawrence, Mass.	100	00
James Codman, Worcester, Mass.	100	00
Sarah Johnson, Worcester, Mass.	100	00
Dr. Josiah Jordan, Springfield, Mass.	5	00
Mrs. Louisa Andrews, Springfield, Mass.	5	00
E. Crowell, M.D., Brooklyn, N.Y.	50	00
C. M. Barrett, New Haven, Ct.	2	00
Geo. Stacy, Montreal, P. Q.	2	00
A. Burford, East Liverpool, Ohio	2	00
M. A. Giles	2	00
O. Giles	2	00
A Friend to the Cause	2	00
W. Y., Philadelphia, Pa.	25	00
Joseph Wescott, No. Castine, Me.	2	00
Geo. W. Smith, Boston, Mass.	20	00
J. DuBois, Everett, Pa.	5	00
Mrs. A. C. Whittemore, New Boston, Ct.	3	00
L. K. Joslin, Providence, R. I.	3	00
Jas. T. Walton, Terre Haute, Ind.	10	00
Chas. P. Perot, Philadelphia, Pa.	5	00
A Friend, Spencer, Mass.	2	00
Henry Seyberus, Philadelphia, Pa.	25	00
H. G. Wyte, Buffalo, N. Y.	2	00
Joseph Kinsey	5	00
Mr. and Mrs. E. P. Tucke	3	00
Martin Hiseo, Providence, R. I.	2	00
Henry Renman, W. Meriden, Conn.	2	00
Henry Gildemeister, Bunker Hill, Ill.	2	00
"A Liberal," Greenville, Me.	3	00
H. K. Morrill	2	00
Jos. P. Hazard, Peacedale, R. I.	5	00
Dr. G. B. Brooklyn, N. Y.	3	00
J. N. H., Peacedale, R. I.	25	00
Joseph Beals, Greenfield, Mass.	2	00
Jas. Wilson, Bridgeport, Conn.	5	00
F. R. Baker, Topeka, Kan.	5	00
James Shackleton, Lawrence, Mass.	2	00
F. Hinckley, Barnstable, Mass.	5	00
Warren S. Barlow, St. Johnsbury, Vt.	5	00
Frederick Schroeder, Papineau, Ill.	2	50
Joseph Schroeder, ditto	5	00
Samue Robinson, Swansea, Mass.	2	00
David A. Mundy, Rahway, N. J.	2	00
"A Friend of the Banner"	50	00
J. W. Robins, M.D., Uxbridge, Mass.	2	00
Mr. and Mrs. J. Roberts, Rush, N. Y.	2	00
J. B. Angel, Red Bank, N. J.	5	00
Lucy James, Danielsonville, Conn.	6	85
Wm. A. Atkins, Provincetown, Mass.	5	00
Mrs. Chas. Baldwin, Fayville, Mass.	5	00
J. Mayo, Waltham, Mass.	2	00
A. M. Gaffield, ditto	2	00
Isaac and D. W. Wright, Harvard, Mass.	2	00
Mrs. A. L. Pratt, New Haven, Conn.	2	00
Samuel Smart, Willoughby, Ohio	2	00
Joseph Dimmock, Stonington, Conn.	2	00
Robert Kerr Elliott, Live Oak, Fla.	3	00
Jas. Lawrence, ditto	3	00
S. C. Moses, Mendota, Ill.	2	00
B. L. Wade, Jefferson, Ohio	10	00
C. B. Brooklyn, N. Y.	2	00
J. F. Hamilton, Berlin, Wis.	2	00
E. Man, Litchfield, Mich.	5	00
E. Nickerson, Burton Harbour, Mich.	2	00
Calven Westover, Oxford, N. Y.	10	00
Friends, Charlotte, Mich.	2	50
S. G. N. Millerton, N. Y.	2	00
E. R. Whiting, New Haven, Conn.	5	00
H. W. Ballard, Malone, N. Y.	2	00
W. M. C., Philadelphia, Pa.	5	00
B. Ellis, Plymouth, Mass.	2	00
S. H. Austin, Syracuse, N.Y.	2	00
Jas. Thompson, Devonport, Ia.	2	00
Levi P. Benjamin, Friendship, N.Y.	2	00
Luther R. Ames, Worcester, Mass.	2	00
Ansel Edwards, New Orleans, La.	3	00
Thomas B. Watford, Philadelphia, Pa.	2	00
J. L., New Jersey	2	00
Mrs. M. A. E. Green, W. Winfield, N.Y.	5	00
Dr. J. S. Loucks, Potsdam, N.Y.	2	00
Robert Rutherford, Rochester, N.Y.	5	00
From One who Hates Persecution	10	00
J. D. Wheeler, Acton, Mass.	2	00
Henry Miller, Sacramento, Cal.	10	00
M. A. Britton, Santa Rosa, Cal.	2	00
Harvey Leman, Springfield, Mass.	2	00
James S. Draper, Wayland	2	00
Isaac Snow, Boston, Mass.	5	00
C. N. Lyne, Philadelphia, Pa.	2	00
Mrs. Lavelette	5	00
Sundry persons	16	13
L. Elliott, Live Oak, Fla.	2	50
Joseph Willoughby, Manchester, N.H.	2	00
W. N. Choate, Jackson Mills, Mich.	5	00
E. J. Kempton, New Bedford, Mass.	2	00
Granville W. Lukens, Mt. Holly, N.J.	2	00
Mrs. G. W. Keene, Lynn, Mass.	5	00
Charles Chittenden, Boston, Mass.	3	00
F. T. Houghton, San Francisco, Cal.	2	00
F. A. Corneli, Central Village, Conn.	2	00

Spiritualists' Defence Fund continued. dols.

Friends, New Britain, Conn.	6	50
Friend of Religious Freedom, Dalton, Pa.	2	00
S. Morton, Winslow, N.J.	2	00
Lucius Bond, Dalton, N.H.	2	00
I. L. Sage, Frankfort, Ky.	3	50
A. J. Kenney, Pana, Ill.	2	00
Mary S. Dory and S. B. Smith, Peru, N.Y.	5	00
Geo. Watt, Augusta, Ill.	2	00
Eben Snow, Cambridge, Mass.	2	50
H. H. Ostrom, Alton, N.Y.	2	00
Mrs. Sarah Compton, Hyde-park, Pa.	3	00
A. A. Wheelock, in behalf of "The Progressive Society of Spiritualists" of Utica, N.Y.	30	00
A Lady Friend, Salem, Mass.	5	00
Friend, Medfield, Mass.	10	00
J. J. Miller, Millerstown, Mo.	2	00
"Heliotrope," Petaluma, Cal.	5	00
W. V. Thompson, Pleasantville, Pa.	2	00
F. A. Grove, M.D., Kirtsville, Mo.	2	00
E. Y. Johnson, Warren, R.I.	2	00
J. Bisby, Hamilton, Ont.	5	00
Jonathan Hatch, Easton, Me.	2	00
Hugh Jones, Erie, Pa.	2	00
Addison Kelley, Kelley's Island, Ohio	2	00
Mrs. E. R. Huntington, Kelley's Island, Ohio	2	00
Hiram Frank, W. Bangor, N.Y.	2	00
I. S. Carter, San Bernardino, Cal.	2	50
A Lady Friend, San Bernardino, Cal.	5	00
S. A. Morse, Philadelphia, Pa.	2	00
H. Anderman, New Philadelphia, Ohio	2	00
Thos. Gales Forster, N.Y. City	25	00
Walter Byren	2	00
Nathaniel Esty, E. Westmoreland, N.H.	2	00
J. A. Barnes, Olympia, W.T.	5	00
Mrs. A. A. Fordham, Brenham, Tex.	2	00
Chas. Livingston	5	00
Hannah Ketchum, Laur, Ill.	2	00
Sylvester Higgins, Bellevue, Mich.	2	00
Jno. M. Kennedy, Philadelphia, Pa.	2	00
M. Bamberger, Piedmont, W. Va.	2	00
Wm. S. Moore, Norwichville, Ont.	2	00
Levi Walker, Belleville, O.	2	00
E. Foster, South Bend, Ind.	7	00
Mrs. T. J. Skidmore, Fredonia, N.Y.	20	00
Friends, Waverly, N.Y.	10	00
M. D. E., Philadelphia, Pa.	5	00
J. S. M.	5	00
C. Wilson, Alameda, Cal.	10	00
H. J. Howell, Corsicana, Tex.	5	00
Mrs. H. W. H. Brooklyn	5	00
Amos Fales, Carlton, N. B.	2	00
John Bowen, Mobile, Ala.	5	00
The Spirits controlling the Mary Hollis Circle, St. Louis, Mo.	30	00
Jas. Bell, Oxley, Ont.	2	65
John D. Powers, Woodstock, Vt.	2	00
C. H. Faxon, Charlestown, N. Y.	2	00
Little Dollie, Galveston, Tex.	5	00
Nelson Powell and Wife, Menden Centre, N.Y.	5	00
A Friend, Benecia, Cal.	3	00
E. C. Hart, Oberlin, Ohio	2	00
A Stranger to L. C.	5	00
No Name, Salem, Mass.	2	00
Marcus R. Freeman, New Bedford, Mass.	2	00
Winslow J. Howard, Prescott, Arizona	3	00
Cyrus Peabody, Warren, R. I.	5	00
Jacob Peter, Jeffersonville, Ind.	2	35
Daniel Gould, Davenport, Iowa	2	00
H. J. C., Bloomsbury, Pa.	2	00
Sums under two dols. (419 subs.)	375	95

HOW TO FORM SPIRIT CIRCLES AT HOME.

Inquirers into the phenomena of Spiritualism should begin by forming circles in their own homes, with no Spiritualist or professional medium present. Should no results be obtained on the first occasion, try again with other sitters. One or more persons possessing medial powers without knowing it are to be found in nearly every household.

Let the room be of a comfortable temperature, but cool 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.

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, considerably delays the manifestations.

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.

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 frequently found to be a weakening influence.

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.

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.

When motions of the table or sounds are produced freely, to avoid confusion let one person only speak; he should 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.

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 afterwards be strengthened.

Next ask "Who is the medium?" When the intelligence asserts itself to be related or known to anybody present, well-chosen questions should be put to test the accuracy of the statements, as the alleged spirits are found to exhibit all the virtues and all the failings of humanity.

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